MANY SILENCES:

AN APPLICATION OF GRID-GROUP CULTURAL THEORY TO RETICENCE IN SAUDI ARABIAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother.

Without you, your wisdom, your kindness and your unconditional love, I could not have done this. Even though you are no longer here, I know you are with me. When times have been hard, I have seen you in my dreams, supporting, encouraging and guiding me. I thank you for your continuous support.

This thesis is for you.

ABSTRACT

Organisational silence is an essential aspect of the field of organisational behaviour, examining why and how information, ideas or opinions are withheld by individuals within organisations. Silence in the organisation can take place between employees and their managers, thus cutting across different levels of an organisation. Attempts are made to understand this phenomenon through exploring the specific types of - and reasons for - silence. Whilst existing literature has provided an important contribution to the field, it arguably has many shortcomings in relation to adequately explaining or understanding this phenomenon. According to the existing literature, which addresses the main four types of silence (Prosocial, Acquiescent, Quiescent and Opportunistic), this study intended to further explore these forms of silence using Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT). It is suggested that this theory provides a more effective approach to understanding silence; through examining how types of silence are produced through thought styles; including fatalistic, individualistic, hierarchical and egalitarian. In addition, GGCT helps to determine more types of silence than currently exist in the literature.

This study was based on a qualitative methodology seeking to understand why people tend to keep silent. Semi-structured interviews were held with 32 respondents, made up of six managers and 26 employees. These were based in six female educational institutions, working under the umbrella of the education ministry to supervise public and private schools, from kindergarten to high school, in Riyadh, in the context of Saudi Arabia. Using semi-structured interviews, the respondents were asked questions relating to their thoughts and reasons for silence in the work setting. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using NVivo and three key results emerged. First, there are more types of silence than indicated in the existing literature. Each form of culture tends to come with a certain type of silence. Fatalistic thought style, for example, produces acquiescent and quiescent types of silence. Egalitarian thought style, on the other hand, produces prosocial types of silence. The individualistic thought style produces

opportunistic silence and hierarchical thought style produces some types of silence, including respectful, empathetic and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. The research data suggested that each type of silence comes with one dominant type of thought style, which conflicts with findings of voice studies which show how voice emerges through a combination of thought styles. The fatalistic thought style, however, was found to be a key element (if only a small element) which worked with all other types of thought styles, in order to produce silence. Further research is needed to explain why and to what extent the fatalistic thought style plays a role here. Research into how thought styles produce silence and voice at the same time would also be beneficial, as the boundaries between silence and voice remain unclear.

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PhD. Finally, a big thank you to all of the participants who took part in my research and who shared their thoughts and experiences with me. This research could not have been completed without them.

DECLARATION

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree, or qualification, to any other university, or institute of learning.

GLOSSARY

ikhtilāṭ   Gender mixing in public places

oiwama   Protection

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Silence(s) matters in several ways, as will be shown in this thesis. However, researchers in silence face an epistemic difficulty not faced by researchers of voice: silence is chiefly identifiable by inference or intuition. Voice, on the other hand, generates content which may be analysed directly. And, while discretionary silence may bring benefits, for the majority of studies, it is a problem (Ruck et al., 2017). Pervasive silence(s) mean lost opportunities and missed lessons (Jones and Kelly, 2014). Silence may be 'golden' but widespread and deep-rooted silence(s) restrict individual and organisational development. The author believes that on the whole, talk is more beneficial than silence but also that it may be a condition for voice. In any case, before silence can be evaluated it must be understood and it is to this end that this thesis seeks to make a contribution.

The question of silence has been discussed within the context of its causal factors in different disciplines. In this study, the focus is on organisational silence and the identification of its causes as *cultural*. There exists a large body of literature on silence most of which is of the view that silence is regrettable, and that organisations will be better off if it is broken and issues discussed openly (Lam and Xu, 2019). The implicit theory is that if there is engagement between employees and managers, from these conversations there will be acknowledgement of the reality and thus solutions to problems facing organisations.

Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT) is used to re-examine and evaluate the existing literature on silence. This thesis will argue for the cultural analysis of silence. In organisations today, employers expect employees to report their concerns to them or to their managers in order to be able to meet increased demands from customers and to compete in their market. Nevertheless, many respondents doubt that their employers will recognise and support their observations and ideas and perceive this as lack of trust, hence organisational silence (Dimitrias and Vakola, 2003). Again, employees are often

intentionally unwilling to communicate vital information to management (leaders or managers) who they find dispiriting or intimidating (Ryan and Oestreich, 1998). This unwillingness to speak up, this silence and lack of information exchange has the possibility of weakening organisational decision making and damaging employee morale and trust (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). More specifically, when employees settle into a collective silence this is known as organisational silence (Henriksen and Dayton, 2006). While hard to disagree with, such statements pose more questions than they answer: why do the intimidated perceive high risk? Why is one subject willing to speak out and another unwilling? What are the reasonings that generate silences?

While GGCT is generally applied to the understanding of the reasonings behind different voices (Thought Styles) here GGCT is applied to silences, in the expectation that new silence types will be identified (Silence Styles).

The idea of silence can be said to have been introduced in ancient history. Kovacs (1989), in a book on the Mesopotamian poem the "Epic of Gilgamesh" written approximately 2100 BCE, states that he believes that the phenomenon of silence, which is related to the concept of secrecy, did not exist from the beginning of human communication. However, some authors in the field of organisational behaviour such as Morrison and Milliken (2000) and Bowen and Blackmon (2003) maintain that individuals are continually communicating and can fail to send or receive communication. In the broader view, silence is fundamentally a phenomenon incorporating instances when something is not spoken or passed on from sender to receiver.

From the point-of-view of organisational effectiveness, silence should not be taken lightly, since employees' participation in organisational decisions is supposed to be vital in improving the process of decision-making (van Manen, 1990). If employees are guaranteed that the information they provide to management will be taken into consideration, this should build trust and they will feel able to openly provide suggestions

to improve workplace conditions and their organisation's decision-making capacity (Afkhami and Mehrabanfar, 2015).

The relationship between managers and subordinates has been affected by many factors considered to be 'obstacles' to this relationship. This study considers such factors, and especially those mentioned above; these differences can be explained by Grid-Group Cultural Theory Typology (GGCT). This study considers obstacles to the relationship between managers and employees and explains them through the application of Grid-group Cultural Theory (GGCT). GGCT posits the existence of four 'voices' (forms of reasoning), each of which encompasses a complete worldview and is, therefore, reasonable in its own terms. Though each of these worldviews are equally valid, they are in opposition to each other (Thompson et al., 1990). all of which are reasonable, yet also opposed, therefore none of which will remain dominant indefinitely. As cultural theorists argue, there is no equilibrium point in culture. It comes as no surprise to GGCT theorists that Saudi culture is, like all other national cultures, complex, fraught with contradictions and very dynamic (Patel, 2013). In culture, change is not just possible but probable. In the institutions that were examined for this research, potential for change is there, and potential for overcoming silence exists.

A question to explore then, is how GGCT descriptors apply. The dynamics will be explored among managers and subordinates in Riyadh's female Institute of Education where, despite sharing an 'Arab culture', the chance that any leader-follower dyad will be equal is remote, not least because it will be controlled ultimately by male supervision. This much is institutionalised. While diversity may animate these relationships with positive outcomes for both sides, a degree of discomfort is practically inevitable. How is such a difference accommodated in practice?

Awareness of reasonable differences should help managers to build better relationships taking into account GGCT thought styles (Thompson et al., 1990). GGCT can help to 'break the silence' that divides persons of profoundly different opinions and upbringing

by enhanced understanding of *conflicting yet equally reasonable reasoning* taking into account what lies behind each person's silence. GGCT also contributes a much greater self-understanding and is, therefore, a gift to the trainer who is attempting to instil reflective practice (Schon, 1983).

Managers and subordinates each have a part to play in breaking silences and these potentialities are all the more important in places or countries where women have profound limitations imposed on them through patriarchy and its own specific form of reasoning. It is undeniable that Saudi society has a unique culture which is embodied in the relations between men and women according to a way of life which pre-dates oil production in the Gulf countries. Before lines were drawn on the map to represent national boundaries, people lived as tribes which fought over the necessities of life such as water and grazing.

It was under these circumstances that males took the dominant public roles because of the need to use a type of violence for the protection of the community. In GGCT terms, patriarchy is a 'polyrational' amalgam of egalitarian/ enclave reasoning and hierarchical/ rank reasoning (Thompson et al., 1990), confining women to the private realm for reasons of 'safety' and in the interests of social stability. Saudi men still believe that, despite great improvements in security, women should not occupy public positions and that, when they do, they should occupy positions which are inferior to men. Overall men struggle to see women as their equals (Abdalla, 1996) and assume that calamity will occur if their hierarchical-cum-protective position weakens.

1.1. Problem Statement

There is a tacit consensus among organisational studies researchers that silence in the workplace is detrimental to the organisation's effectiveness and performance. Many studies confirm this viewpoint and much research has been done on the relationship between silence and other organisational factors.

These previous studies have been conducted mostly within the positivist paradigm and, therefore, are based on constructs. These studies examine how their constructs are related to each other and aim to describe a snapshot view of what is assumed to be a relatively ststic state of affairs. However, constructs are models that represent reality, not reality itself. Furthermore, these constructs can only be operationalised through the survey instruments that are based on them. This approach has revealed a great deal about the silence phenomenon, but it has contributed relatively little to our understanding of silence itself or of its role in the organisation.

In a constructionist approach to organisation, for example Berger and Luckmann (1967), the study would begin from a different assumption that the organisation is dynamically created by the flow of interactions between the actors within it. In this view, silence might be seen as an aspect of communication and, therefore, as potentially constructive or destructive as voice. This study assumes the validity of both of these approaches by adopting the critical realist paradigm. Here the phenomenon will be addressed by looking for an underlying structure to the phenomenon of organisational silence that will provide explanations and insights as well as indications of how this phenomenon relates to others.

Thus, the problem that is addressed in this thesis is one of a lack of understanding of the origins and roles of organisational silence in the everyday life of an organisation. It is only when scholars have a conceptual model with explanatory as well as predictive power that htye will be able to advise practitioenrss about what is bad about organisational silence and how to tackle it and when it serves a useful purpose and when it should be left alone.

This study addresses this problem by positing that Grid-Group Cultural Theory may be of help and to test this suggestion.

1.2. Research Aim, Objectives and Questions

1.2.1. Research Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the reasonings with which silence is practiced and the effects of silences in the Institute of Education in the context of Saudi Arabia using GGCT. However, the same method might be applied to organisational silences in any country, because the reasonings to be found in Saudi Arabia are recognisable everywhere and in all time periods and contexts. This is because GGCT is a universal and comprehensive categorisation of thought styles (Thompson et al., 1990; Patel, 2013).

1.2.2. Research Objectives

a) To identify the types of silence that are to be found in the Institute of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

b) To use GGCT cultural styles to differentiate and explain types of silence

1.2.3. Research Questions

a) What silences exist between managers and subordinates in the Institute of Education (for female education)?

b) How do GGCT thought styles enter into managers' and subordinates' respective silences?

1.3. Literature Gap

Though the phenomenon of organisational silence is widely recognised, there is little understanding regarding its nature and main components (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Knoll and van Dick, 2013a). Although there are many studies on the *concept* of silence, they have not explicitly *explained* why particular employees choose to remain silent (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). As a result, this study is an attempt to explore this silence by considering the causes of silence which have been determined as being based on an individual's social and cultural practices. It is to be stressed that an important premise is that all silences are reasonable.

1.4. Definition and Explanation of Key Terms

1.4.1. Institute of Education

This is the institution responsible for supervising all education establishments (all Primary and Secondary schools, public and private). The employees of this institution are government employees expected to implement the government's education policies, ensure schools are run in the best possible ways and follow the prescribed curriculum.

1.4.2. Segregation and Culture

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosts Mecca which is one of the most important symbols of the Islamic religion. This has led to the establishment and enforcement of strict Islamic codes of conduct and everyone is expected to adhere to these. One of the most conspicuous codes is the segregation of males and females in public places. This is an institutionalised religious and cultural practice that the researcher had to contend with when seeking to collect data and, as explained in Chapter 4, the researcher envisioned difficulty in seeking male respondents. For this reason, this study was primarily limited to female employees. However, as will be demonstrated, this does not inhibit effective application of GGCT, and respondents' trust was won partly on the basis of the researcher's female gender.

1.4.3. Organisational Silence

Researchers in the field of silence in the workplace may approach the subject at the level of the individual or of the group. Many valuable studies have been conducted by psychologists at the individual level (eg. Opt and Loffredo, 2000). However, this study falls into another stream of thought which approaches silence at the level of the organisation. Hence, the object of study in this research is *organisational silence*.

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1.5. Theoretical Background

This thesis uses Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT) for its theoretical basis. GGCT was first developed by the anthropologist Mary Douglas from an earlier model developed by the sociologist, Basil Bernstein (Back, 1973). It was later developed by a number of scholars including Michael Thompson, Aaron Wildavsky and Marco Verweij (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982; Thompson et al. 1990; Thompson, 2008; Verweij and Thompson, 2006). Douglas was heavily influenced by the sociologist Emile Durkheim and this influence can be seen as particularly coming from Durkheim's classification of suicide (Durkheim, 1897/2005). Durkheim's work relies on opposing binary concepts. Thus, his classification of suicide depends on two binaries, the first concerning social integration giving egotistic/altruistic suicide and the second concerning the regulation of society giving anomic/fatalistic suicide.

In GGCT, Douglas takes two opposing binaries, individual/group and social rules/no rules and places them at right angles to each other to give a quadrant. Each of the four parts of the quadrant gives a distinct thought style (Douglas, 2007; Thompson et al., 1990. The individual/group binary forms the horizontal axis (Group) and the rules/no rules binary forms the vertical axis (Grid). Thus, low group, low grid gives Individualism where the focus is on individual action; low grid, high group, gives Egalitarianism where the focus is on the identity and well-being of the group; high grid, high group gives Hierarchy where the focus is on social stability and low group, high grid gives Fatalism where the focus is on inactive acceptance of whatever happens.

Apart from a classification of thought styles, there are certain significant consequences of the theory (Thompson et al., 1990; Thompson, 2008). First, GGCT proposes that each of these competing thought styles is complete in itself and, therefore, cannot be wrong, though, of course, each appears to be wrong from the point of view of the other three. Second, it proposes that all of the four thought styles are present, though in different proportions and the suppression of any one of them produces suboptimal decisions. Third,

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the theory is fractal, that is, it works on any size of group from something as large as a nation or world religion down to a family, or couple, or even an individual. Fourth, since the thought styles are in a constant state of competition with each other, this is a dynamic theory which incorporates change.

GGCT was conceived by its original developers as a theory of the functionalist paradigm from sociology (Thompson et al., 1990). The functionalist paradigm sees social groups as self-regulating so that, unconsciously, they adapt to ensure their survival. In this way, the original developers wanted to make a clear distinction between GGCT and theories developed in the paradigm of rational, autonomous individuals from economics.

These characteristics of GGCT make it particularly suitable for this study. First, it is able to encompass and explain individual differences. Second, it is able to explain change and, therefore, allows for the planning of change. Third, it fits with eh research paradigm of this study, which is realism (Edwards et al., 2014). Since the thought styles form a template for the rationality of individuals, and the of the group, which is unconscious, GGCT is consistent with the layered ontology of realism, the research philosophy of this study, where the basis of action is often an unconscious reality.

1.6. Position of Women in Saudi Arabia

1.6.1. A Question of National Culture

Since GGCT posits the existence of four equally reasonable but conflicting 'voices' none of which can remain dominant indefinitely, there is no fixed equilibrium point (Thompson et al., 1990). But, insofar as trends are widely observed, a different theoretical view that explains national culture can be drawn on. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions theory (Hofstede, 1980) has for a long time been employed in such cases while this study takes a different path, employing GGCT. Contrary to GGCT, Hofstede posits the existence of stable *national cultures*. A question to explore, then, is what GGCT can offer that Hofstede's theory cannot when explaining organisational silences specifically. It is one thing to say that it is a patriarchal culture and that women's talk may be inhibited in the

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presence of men, but this does not explain why women may be inhibited from speaking in the presence of other women.

Fortunately, GGCT is both more explanatory and dynamic than is provided for by Hofstede's distinctly descriptive and static typologising of supposedly fixed national cultures, while GGCT also demonstrates the same universal extent of application that Hofstede offers (Patel, 2013). However, it is undeniable that Saudi society embodies a unique permutation of cultural characteristics, which mixes traditional mores with modern aspirations, especially regarding the relations between men and woman that has persisted from before the development of Saudi's oil economy brought wealth and aspirations to modernity (Ibrahim, 2019).

1.6.2. Creation of Silence in Saudi Arabia

As Gulf countries started to export oil, many nomadic tribes moved to live in cities to participate in the labour market in various modern economic activities. The wealth which came from exporting oil influenced these societies in different ways, placing 'modern' assumptions directly next to 'traditional' ones. Saudis are at the same time deeply conservative and yet participate in a modern capitalist economy (Beling, 2019). Thus, they live in two worlds which are different and frankly contradictory. In this way, silence is part of the fundamental political economy of the country.

A 'modern' presumption in favour of educating women for public positions exists alongside a conservative assumption that expects obedience to male hierarchy; thus, women are constrained to work out of sight and in isolation, away from men, and to work in lower level occupations which demand lower qualifications having less responsibility. These countries accept modernity alongside conservatism (Abdallah, 1996) in a way that is so severely contradictory that the nature of this way of life is difficult for its participants to discuss. The contradiction is preserved by remaining silent about it. In Saudi Arabia there is a pervasive culture of silence which GGCT would characterise as Fatalistic (reasonable in order to enable personal survival). It may be that this silence also

contributes to some of the difficulties which women managers and subordinates experience between them.

However, King Faisal has used his patriarchal and traditional authority to convince religious conservatives to accept the idea of allowing women to become educated and to work by conferring on them the authority to control the education of women, and to monitor the educational curriculum (Beling, 2019). This policy accommodates a hierarchical ideology that limits women to being good wives and mothers and to working in gender-segregated occupations such as teaching and health care (Hamdan, 2005).

Saudi women bear their inferior positions publicly, while privately thinking about their rights. These private thoughts were promoted, at least partly, when the national oil company, ARAMCO, was created. This was established in 1979 to manage and operate the production and refinement of oil. From the beginning, American managers and engineers brought their families with them, and their female family members went shopping without restriction. This public demonstration of women's freedom encouraged Saudi women to think again about their situations and rights (Hamdan, 2005).

The general limitations on women's activities is not to be underestimated; even with educational qualifications, they have limited rights to paid employment, remain subject to patriarchal/hierarchal assumptions about their abilities, their 'essential roles' and their development and advancement in the workplace. (Abraham, 1997, cited in Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Pervasive negative attitudes of men are derived from what can be seen as an intensely masculine culture[1] (Effendi, 2003, cited in Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Under the principle of o*iwama* (protection) men are honour-bound to guard 'their' women's honour and sexuality by placing restrictions on their mobility. Women cannot even travel without

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[1] By 'feminine' Hofstede means that Saudi culture is caring of others, while patriarchy can indeed be described as caring too, at least in principle

permission from men. Moreover, when her sons reach the age of majority, a woman must obey them.

These cultural practices create gendered work, domestic relations and organisational structures, and sustain sex-segregated work-spaces and public spaces (Metcalfe, 2008). As Al-Halawani (2002) establishes, women in all sectors work under the shadow of men. Even if women become leaders, they cannot take any decision without the endorsement of male leaders who are above them in the hierarchy. The female leader lacks full authority, and her female subordinates are aware that she must follow orders which come from male leaders. These obstacles hinder and limit the ability of women to lead organisations effectively.

Evidence also shows that the amount and quality of leadership training available to women is inadequate to the demands of such roles. Women often undertake training based on their own initiative which does not follow any strategic leadership development plan within the organisation (Al-Ahmadi, 2005, cited in Al-Ahmadi, 2011). Indeed, it is likely that the absence of strategic leadership development programmes and a failure to discuss this deficit is among the silences referred to above.

Though the number of schools and universities in Gulf countries has increased since 1970s as a result of heavy investment, the participation of women in both private and public sectors is still modest (Calvert and Al-Shetaiwi, 2002; Hamdan, 2005). Female employment varies between 2 and 10 per cent which is extremely low by international standards. In the mid-1990s, Arab women's share of the labour force was the lowest among the six developing regions of the world (Sidani, 2005). Due to prevailing moral and religious beliefs amongst the vast majority of people (including women), even young people think women should stick to their 'original' role as wife and mother. Saudi women are not allowed to stand on production lines in large factories and are also prevented from taking up many specific roles, for example, prevented from working as personal secretaries (Mellahi and Al-Hinai, 2000).

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Above all, Saudi society is conflicted by the vexed issue that, while economically it is capitalistic, nevertheless it has a mixture of conservative values deriving from implicit tribal traditions and explicit, codified Islamic values that are heavily institutionalised. There are further complexities introducing ambiguity to this culture. Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993) argue that in certain situations Saudis follow Arab tradition which conflicts directly with Islamic teachings, while in other situations they act according to Islamic values. Yet, they may embrace the values of the capitalist market (consumption, choice, competition) and enter into contracts that are not compatible with Islamic teachings. In summary, it is necessary to understand Saudi culture and history before it is possible to understand the relationship between managers and their subordinates in this all female workplace, in the offices of the Institute of Education in Riyadh.

Many managers are familiar with Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) and can classify Saudi culture but without understanding why one national culture becomes different to another. Hofstede's model does not provide an explanation of the dynamism within a culture or its contradictions; certainly not as GGCT does (Patel, 2013). Saudi culture is complex, very dynamic and with contradictions and ambiguities. In this culture, change is not just possible but probable. Contra Hofstede, in the organisation that I examined, the potential for change is there, and potential for overcoming silences exists even in *the conflicting reasonings that inform the silences themselves*.

Saudi silence is born of the uneasy juxtaposition of capitalism and conservative patriarchy but my respondents gave me many clear, specific and rational reasons for remaining silent. Their explanations for their silences should be taken at face-value and trusted. This study demonstrates that the GGCT model may be applied universally. Their hierarchical respect for rules can be found in any country, their egalitarian concern for others is also present within any culture; their individual competitiveness (likewise an available prototype) and fatalistic concern for self-preservation are each found as easily in London or Chicago as Riyadh. These thought styles are present in any culture and made available

by culture so, in this sense, Saudi Arabia should not be considered exceptional. It follows that this method is generalizable to all cultures.

1.7. Importance of this Study

Having considered the case as it is in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where there is widespread silence among women and certainly within the Institute of Education, this thesis seeks to identify the causes of silence to establish a way of understanding it that might lead to finding ways of breaking the silence.

However, this study is not pessimistic. It does not begin from a static and monolithic view of Saudi culture (as Hofstede does) but from a quite different understanding of culture altogether that is afforded by GGCT; of what culture is and how it works, at every scale from an individual's thoughts right up to institutions of any size.

This study is important insofar as it may assist managers and subordinates to identify where silences exists, and to take reasonable measures to address them. Thus, this study is ultimately practical, as it helps organisations to deal reasonably with reasonable silences.

1.8. Contribution of the Study

The primary contribution of this thesis is to have explain associations between the four main thought styles (biases) and different types of silence. These biases are Hierarchical, Individualist, Egalitarian and Fatalistic (Thompson et al., 1990) that give rise to silences that include Prosocial and Quiescent silences. The study has pioneered the creation of a link between these thought styles and types of silence, but it also recognises other types of reasonable silence, notably Respectful / Empathetic and Comfortable silence. Thus, the study has found that silence is created by many reasonings and it must be emphasised again that silences are *reasonable* not irrational.

The study is of great benefit to the managers who can, reflectively, make themselves accessible to themselves and to others. Indeed, managers and employees may come to recognise that silence(s) are created culturally for reasonable reasons that also enable silences to be broken. There are Hierarchical, Egalitarian, Individualistic and Fatalistic reasons for silence (alone and in combination) but also Hierarchical, Egalitarian, Individualistic and Fatalistic reasons for speaking out.

1.9.   Limitations and Delimitations

Having been conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, there are a number of challenges that could not be overcome. For example, the researcher is a woman so the study had to be conducted among women as there is strict gender segregation. It was not possible for the researcher to collect data in a male institution.

In terms of delimiting factors, this study focussed on cultural biases' (thought styles) influences on silences. It is conceivable that there could be non-cultural causes of silence, such as a persons' 'animal spirit' (Keynes, 1936/2018) – their given biological natures, their inherited personalities. The inferences in this study do not go beyond the boundaries of cultural biases.

1.10.   Organisation of the Thesis

The thesis is laid in conventional fashion. Following this introduction, there is a literature review examining the views of various authors on the topic of Organisational Silence followed by a review of the literature of GGCT. The third chapter addresses Methodology, where I have discussed the paths taken to identify, collect and examine the data. There follows Findings and Analysis, then a Discussion chapter that interprets the findings in relation to the existing literature. Lastly, there is a Conclusions and Recommendations chapter which has provides general remarks and lays out suggestions as to the future implications of this thesis.

1.11. Chapter Conclusion

This is a study of organisational silence conducted within the research paradigm of critical realism. Most studies of organisational silence hitherto have been positivist, quantitative studies. This study is, therefore, looking the phenomenon with a view to finding underlying, hidden regularities with a view to developing a theory of silence with more explanatory power. This has been done by applying GGCT to qualitative interview data gathered in an all-female workplace in Saudi Arabia to test if the GGCT thought styles are in evidence as predicted by GGCT. The extant literature of organisational silence was examined and it was found that the typologies of silence that have been proposed were consistent with the GGCT model. When the data was analysed it was found that the typologies of silence already proposed fitted the data but additionally, when GGCT was also applied new types of silence were also revealed.

This chapter has outlined the background to the study on Organisational Silence and states the research aims, research questions and objectives. In general terms, how silence developed in Saudi Arabia has been outlined as a brief contextualisation of the experiences and constraints of the women staff members in the offices of the Ministry of Education. The rationale, the contribution of the study, its chief limitations and delimitations have also been outlined.

CHAPTER 2

LIVING SPACE AND CONCEPTUAL SPACE: WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD A CULTURAL THEORY POSESS?

2.1. Chapter Introduction

Academic literature extends indefinitely in all directions. Literature reviews must choose and delimit the conceptual 'space' which suits the researcher's purpose. They should enable the reader to 'visualise' the environment surrounding a study by highlighting the socio-historical context and the theoretical viewpoints on the issues contained within the boundaries of this 'environment'. In this thesis, the motivations of women employees to be silent are examined using the typology of thought styles of Grid-Group Cultural Theory. These thought styles afford insights into the rationalities for their silences. However, it is first necessary to understand the context in which GGCT is being applied. Therefore, this chapter discusses the context of this study by surveying the social and historical background, it goes on to looking at some major theories of national culture and what they indicate about Saudi culture as a whole. This chapter examines the context of women's experience in the workplace in Saudi Arabia in more detail than in Chapter 1.

2.2. The Context of Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, women are marked out as different and constrained compared with men by official and unofficial means (Kelly, 2014; Gorney, 2016). They are confined to spaces created and defined by the government through its own 'lenses' (assumptions) and by those of religious institutions, positioned to operate in particular spheres under certain conditions (Alselaimi and Lord, 2012; Al-Alhareth *et al.,* 2015; van Geel, 2016). When they have acquired the necessary skills or attained a position of some authority, new challenges emerge, especially at their places of work (Alfalih, 2016; Al-Asfour *et al.,*

2017). By examining these contextual issues separately, it is possible to suggest a frame within which their organisational silences can be explicated.

Organisational silence(s) occurs everywhere by degrees, however, Saudi organisational silence has recognisably local features. First, the culture of Saudi Arabia has evolved differently than in other places, certainly it has evolved more slowly. Because of the country's status as the guardian of the most important holy places of Islam, Saudis generally believe that it is their duty to protect traditional values while, at the same time, since they have an economic bonanza from oil production they also wish to modernise. Second, there is a larger divide in Saudi Arabia between the social expectations of men and women than almost any other country. Traditional values limit the roles that women can play, especially in the workplace and it is only recently that women's education has been encouraged. These factors form the historical and social context of this study.

2.2.1. *Political Changes in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*

The position of women in the Kingdom was for a long time been subservient to that of men, in this highly masculine society (Doumato, 2010; Den Hertog et al., 2010; Kelly, 2014). Recently there has been an increasing rate of political change as the new leader, Prince Mohammed bin Salman, initiates a raft of measures aimed at economic and social liberalisation (Varshney, 2019). These include allowing the opening of new cinemas and theatres and enlarging social and economic space for women, by for example, permitting them to drive cars (Amnesty International, 2018; BBC News, 2018; De Bel-Air, 2018).

These changes highlight a clear conflict between liberalisation and boldness, and the need for adherence to traditions. The divide is observable between the older generation, which is very conservative, and the younger generation, which is embracing each new change as it is unveiled (Whiteoak *et al.*, 2006; Doumato, 2010; Gorney, 2016). The older generation tends to have more persistent conservative values (*Ibid.*), assuming, for instance, that the judgement of an older man cannot be questioned and that someone with an important job title is automatically accorded unquestionable authority. Though the

changes have not meant outright free association of men and women, it is evident that even among exclusive institutions, the older generation is in conflict with the younger generation.

2.2.2. *Economic Situation and Saudisation process*

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one of the richest countries in the world that has for a long time been dependent on oil extraction and sale. Oil and its by-products are crucial to its economy (De Bel-Air, 2018). During the first part of the past two decades, the price of oil was at its highest and Saudi Arabia witnessed a boom, leading to increased investments in and outside the country. In the recent past, however, due to the financial crisis of 2008, came the realisation that the period of reliance on oil and petro-chemical by-products was over, and that there was a need for diversification. Oil prices had been falling and the government implemented a Saudisation process, which meant that locals are being encouraged to become employed in sectors that have previously been heavily reliant on the employment of foreign nationals (De Bel-Air, 2018; Varshney, 2019). This led to the creation of jobs for women, who traditionally were not highly represented in places of work (Rabaah *et al.*, 2016; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Alsubaie and Jones, 2017). With such opportunities, and little time for preparation, and a high expectation for them to perform, the effects can include loss of confidence on the part of the employees, to the point where silence has become normal.

2.2.3. *Women and Education*

Traditionally women in Saudi Arabia were not thought to be worth educating. Even after the discovery of oil, male children were sent to school while it was deemed unnecessary to send girls (Alamri, 2011; Rabaah *et al.*, 2016). For a long period, education for girls was discouraged and it was not supported by government policy. For several decades, girls were disadvantaged and unable to compete with males on equal terms. However, in the 1960s, the first primary school for girls was established, mainly for religious studies (*Ibid.*). Differences in approach between the education of men and women in Saudi

Arabia persisted. This continued until 2002 when the education of women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was moved from the Department of Religious Guidance to the Ministry of Education (Hamdan, 2005). The reason for putting girls' education under the Department for Religious Studies had been to ensure that girls were taught the duties expected of a good wife. The question of having girls in education, has, since the 1960s been a major controversy in Saudi Arabia, and it continues (Rawaf and Simmons, 1991).

The disadvantages faced by girls and women were not only institutionalised in education but affected Saudi men's choice of brides. It became clear that young educated Saudi males preferred foreign women (Fawaz, 1991), an issue that was brought to the attention of King Saud, who in 1959, gave a speech on the importance of educating girls. In the past few years, there has been a rapid increase in the number of girls in education. This was occasioned by the government's policy of Saudization and the need to ensure that the Kingdom had qualified workers. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia has the lowest female literacy rate in the Middle East (Bahry, 2019). A number of new challenges face Saudi women in education and women who are educated (Fawaz, 1991; Bahry, 2019). For example, according to Al-Asfour *et al.* (2017) educated women are preferred by young educated men but are looked down upon by older uneducated men.

Institutionalised segregation means that interaction that could prove beneficial may not be realised (Rugh, 2002). The situation presented by Rugh (2002), is unique in a number of ways. First, the missed opportunities that are occasioned by segregation has meant that the confidence and ability to engage with other people at different levels or on different platforms, is less in women (Baki, 2004). Males have larger public spaces and are able to express their abilities freely and easily, in ways that can be beneficial to them. A more restricted space means that women have less ability to showcase their potential (Alwazzan and Rees, 2016; Syed and Hennekam, 2018).

In the recent past, there has been a concerted effort to educate women (Alnahdi, 2014; Rabaah *et al.*, 2016), and recently the government of Saudi Arabia floated the idea of an

All-Female City (Khaleeli, 2012), where they can study, work and engage socially, such a far-fetched initiative and any benefits cannot be realised in the near future. Education in Saudi Arabia is free from kindergarten to university, with the aim of ensuring that everyone gets equal opportunities to have an education (Rugh, 2002; Rabaah *et al.*, 2016). With free education, there has been an effort to send women into higher education within and outside Saudi Arabia, which has meant that they are able to benefit from education that is diverse (Alamri, 2011; van Geel, 2016; Young and Snead, 2017). However, it is clear that the value of their education has been reduced because they have not been given space to put what they have learnt into practice (Rugh, 2002). The new challenge for educated women in Saudi Arabia has been the lack of merited promotion and, for many women, their qualifications have conferred mere titles. Educated women tend not to enjoy job security nor benefit their family on the basis of their education, thus causing many of them to view it negatively (Alwazzan and Rees, 2016).

Higher education for women has been used as a means to compete for status among families but has also led to challenges where the women who appear to have joined the league of the highly educated tend to be viewed differently by those who are outside this category (Al-Habib, 2012). This is a problem that also exists *between* women, cutting across academic and social circles, with the effect that proposals or opportunities for growth and development may not necessarily be realised by women, especially opportunities which might be created through collective voices.

The challenge faced by women educators of women has been the questioning of their calibre and the anxieties that surround their positions (Alwazzan and Rees, 2016; Baki, 2004). Baki (2004), noted that women educators find themselves torn between fulfilling the requirements of their education and meeting the expectations of their gendered status. The challenge is new and unprecedented, in that often, women are expected to contribute through their knowledge and thus develop society, but at the same time, they are treated with scepticism about their ability to utilise their knowledge. This means that many remain less committed to fulfilling their abilities than they once were (Al-Ahmadi, 2010).

Al-Ahmadi (2010) highlights that whereas there are other challenges common among women, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the situation is unique in that that lack of structural changes means that female educators are judged less competent than males. With this, women tend to 'hide' their skills. Jamjoom (2010) has indicated that it has so far been difficult to understand female educators' experience, because the challenges that they face are complex, and getting information from them is difficult. Therefore, their experience of their workplaces is a matter that is addressed here.

Another significant area is entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia. It is noted that only recently have Saudi women demonstrated success as entrepreneurs (Nieva, 2015). Entrepreneurship among women are still widely evaluated negatively. The challenges for the women are two-fold: women do not have opportunities because a male dominated society tends to limit entrepreneurial expression and, second, women who appear to be doing well, can face a backlash from family or society due to their very success (Ahmad, 2011; Alselaimi and Lord, 2012; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017; Alsubaie and Jones, 2017). Nothing fails quite like success. Like employment, business opportunities are limited for the women. There have been cases of women focusing or being encouraged to focus on businesses that will make them interact with other women (Nieva, 2015). Whereas some women have had great success in women-to-women business, the fact that their businesses are segregated limits opportunities (Khaleeli, 2012; van Geel, 2016). These challenges contribute something to silence among Saudi women and they create disadvantages damaging to women's intellectual growth. Recent changes are, however, encouraging as they are coming from the upper echelons of society, so have a good chance of succeeding.

2.2.4. *Women at Work*

There has been an accelerated increase in the number of women at work in Saudi Arabia. The employment sector has become more receptive to women, a situation that has seen many women enter paid work (Pharaon, 2004; Kelly, 2014; Bahry, 2019). Thus, women

in Saudi Arabia are slowly permeating the workplace. Part of the reason why women are venturing into paid work is because they are educated and because the government has adopted more friendly policies towards female employment (Bahry, 2019). There are certain areas of work where women do not engage, however, and this is so because the government and the commercial sector has placed barriers. The increase in number of women in the workplace does not imply that they are facing only mundane challenges. A study by Hodges (2017), found that although women are securing well paid and professional jobs, the unique feature is that they view this principally as a means of gaining autonomy; venturing into work to escape from one problem, to find that at work, there are other challenges to contend with (Al Alhareth *et al.,* 2015; Alfalih, 2016; Al-Asfour *et al.,* 2017).

A number of studies have examined women at work in different professions in Saudi Arabia (Pharaon, 2004; Vidyasagar and Rae, 2004; Miller-Rosser, 2006). These studies all find extreme difficulties for women at workplaces in a society that is male dominated. Vidyasagar and Rea (2004) examined Saudi women doctors and concluded that they not have the same career prospects (on the basis of merit), as their counterparts in the Western world, but they are protected by law from engaging in menial jobs, because of the country's historic dependence on cheap foreign labour. Pharaon (2004) presents a harsh economic context that aggravates women's experience and notes that the country has in the recent past, experienced difficulties on almost all fronts, economically and politically, and as such, the economy barely supports male employment, making women's employment insecure. Nevertheless, despite the challenges beyond their control, women in Saudi Arabia are making a significant contribution and have permeated professions including nursing, information technology, journalism, media and public utilities (Pharaon, 2004) in addition to education. Pharaon (2004) notes, however, that nursing is viewed negatively, thus diminishing nurses' enthusiasm for their profession.

Despite Saudisation women have been ill-prepared to take up opportunities created by the repatriation of foreign labour (Bahry, 2019). Women remain locked out for lack of

competence, or because of lack of the ability to take on arduous work once carried out by those whose jobs they could be taking (Fawaz, 1991; van Geel, 2016). Al-Asfour *et al.* (2017) presented a picture of a workplace that is in many ways unfriendly to women, ranging from their terms of engagement to their roles as mothers. They indicated that workplaces are not prepared to accommodate women. They noted that this situation is accentuated in a country where the notion of a woman at work carries negative connotations. Women at work hesitate to raise queries at and about work. They are heard less on matters of importance to them, for example, facilities that they may need. The issues raised by Al-Asfour *et al.* (2017), are disappointing for a country that has created highways in the desert and which acts as a powerful regional leader.

Other than religion, cultural practices like family, morality, marriage and peaceful coexistence have been found important in shaping the way people relate to each other at work. It is expected that a woman will be married on reaching the age of marriage, will have children, be committed to her family and remain well-groomed. As research by Alhirz and Sajeev (2015) showed, due to the importance of upholding the family name, marriage alone is not the only important thing. Decent dressing is also prescribed by religion. In a society where women are not always allowed to work, the fact that a woman is in the workplace is itself a milestone. To this extent, it was evident that those who were at work had a sense of pride. Yet because regulations governing work are weak and employment insecure, those who worked were anxious to ensure that their working conditions are respected to the point of living in constant anxiety.

When the government does enact regulations (Johnson and Ridley, 2015), what has been decided tends to be implemented. This means that subordinates tend to accept what is presented to them and conform out of anxiety over losing their jobs. However, silence as a result of fatalism is reasonable in these circumstances. Context in its wider sense fosters silence among managers too. However, subordinates' silence is due immediately to being fearful of losing their job, while this anxiety is probably animated by the value they place

on continuing group membership (Kish-Gephart *et al.*, 2009). Silence avoids them being punished (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989).

Education was for a long time the preserve of men, and parents or guardians could refuse education to their female children or family members, compromising their competence. Although in the short-term Saudi Arabia met labour shortages from other parts of the world, especially South East Asia, Saudi women who ventured into the job market found it hard to compete effectively, and endured humiliation in silence or left the organisation (Zamberi Ahmad, 2011a). Nevertheless, Saudi women, and by large, the women in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), are asserting themselves, by engaging in different sectors, paid or non-paid. In Saudi Arabia particularly, women are taking active roles at work, and are not necessarily waiting to be invited to create their own space (Gorney, 2016; Bahri, 2019). Female assertion saw the establishment of all female banks, a trend started by the Al-Rahji Bank in 1980 and since adopted by other banks, to the point where opportunities have arisen for women to teach banking courses in institutions of higher learning (Bahri, 2019). With this opportunity, comes continuing gender segregation at work, denying women greater opportunities (Al Alhareth *et al.*, 2014; Kelly, 2014; Varshney, 2019). It has been expected that women seek permission from male family members (parents, brothers or husbands) before seeking employment (Bahri, 2019). The opportunities are thus closed for them if they are without the understanding and support of male family members.

A number of studies find that for women who have a secure job, transport can be a challenge, especially for the women who cannot afford private transport (Kelly, 2014; Al Alhareth, 2015; Al-Asfour *et al.*, 2017). They have depended on being escorted and until recently, could not board public transport on their own (Bahri, 2019). The problem of segregation meant that transport was not available to women. This lack of spatial mobility also affected their social mobility. There is, however, regional variation. Regions like Jeddah and Mecca show greater acceptance of women at work (Bahri, 2019), than smaller regions where women at work face social exclusion, family hostility and threats.

Nystrand (2006) asserts that a country context can be described politically, socially, economically, technologically, environmentally and legally. By examining the country context, an attempt could be made to understand how people behave (Hoadley, 2007). An examination of context could aid a study of silences within an institution. Saudi Arabia is one of the most observant societies in the world, being the 'home' to the Holy City of Mecca, having global religious symbolism (Alhirz and Sajeev, 2015). Being an important religious destination for Muslims, Saudi Arabia is ruled according to religious tenets and religion pervades most aspects of life. In Saudi Arabia, the segregation of men and women is commonplace, the observance of religious activities is compulsory and attempts to modify practices that hinge on religious beliefs tend to fail. It is thus not surprising that this research was conducted in an institution that is all women, because segregated institutions are part of the fabric of what Saudi Arabia is. Women are quite typically unwelcomed at work, though efforts are being made to improve their work satisfaction. Changing work culture to accommodate women will take time due to the far-reaching institutional changes that need to be put in place.

2.2.5. Women and Social Relations

Perhaps one of the most notable issues about Saudi Arabia is the cultural expectations men have of women. Within the broad definition of culture is the question of beliefs, myths and traditions. Defined in this way, culture is a way of doing things that distinguishes one group from another (Quamar, 2016). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is of great importance to Islam and social life is influenced by strict Islamic norms. Bahri (2019) noted that women face religiously inspired barriers which involve seeking the consent of males, who tend to view women as their property, refusing to delegate authority to them. With insufficient authority the author noted that mistrust spreads to the extent that women are disallowed from making decisions even within their households on the grounds that to allow them would undermine the family.

Although Saudi Arabia is recognised as 'collectivist' in decision-making, the voices of women in key decisions are often inaudible. Where a woman's success is understood to overshadow that of her husband so he may block her progress or divorce her outright. For example, a woman who had a good career gave press interviews and her husband ended up divorcing her as her success embarrassed him (Bahri, 2019).

Quamar (2016) confirms that change is slow though women have begun to show greater assertiveness towards the state, through demands for economic empowerment and participation in decision-making (Meijer, 2010). Women have experienced unhappiness in silence though this is less the case in the public sector. One response is the accusation that women who are questioning social norms are damaging the image of the country abroad. Fundamentalist conservatives are adamant that women should remain within their segregated domains. Change divides the progressive minded and the traditional minded in the kingdom, a division that is viewed as highly dangerous (Meier, 2010; van Geel, 2016). Notwithstanding clear barriers to their social mobility it is noted that women are treated more liberally within their households. Debate continues as to whether this liberty should be exercised within the confines of the house or whether more can be done to ensure that women can be fully integrated outside their homes (Bahri, 2019). In short, women's silence, as described, is the subject of animated debate.

Heated debate takes place over the question of *ikhtilāṭ*, which describes the participation of women in public places where genders mix (van Geel, 2016). Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries in the world where women are separated from men in most public places (van Geel, 2016; Bahri, 2019). Segregation is largely unchallenged, but ambiguity exists as to what is meant by 'public participation', and if it is indeed a problem. Separation of the genders is treated as a religious matter expected by default (Amélie, 2008). But during 'Operation Desert Storm' (Quamar, 2016) Saudi women saw Kuwaiti women driving, and female coalition force members driving and taking part in military engagement, fully in public view. This stirred the desire for change (Amélie, 2008). While elements of the elite showed willingness to accommodate change (van Geel, 2016), conservatives often

block the changes women yearn for. It is important to note that in KSA, women who seek emigration or are outgoing are shunned as they are considered defiant of the culture (Rugh, 2002).

The issue of violence, domestic, verbal or psychological towards women in Saudi Arabia remains shrouded (Barnawi, 2017; Fageeh, 2014). Domestic violence continues at alarming rates but is under-reported simply because male violence is viewed as normal (Barnawi, 2017). Violence is regarded as instructional, meted out by those in authority, including the police and religious enforcers (Almosaed, 2004). Women who are more likely to be caught up in domestic violence include the educated, those who aspire to challenge the status quo, and those who are deemed to be bringing shame to the family. Women who are highly educated have gained their voices and are able to ask hard questions which expose them to violent victimisation. It appears that this aspect of the social problem has proven especially difficult to address. The government has been unable to reduce domestic violence against women (Barnawi, 2017). An important link between education and violence against women, is presented by Shiraz (2016), who indicates that domestic violence in Saudi Arabia is inversely linked with the level of education.

Marriage and divorce laws favour men (Barnawi, 2017), practices that are deep-seated and persistent. The expectation of divorce through male proclamation makes it easy for them to initiate divorce, but more difficult for women who have to prove their case (Seikaly et al., 2014). Saudi Arabia has high rates of divorce that tend to raise questions about domestic ties. In most cases, men are given more power in divorce proceedings giving them choices over child custody and support. Divorced women are shunned, regarded as having brought the divorce on themselves. Attempts to provide marriage guidance hinged on social and religious teaching has had limited success.

With divorce, the issue of caring for children has become critical. Women tend to be kept at home to look after their children as a duty (Barnawi, 2017). Women who are at home

tend to face a number of challenges: first, they may be subject to that role for a long time, forfeiting opportunities for independence; second, when going back to work, they need to balance work with children compromising their productivity and effectiveness (Afifi et al., 2011). The social context, marriage, gender interaction, domestic violence and the restricted participation of women in social life are all linked and untangling them is a difficult task.

2.2.6. *Women and Religion*

Religion is so fundamental to life in Saudi Arabia that it is explicit or implicit to most social practice (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2008). The state protects its citizens by ensuring that Sharia law is implemented, in an attempt to avoid criminality (Jerichow, 1998). Though it is believed that Sharia law is man-made it was adopted later as unquestioned teaching and essential for a well-run state. Jerichow (1998) indicated that the controversy surrounding the place of women in Islam can be overcome by avoiding theological generalisation and distinguishing the Prophet's teachings from their many interpretations. The Wahabi view of Islam is not the only interpretation. Nevertheless, before the adoption of Islam, women were subjugated by men (Al Munajjed, 1997). The Quran was to confer equal rights on women, allowing them to travel for pilgrimage and join in worship while their modesty was to be expressed in their clothing.

The Wahabi's interpretation is much more restrictive, forbidding the mixing of genders, including at work (De Castillo, 2003 cited in Baki, 2004). The main basis of these restrictions is centred on *ird* and concerns chastity (Yamami, 1996). Anxiety about women's chastity is an underlying principle that thus governs every aspect of life and obedience to men is interpreted as fulling religious expectations (Amélie, 2008). Women in Saudi Arabia have conceded a position that gives men a bigger say in matters that range from family inheritance, career opportunities, education and public interaction (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2008). The expectation that the holy sites in Mecca and Medina must be visited by all Moslems in the world at least once in a lifetime institutionalises the

religiosity of Saudi society which is expected to set an example. Religion takes precedence and all social events or functions are conducted in accordance with religious precepts. There is a consensus across the Kingdom, that practices which enjoy religious sanction must be preserved, presenting difficulties for women (Amélie, 2008; Moaddel and Karabenick, 2008). Furthermore, religious principles tend to affect the way women relate with each other. Al-Rasheed (2013) has indicated that religious institutions mean that women's disadvantages are exceptionally difficult to discuss. Individuals feel like lone voices in challenging the status quo and as such a rational option is to accept the situation as it is – in silence.

Religion is most potent when politically motivated. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood, or Zayd Movement, holds an extreme viewpoint about the position of women in society (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Such groups wield considerable power, affecting the way things are done and how people think (Amélie, 2008). When allied to vested interests they can shrink spaces for women. Although women have attempted to challenge unfairness to them, there have been few attempts to challenge religious precepts and practices. Indeed, splits are evident among women, some supporting religious proscriptions and prescriptions while other groups view them as questionable (Ahmad, 2011). Religious constraints may not be easy to mitigate and will require time to overcome so the effects on women may continue for a considerable period. When religious norms are accepted without question and when groups with vested interests wield more power to the point of indoctrination then women's power to effect change is limited and again, the silence that accompanies fatalistic thoughts is a rational response.

Saudi Arabia is a country where religion plays a crucial role in determining the way the organisations are run and has much in common with other countries where religion is a dominant force. A study of the Iranian context by Samar and Yazdanmehr (2013) found that teachers resorted to silence as an implicit cultural expectation rather than as an outcome of policy within their institutions. In India, it was found that subordinates are becoming collectively vocal but individually they tend to keep silent because of social

expectations (Prabhu, 2005). Prabhu (2005) indicated that religion still influences the way people relate with each other, by creating a sense of meekness and to avoid harming others. Silence spares the embarrassment of others. In South Korea, religion does not necessarily dictate whether subordinates raise or do not raise their concerns, however, religion is an important institution in the country and again, it teaches meekness, which also fosters silence on sensitive matters (Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015). In these three cases, Iran, India and South Korea, religion affects how subordinates relate with each other and with those in authority, though in none of these cases is religious influence as strong as it is in Saudi Arabia.

In an attempt to provide suggestions to deal with inflexible religious views, Afifi et al. (2011) noted that society must be informed of the impacts of actions taken against women in the name of religion, because this affects not only individuals but society as a whole. Bahri (2019) agrees that one way of solving religious disadvantages to women is to ensure that there is nation-wide sensitisation. However, it should be noted that consciousness raising has been very limited. It has been argued that religion has positioned women in such a way that change appears unattainable, and though not unthinkable, largely not speakable. For a traditional, religious society like Saudi Arabia only very slow change is possible. However, not every theory of culture is so static. Indeed, according to one theoretical formulation any cultural position will bring about challenges and changes sooner or later and the stronger the status quo, the stronger will be the challenges that it invites. The choices are major and one particular approach (GGCT) thus enables planning for change where no change appears possible now.

2.3.   Chapter Conclusion

Religion pervades Saudi life and religious prescriptions and proscriptions provide a context that is widely understood, and which affects Saudi women in quite pronounced ways by international comparison. A common-sense analysis would suggest that Saudi

women have much to complain about and thus compelling reason to *speak*. Yet silence tends to prevail instead.

The traditional forces in Saudi culture are being opposed to the forces that are taking it towards modernity: the main manifestations of these forces are education and Saudisation. Since the opening of education to women, both in terms of enrolment and what is taught, it is clear that Saudi women have made considerable strides beyond the household. The number of female students has increased significantly which underscores the determination by the government of Saudi Arabia to support women generously, of which I am a beneficiary. Yet women in all spheres remain segregated. While education provides opportunity for women in Saudi Arabia, educated women are not always accepted even by other women. Saudisation and the search for a post-oil economy mean that women are getting into paid work, yet the work-place environment is influenced by the 'outside work' environment which is constraining. In terms of context, it is clear that family and society have great influence on the way women behave and can impose obstacles to their development if the actions by women are deemed negative by the family or society.

In short Saudi culture is far from settled, consistent and uniform. It is more than context; it is contexts. However, given the rule-based nature of traditional thinking with its complex system of explicit and implicit prescriptions, it is to be expected that Saudi society has a hierarchical approach to organising itself with definite principles about who holds what authority in which situations. But also, given the trend towards modernisation there is also to be expected a good deal of frustration as this trend clashes with the traditional thinking. It is only to be expected that this clash would often produce a sense of hopelessness on the part of the modernisers leaving them with a fatalistic outlook.

Saudi women face many challenges similar to those faced by women in other parts of the world where women have chosen to voice protests. In principle Saudi women could likewise raise their concerns, particularly workplace concerns. Yet silence(s) prevail. At

every turn, Saudi women are circumscribed by explicit or implicit rules that govern their everyday behaviour which emanate from traditional values. In a situation like this it might be expected that hierarchical, rule-bound ways of thinking might be dominant, along with a fatalistic acceptance that that these rules inevitably thwart individual aspirations and cannot be changed.

The history of religion, social relationships, education and work in Saudi Arabia for women has been difficult. With the recent changes in relation to Vision 2030, introduced by the Crown Prince, there have been numerous positive changes in the education, employment and political system for women (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017). With regards to religion, whilst in the past it has guided every act within Saudi Arabia, there has been some reduction of the influence of religion within society. These changes offer more equal opportunities for females within Saudi society. However, the impact of these on issues of silence is yet to be seen. It is also worth noting here that the collection of data for the current thesis occurred at the beginning of May 2017, and so the findings reflect the situation of women in the society to that date.

Although changes are now taking place, the pace is slow, and their impact limited. In such circumstances, silence is a reasonable stance to adopt. There is no point in speaking if speaking has little chance of success and some chance of attracting censure.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1.   Chapter Introduction

This review examines three bodies of literature. Part A examines theories of national culture to find what they can add to the background of this study and to make a comparison with GGCT as a theoretical basis of this study. Part B examines Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT), which forms the theoretical basis of this thesis. GGCT is an institutional cultural theory, that is, it provides a model which explains the underlying patterns of motivation to action among groups of people. It is different from the national culture theories examined in Part A in that it is not primarily designed to compare entities at any particular level. It is dynamic so it helps researchers to understand how a culture is being continuously created and changed. It is also *fractal*, meaning that it works at any level from the individual to the trans-national (Thompson et al., 1990). In this case it is being used at the organisational level. Part C examines the literature on organisational silence evaluated through GGCT, which provides a unifying framework and reveals the gaps in knowledge with regard to the standard account of organisational silence. The most successful explanations of organisational silence seem to be those based on GGCT thought styles and this study attempts to establish specific links between organisational silence and these thought styles. This link is crucial for categorizing silence with much greater precision than has previously been attained. Thus, this review explores the following research questions:

   a) How might silence be categorised more exactly, systematically and dynamically?

   b) How can GGCT be used to address silences between managers and subordinates in Saudi female educational institutions?

3.2.   Part A. National Culture Theories and Silence

This study adopts a cultural approach to organisational silence. However, culture is a notoriously slippery term having an enormous range of meanings (Williams, 2013). This problem is a semantic phenomenon and does not necessarily reflect objective reality since different theorists may be talking about completely different objects of study when they use the term. Therefore, when the term is being used with technical precision, as it is here, it is necessary to be clear about what is meant.

Cultures can be identified at many levels and in many contexts. In the context of the workplace, there are national culture (Hofstede, 1980), organisational culture (Cameron and Quinn, 2011) and professional culture (Bloor and Dawson, 1994) levels. National culture is the context for all the others and influences all the others (Hofstede, 1980; 2005). In this study, the focus is on culture at the organisational level but with the acknowledgement that the organisation exists in a national context and, therefore, that the organisational culture is shaped by the national culture.

Theories of national culture fall into three types: those that measure specific, discrete dimensions such as Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) and the Globe Project (House et al., 2002); those that categorise communication such as Hall (1989; Hall and Hall, 1990) and those that deal with values such as Schwartz (1999). It is beyond the scope of tis thesis to explore each of these in depth. It will be enough to take representative samples of each of these types of theory to show what they tell us about the cultural context of Saudi Arabia and why they are insufficient for the analysis of organisational silence. National culture, measured at the individual level, would be an obvious way to approach culture in a study like this (Dorfman and Howell, 1988). So, the conclusion to this section also explains why GGCT was chosen rather than one of the theories of national culture.

These national culture theories are all descriptive; that is, they are designed for taking a snapshot of a national culture at a point in time. Their purpose is comparison between the

norms of different countries to facilitate cross-cultural management. Since this is not the purpose of this study the discussion of these cultural models will be brief. In the case of each type of theory only one example will be discussed since this will be sufficient to demonstrate the inadequacy of each type of theory to the purpose of this research. However, each of these theories affords some useful insights into the culture of Saudi Arabia and, therefore, into the background of this study.

3.2.1. *Dimensions of Culture*

This category of national culture theories uses quantitative methods to measure dimensions of culture. The choice of these dimensions may seem to be a little arbitrary since they do not emanate from a theoretical model but come from what it is possible to measure. However, they can provide valuable insights into the differences between the cultures of different countries. The best-known models of national culture of this type are Hofstede (1980), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2011) and the Globe Project (House et al., 2002). These all use survey methods and, therefore, are averaging their results over large samples (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007). For this type of national culture theory Hofstede's has been chosen as the exemplar for discussion partly because it is, arguably, the best-known and partly because it has formed the basis of the others.

3.2.1.1. *Hofstede's Cultural Model*

Hofstede's cultural model (1980 1991) is often cited in many disciplines (Blanton and Barbuto, 2005; Soares, et al., 2007) including studies on organisational silence (Huang et al.'s 2005; Umar and Hassan, 2013). Hofstede's initial model (1980) posited four dimensions of (national) culture: *Power Distance*, *Uncertainty Avoidance*, *Individualism/ Collectivism* and *Masculinity/ Femininity*. Later, a fifth dimension was added, *Long-Term/ Short Term Orientation* (Hofstede, 1991) and a sixth *Indulgence/Restraint* (Hofstede et al., 2010). The original four dimensions included in Hofstede's cultural model (1980) are described in Table 3.1.

This model of national culture has been highly successful and is still in current use by researchers after over four decades since it was first developed, though it has also come in for much criticism. The original four dimensions (Table 3.1) are the ones that the theory is most known for (Hofstede, 1980), though all the dimensions are useful for comparing business contexts.

Dimension	Description
Power Distance (high vs. low)	This dimension deals with the implications of inequalities in power and authority in a society or an organisation and speaks to relationships that are hierarchical and create dependency.
Uncertainty avoidance (high vs. low)	This dimension suggests that people differ in how they perceive threats. Some people avoid situations which they see as uncertain and ambiguous while others tolerate or welcome uncertainty
Individualism vs Collectivism	This dimension relates to relationships between people. Some look to their self-interests and some national cultures are collectivist which promotes group interest over their own interests.
Masculinity vs Femininity	This dimension distinguishes masculine assertiveness and achievement from caring for others and quality of life which are dominant values in feminine cultures

(Hofstede, 1980)

Table 3.1. Hofstede's Original 4 Dimensions of National Culture

Power Distance is concerned with hierarchy and specifically measures the willingness of those at the bottom of the hierarchy to accept the power over them of those above them. According to Hofstede, Saudi Arabia scores extremely high on this dimension at 95/100

> *Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.*
> (Hofstede Insights, nd.)

Power Distance correlates with the Individualism dimension which measures the extent that a society focusses on the individual or the group, for example, the family. So, it seems that these are overlapping constructs and possibly relate to the extent that a society has modern values or traditional values (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). According to Hofstede, at 25/100 Saudi Arabia scores low on Individualism making it a collectivist society:

> *Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivist societies offence leads to shame and loss of face, employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms (like a family link), hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's in-group, management is the management of groups.*
> (Hofstede Insights, nd.)

The other two dimensions are, at first sight, a little ambiguous. Uncertainty Avoidance measures the degree of uncertainty that people are prepared tolerate in their lives. According to Hofstede's findings, on this dimension the British are able to tolerate a large degree of uncertainty which is good for entrepreneurial endeavours, but it does not explain the emphasis they place on punctuality, following the rules of the road and so on. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia scores high on this dimension at 80/100:

> *Countries exhibiting high Uncertainty Avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour and are intolerant of unorthodox behaviour and ideas. In these cultures there is an emotional need*

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for rules (even if the rules never seem to work) time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, precision and punctuality are the norm, innovation may be resisted, security is an important element in individual motivation (Hofstede Insights, nd.)

The most commonly misunderstood of Hofstede's dimension is Masculinity which is not a straightforward measure of patriarchalism. It is a measure of how task and achievement orientated a society is compared to being nurturing and having family values. It is not surprising, therefore, that according to Hofstede's measure Saudi Arabia scores on the masculine side of this dimension it is surprising that, with a score of 60/100 it isn't more masculine. However, it should be kept in mind that with Saudi's traditional values, family is very important in Saudi culture. This dimension is more about work-life balance than about gender roles.

There have been many objections levelled at Hofstede's work. Perhaps the most devastating attack has been McSweeney's (2002). McSweeney's criticisms of Hofstede's original research project are based on an analysis of Hofstede's methodology which produced the profiles that Hofstede offers for country comparison. McSweeney's objections include the assumption that the borders of a sovereign state should be taken as a suitable indicator of a common culture. Countries vary in the homogeneity of the cultures of the groups within them and some contain groups that have radically different cultures. This may be an argument against applying Hofstede's method in Saudi Arabia since the country was only recently formed from a coalition of culturally diverse tribes. Another objection is Hofstede's assumption that national culture is the ultimate determinant of all other cultural phenomenon.

There is no doubt that Hofstede's methodology and instrument have given good service as the list of studies that have used them continues to grow. They have also been the inspiration for new theoretical development. The Globe project used some of Hofstede's

dimensions and added to them to give more fine-grained country profiles (House et al., 2002).

3.2.1.2.   Hofstede and Silence

Researchers have used the cultural dimensions of Hofstede's model to study silence, but their results are inconsistent. Huang et al. (2005) shows that power distance leads to acquiescent silence and punishment produces defensive silence and the same findings were confirmed in a study undertaken in South Korea (Rhee et al., 2014). However, Ho et al. (2013) in the context of Singapore found no relationship between power distance and silence. These diverse findings compel the researcher to ponder on the reasons for the discrepancies. That the contradictory findings may suggest that it is not the context that makes findings similar or dissimilar, but the theoretical underpinning that may be faulty.

Some researchers have studied silence using Hofstede's model in combination with other theories. For example, Botero and van Dyne (2009) studied silence in the context of Columbia and the US by simultaneously applying the power distance dimension of Hofstede's model (1980) with Leader Member Exchange (LXM) theory, which relates to the quality of the relationship between supervisor and subordinate. Studies of silence using LMX have shown that a high level of LMX relationship promotes speaking up while a low level of LMX relationship promotes silence (Fasithurst, 1993; Krone, 1991, 1992). Botero and Van Dyne (2009) found a significant positive relationship between power distance and LMX despite historical differences in cultural values between the two countries. These findings may suggest that consideration of only cultural dimensions might not be helpful in understanding the silence phenomenon in different nations, and it may need additional theoretical model(s) to better understand the phenomena. This argument is supported by the findings of studies that have examined power distance and collectivism in different contexts, in India (Jain, 2015), Nigeria (Umar and Hassan, 2013) and South Korea (Dedahanov et al., 2016), but these studies concluded that social and

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cultural perspectives (Jain, 2015) and cultural values (Umar and Hassan, 2013) were imperative for better understanding of silence.

This thinking has been applied in other studies where comparisons between two or more different countries were made. Petkova et al. (2015) studied silence in Japan and Finland, that are different from each other on Hofstede's cultural dimensions but found that there were similarities in the perception, use and preferences for remaining silent due to similarities in social values (such as privacy) and sensitivity to feedback (face saving). These findings suggest that the parameters explaining silence can be similar is two countries even when they stand away from each other on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions. These authors conclude that spiritual or religious values and inner psychological experiences and emotions play a role in silence (Petkova et al., 2015). Findings of another study that applies Hofstede's model for comparison between South Korea and the USA, showed that collectivist societies (such as South Korean) tend to say more, albeit more politely, than in individualistic societies (such as the US) that are more vocal (Choi et al., 2016); hence, the observance of silence could be different between the two types of societies/contexts. A review of fifteen studies on silence conducted in Thailand concluded that silence in Asia is generally viewed differently (mainly as respectful) as opposed to the way it is viewed in the Western world (Komolsevin et al., 2010). This perspective has been supported by a later study, that applied the Collectivism vs Individualism dimension of Hofstede's model in the context of Japan, which reported that silence may be a form of communication is some societies like Japan unlike in Western countries (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015).

These findings suggest that Hofstede's model might not be sufficient for explaining silence in a particular context and several researchers have criticised Hofstede's cultural model for a number of limitations (Eringa et al., 2015). For example, the binary construction of cultural dimensions in Hofstede's model that represents a developed and modern view characterising the Western countries and an undeveloped, traditional and backward view that represents the rest of the world (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007).

Hofstede's model has also been challenged for being static and not dynamic and providing a simplistic view of cultural variations (Signorini et al., 2009; Eringa et al., 2015). The validity of Hofstede's model has been criticised because it presents the post-colonial scientific view of the West (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007). Thus, Orr and Hauser (2008) have called for a revisiting of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the context of cross-cultural attitudes in the present times.

Hofstede's findings are generally informative about how Saudi Arabian national culture is as a whole. However, Hofstede's model is unsuitable for the purposes of this study since it is merely descriptive. It has no explanation for how cultures are formed, how they change, or of individual differences, or how the understanding of culture can help to understand the causes of silence and how it may be overcome. GGCT can do all of these things as will be shown in Part B.

3.2.2. Culture and Communication Style

The most prominent theory that categorises national culture according to communication style is Edward Hall's high context/ low context theory of culture ss expounded in his book 'Beyond Culture' (1989) which presents a scenario where the nature of the message can be instrumental in the way the message is understood. The argument is that messages cannot carry their own meanings independent of cultural context (Nishimura et al., 2008; Ukpabi et al., 2017). The underlying assumption of this theory is that people drawn from different cultures tend to communicate differently and confusion in communication arises from cultural differences. The nature of information and how it is disseminated has been found to vary significantly with culture, because, as Zhang *et al.* (2011) argue, only if the information that individuals hold is sufficient can it guarantee a sense of *belonging* and not just a means of mutual understanding.

A feature of context theory is that social environments that produce culture are made up of three principle components:

- social structures (social class, technology and demography)
- social processes (perception and attitudes)
- common patterns and social realities required for functioning society (Earle and Earle, 1999).

In high context societies, groups have established close connections over a long duration, and this makes them to be able to understand each other without the need for explicit elaboration (Kitiyama and Ishii, 2002). On the other hand, in low context cultures, group members lack the familiarity provided by close connections and all the relevant information has to be included in the message (Hall and Hall, 1990).

Hall's theory assumes that, first, there is stored information, implicit and known to all and, second, information that is exchanged (Nguyen et al., 2007). In high context cultures both types exist, while in low context cultures, stored information is minimal or altogether absent (Nishimura et al., 2008). A low context culture requires less information and treats what is written or said as final, while in a high context culture, what is written or said may have other meanings and must be understood implicitly. In low context cultures, phrases like 'say it in plain English, be clear, tell it as it is', will often be heard, while in high context cultures, such demands may not surface (Singh et al., 2005). In the explanation of this theory, cultural underpinnings (religion, language and myths) must also play a role. In high context societies, verbal information is treated with suspicion and individuals place a lot of confidence in the unspoken (Richardson and Smith, 2007; Ukpabi et al., 2017).

These styles of communication have consequences for several aspects of how societies work. According to Kim et al. (1998), high context cultures tend to be sociable compared with those of low context. Hornikx and le Pair (2017) found that those acculturated in high context are able to decipher complex messages easily, unlike those acculturated in low context. Low context persons require clarity in what is said. According to Croucher et al. (2009), people from a high context culture are reticent about sensitive issues such

as religious issues and taboos, while people from low context cultures may talk freely about anything, anyhow. There is also a sense in which people of high context cultures may resist any attempt to interfere with their rights very seriously (Nguyen et al., 2007). This means that individuals accustomed to high context cultures hold strong opinions on key issues. This characteristic is observable in Saudi culture, which is high context (Mellahi, 2006). It has been noted that in high context cultures there is polychronic perception of time, where time is seen as fluid, capable of being stretched and where deadlines are an ambition not necessarily to be met (Sorrells, 1998 cited in Rogers and Tan, 2008). On the other hand, the monochronic time perception treats time as sequential, to be saved and spent, more familiar in low context cultures (*Ibid*.).

Within an organisation, context may play a crucial role in determining how and when inferences may be drawn. It has been found that in organisations within high context cultures, information exchange and decisions are not timetabled. However, subcultures may complicate the picture. A few studies focus on subcultures which supply different understandings of contexts as compared with the wider culture within which they occupy.

According to Medin and Schaffer (1978), contexts envisaged within subcultures may diverge substantially from those as pictured by the larger culture. The implications for researchers are clear: within a society subcultures occupy very different mental spaces interpreting seemingly similar information differently. Subcultural studies provide a useful warning to researchers: even if national cultures can be identified statistically through large samples, most individuals belong to heterogeneous subgroups that depart from the national culture. Thus, studies of national culture may be of less value to the organisational researcher.

Context theory assumes that there is a functional need to pass on a message in a way that can be understood (Ukpabi et al., 2017). Thus, the sender should be able to communicate, but the receiver must be able to decipher the message in the way intended by the sender. In a high context culture communication is efficient because the participants can assume

a lot of shared knowledge and assumptions. However, this situation can lead to a rigidity of thinking. On the other hand, in a low context culture little can be assumed, and all the information must be exchanged explicitly. This is less efficient but introduces the possibility of much flexibility. Context theory offers some insight into the nature of silence in Saudi Arabia. The high context nature of Saudi culture means that there is an assumption that there is much that does not need to be said which reduces the possibility of discussing and questioning commonly held beliefs. In a culture like this, silence is properly taken as meaning assent. However, assent is not necessarily what is really meant, especially in the case of women because women fear saying it and choose silence instead because they do not wish their thoughts to be known.

Context theory helps the study of silence by treating individuals as cultural subjects, but it offers no explanation for how individuals choose what to say or for their silence. It lacks the precision needed to distinguish among many types of silence. Moreover, change happens even within the most inflexible of cultures: in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a raft of changes have been initiated, partly in rational response to changes in the international oil market. Reliance on high oil prices had to stop and there was need to open up the economy to diversification. The new Crown prince has also initiated measures – again reasonable - to enlarge social space including the expectations that more women would enter employment.

Context theory as to the *content* of messages, nor about silences, which are two features that this study is concerned with though it treats the strength (and weakness) of intra-group relationships as fixed and treats the strength or weakness of ties as vital to explaining communication, or lack of it. The theory is good for drawing attention to the need to understand what beliefs, myths, religious and other backgrounds there are and how they play a role in ensuring that there is, or there is not, communication. Context theory, therefore, relates more to the question of miscommunication than to silence in an organisation. Thus, though useful for cross-cultural management (Meyer, 2016), context

theory falls short of the requirements of this study for a theory that can deal with change and individual differences in similar ways to Hofstede's theory.

3.2.3. Culture and Values

In response to what Schwartz (2006) described as an absence of consensus with regards to definitions, content and structure of basic values, he built on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory. Schwartz (1992) developed the theory of basic human values to account for differences in national culture. His initial theory, which drew on 40 samples across 20 different countries, identified ten basic personal values which are found in all cultures.

For Schwartz (2006; 2012), values are constituted by six main features. They are related to beliefs; refer to desirable goals; transcend specific actions and situations; produce standards or criteria; in a hierarchy relative to one another and this hierarchy guides action. Values are distinguished, however, by the goals or motivations underpinning them, leading to Schwartz's (1992; 2006; 2012) identification of ten main values. Such values, he maintains, are universal because they are founded upon three universal requirements of human existence: individuals' needs as biological organisms, the conditions of organised social interaction, and the well-being and subsistence needs of groups (Schwartz, 2012). These needs include self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism (Table 3.2).

Type	Definition	Values
Self-direction	Independent thought and action (i.e., choosing, creating, and exploring)	Creativity, freedom, independence, curiosity, and choosing one's own goals
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life	Daring; leading a varied and exciting life
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous self-gratification	Pleasure and enjoying life
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Success, ability, ambition, and influence
Power	Social status and prestige; control or dominance over people and resources	Social power, authority, and wealth
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, relationships, and self	Family security, national security, social order, cleanliness, and reciprocation of favors
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms	Self-discipline, obedience, politeness, and honoring of parents and elders
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide	Accepting one's portion in life, humility, devotion, respect for tradition, and moderation
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	Helpfulness, honesty, forgivingness, loyalty, and sense of responsibility
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and of nature	Broadmindedness, wisdom, social justice, equality, desire for world peace, sense of a world of beauty, unity with nature, and environmental protection

(Kulin and Seymer, 2014)

Table 3.2 Motivational Types of Values

In measuring these basic values, Schwartz reported that there was a:

> *…high level of consensus regarding the relative importance of the ten values across societies. In the vast majority of nations studied, benevolence, universalism, and self-direction values appear at the top of the hierarchy and power, tradition, and stimulation values appear at the bottom. This implies that the aspects of human nature and of social functioning that shape individual value priorities are widely shared across cultures.*

(Schwartz, 2012, p.17)

Whilst Schwartz (2012) identifies ten distinct values, he asserts that these form a continuum of related motivations, leading to a circular structure (Figure 3.2. The closer

values are within the circle, the more similar their underlying motivations, and the more distant, the more incompatible they are.
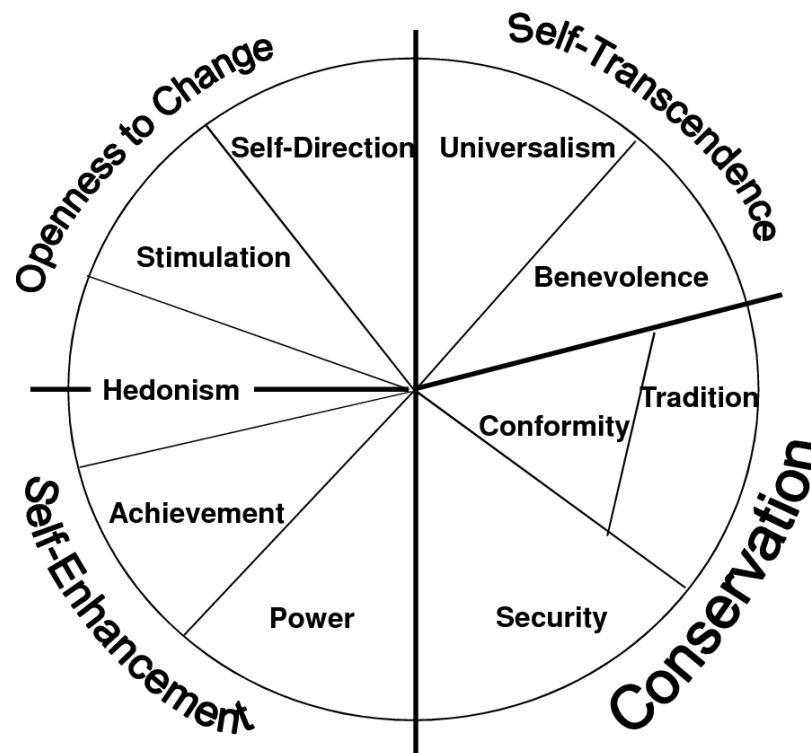
(Schwartz, 2012, p.9)

Figure 3.1. Relations among Ten Motivational Types of Value

The structure of values therefore refers to the ways in which certain values are opposed and in conflict, such as the pursuit of the value of benevolence and the value of power, or are supportive and compatible, such as conformity and security, which both protect order and harmony (Schwartz, 2006). Importantly, Schwartz (2012) points out that whilst the nature and structure of the values can be considered universal, there are differences between individuals and groups in terms of the importance attributed to values; hence there are different value hierarchies in different societies.

Schwartz et al. (2012) develops a refined set of nineteen basic individual values in order to enhance the explanatory potential of the original theory. The refined list includes: Self-direction of Thought and Action; Stimulation; Hedonism; Achievement; Power of Domination and Power over Resources; Personal and Social Safety; Tradition; Conformity with Rules and Interpersonal Conformity; Benevolence, Dependence and Care; Commitment; Nature Universalism and Tolerance Universalism; Face and Humility. These are again presented as a circle of values (Figure 3.3), with the outer circle splitting values into those dedicated to managing anxiety and protecting the self (at the bottom) set against those that concentrate on growth and self-actualization and are relatively anxiety free (at the top).

> *The second circle distinguishes agentic values concerned with outcomes for self (left) versus communal values concerned with outcomes for others or for established institutions (right). The next circle groups the values into four higher-order categories. This grouping captures two bipolar dimensions of motivationally incompatible values. The refined theory gives researchers the option of working with as large or as small a set of values as is appropriate for them. By combining adjacent values on the circle, it is possible to recapture the original 10 values or to form other groupings of values useful for studying specific topics.*

(Schwartz and Butenko, 2014, p.800)

There has been a great deal of empirical support for Schwartz's theory of basic values (see, for instance, Cieciuch et al., 2014; Rosario et al., 2014 and Strasheim and Ungerer, 2017), and for the refined theory of values (see, for example, Torres et al., 2016), but it has not been without criticism. Whilst Pakizeh et al. (2007) applied the circular model in their research and found strong associations between values and memory, for example, they questioned the extent to which the data sufficiently uncovers conflicts and

compatibilities between values. As they suggest, the reliance on value judgements for data may prove problematic as "…their utility is attenuated by the fact that people may consciously adjust these ratings to be compatible with salient motives" (p.460), such as
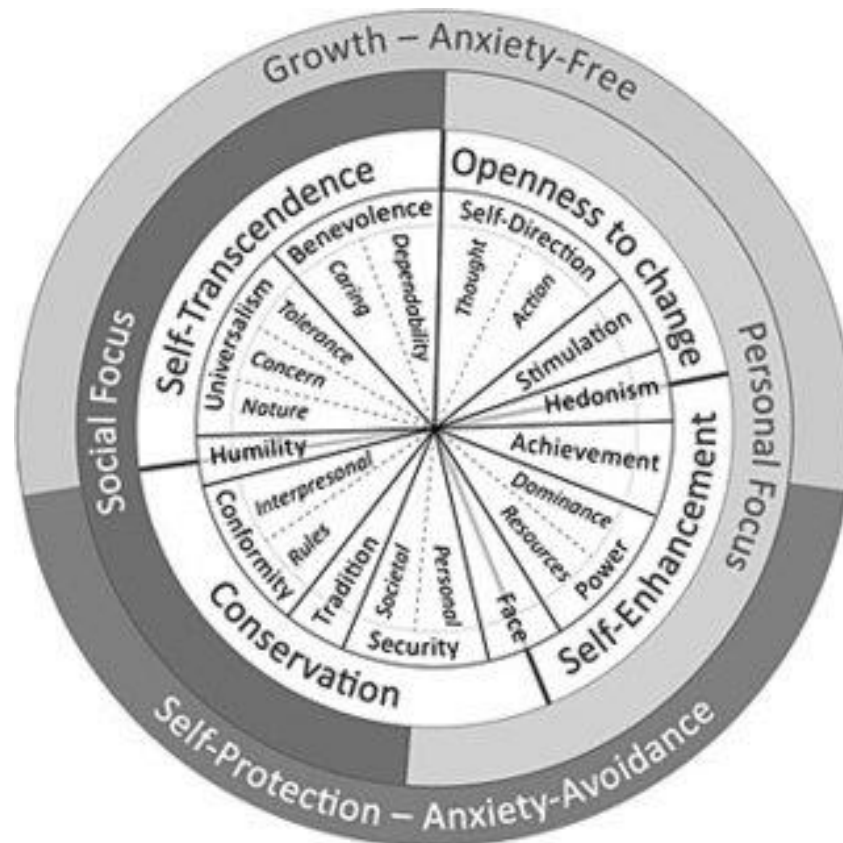
(Schwartz and Butenko, 2014, p. 800)

Figure 3.2. Motivational Circle of Values

providing socially desirable responses, or an attempt to appear consistent to the researcher and the self. Furthermore, some have pointed to the absence of particular values and others suggesting that "value structures may change over time as social conditions are transformed, or they may change even rapidly in response to major technological, economic, political events" (Rosario et al., 2014, p.24).

In a study of the values of generation Y professionals in Saudi Arabia Lim et al. (2011) found that security, tradition, conformity, universalism, and benevolence were the most important life values. This shows Saudi Arabia to have values in the top left of Schwartz's Circle of Values (Figure 3.2).

3.2.4. Conclusion to Part A

Taking note of the weaknesses in the Hofstede's model, researchers like Nishimura et al (2008) applied three principles from three different theories/models, for instance, high/low context culture (Hall, 1976; 1983), individualism/collectivism dimension (Hofstede, 2008) and Western vs. Eastern values and cultural categories of communication (Lewis, 2005) for studying silence and other communication styles in Finland, India and Japan and concluded that a combination of all three principles provides better understanding of communication styles. However, the researcher argues that combining three different theories to explain silence in diverse contexts without a convincing argument (Nishimura et al., 2008) suggests that these theories separately are not sufficient to explain silence. A cultural theory that could account for leaders' reasoning as easily as our respondents' reasoning would be desirable. Indeed, the origins and intelligibility of reasoning is relevant to this study, and more especially the cultural origins of reasonable silences. The researcher therefore suggests that GGCT is an alternative theory that could provide a more suitable theoretical framework in explaining silence.

3.3.   Part B. Grid-Group Cultural Theory

GGCT is a framework that examines individual and institutions in context. As Chai et al. (2009, p. 195) suggest, it "…proposes that an individual's behaviour, perception, attitudes, beliefs, and values are shaped, regulated, and controlled by constraints that can be categorized into two domains: group commitment and grid control". The 'grid' element signifies the extent to which an individual's (or a group's) life is constrained by rules and classifications (Thompson et al., 1990). 'Group' signifies the extent to which

an individual (or group) is affiliated to a larger social unit, such as family, tribe, organisation, political party, nation or religion (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982; Maesschalck, 2004; Loyens, 2013a). The dimensions, Grid and Group are orthogonal and can be arranged at right-angles to each other to form a quadrant (two-by-two matrix). One thought style can be inferred for each of the four quadrants (Figure 3.1).

As Wildavsky (1987) explains, GGCT provides answers to two questions: 'Who am I?' and 'What shall I do?' Each thought-style provides a specific answer to both of these questions. As Verweij et al. (2014, p. 3) state:

> *Hierarchy combines lots of regulation with a high degree of collectivity; individualism is low on both regulation and collectivity; fatalism is characterized by lots of regulation and little collectivity; and egalitarianism scores high on collectivity but low on regulation.*
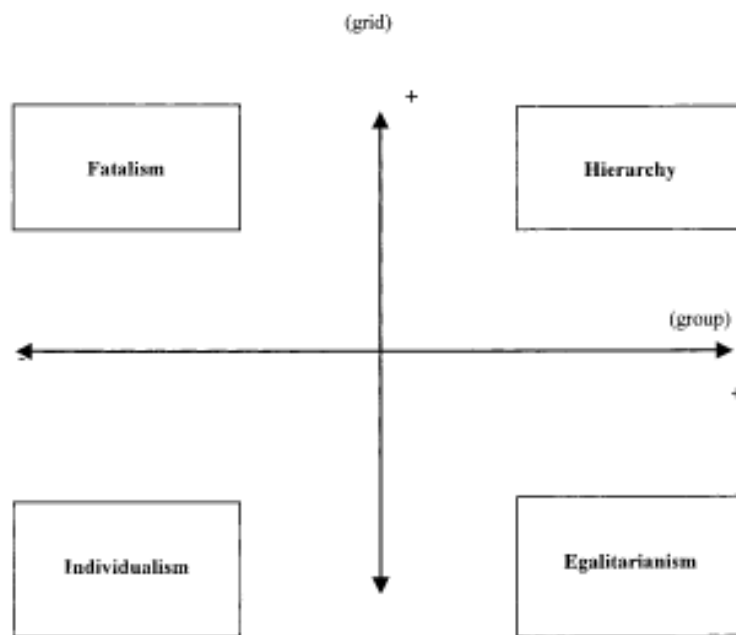
(Rippl, 2002, p.149)

Figure 3.3. Grid-Group Dimensions

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GGCT is a typology of thought styles (also known as 'cultural biases', 'voices' and 'solidarities') developed initially by the anthropologist, Mary Douglas (1970), based on her observations of groups of primitive people and on sociological theory; mainly that of Emile Durkheim. It was from Durkheim that social regulation (Grid) and social solidarity (Group) were adopted. Douglas made a number of modifications in order to make GGCT applicable to all kinds of organisations and societies. She substituted Bernstein's terms, *Grid* and *Group*, in place of Durkheim's *Integration* and *Regulation* (Chai et al., 2009). According to Meader et al. (2006), cultural theorists had tended to focus on subjects' world views (cosmologies) and empirical studies have been carried out in this respect (Dake, 1991). For Douglas (1978), cultural biases (i.e. thought styles) represent distinct preferences for a particular institutional form and subsequent dedication or loyalty to the values and beliefs attaching to it.

In GGCT, the four categories of thought, feelings, preferred actions and preferred institutional forms demonstrate a dynamic relationship of antagonism, negotiation and co-operation with each other (Ney and Verweij, 2015). These are named *fatalistic*, *hierarchical*, *individualistic* and *egalitarian*. Danielson (2008) characterises these in this way: the fatalistic thought style is concerned primarily with survival, and is animated by a sense of unpredictability and lack of control; the individualistic thought style focuses on freedom, competition and self-interest in pursuit of reward; hierarchy values order, ranking and specified responsibilities for every individual to ensure their beneficial contribution to the good of the whole and, finally, egalitarianism promotes united action among equals and exclusion of outsiders.

All four thought styles are always available culturally, even when any actor seeks to exclude, eliminate or suppress one or more of them. This model works for any size of group from a whole nation or religion down to a household (Thompson, 2008), and since individuals are also subject to social solidarity and social regulation *by varying degrees*, GGCT also accounts for the feelings, thoughts and preferred institutions and actions of

individuals (Douglas, 1970). The four thought styles enable precise characterisation of an individual's preferences and of four corresponding political cultures (Grendstad, 2000).

Thompson and Wildavsky (1986) consider that GGCT both specifies and explains preferences. Each thought style emerges from social interaction with each of the other thought styles. People develop their own preferences out of antagonism for other preferences or ways of life. Our values, preferences, feelings, actions and beliefs are formed antagonistically with other thought styles. However, these can be confirmed, adjusted or - in extreme cases – abandoned in the light of equally specific anomalies to which each thought style is vulnerable and incapable of solving. Furthermore, as they suggest:

> *Cultural theory is based on the axiom that what matters most to people is their relationships with other people and other people's relationships with them. It follows that the major choice made by people (or, if they are subject to coercion, made for them) is the form of social organization - shared values legitimating social practices - they adopt. An organizational act is rational, therefore, if it supports one's organizational culture - one's way of life. In this way, values and facts are inextricably woven together and continually tested in social transaction.*
> (Thompson and Wildavsky, 1986: 276).

Choices are not made by pre-social 'utility-maximising' individuals, but are instead, inherently social. Thinking is made possible by sociality. It is not about personality. As Douglas (1994: 37) explained an "act of choice is also active in their [the individuals'] constitution-making interests. A choice is an act of allegiance and a protest against the undesired model of society".

As an example, to show the wide range of applications of GGCT, there is Jeliazkova's (2014) study of the teaching of citizenship which applies the four thought styles:

- the low grid, low group individualist focuses on educating individuals to witness their progress (makers of their own fortunes)
- the low grid, high group egalitarian focuses on creating a sense of equity (Figure 3.2)

While both types of citizenship teachers tend to impart knowledge, the individualistic is focused on knowledge itself, whilst the egalitarian focuses on the creation of shared values. Within individualistic and fatalist (high grid, low group) thought styles neutrality is advocated, while in the hierarchical (high grid, high group) and egalitarian thought styles, the focus is on instilling discipline and values.
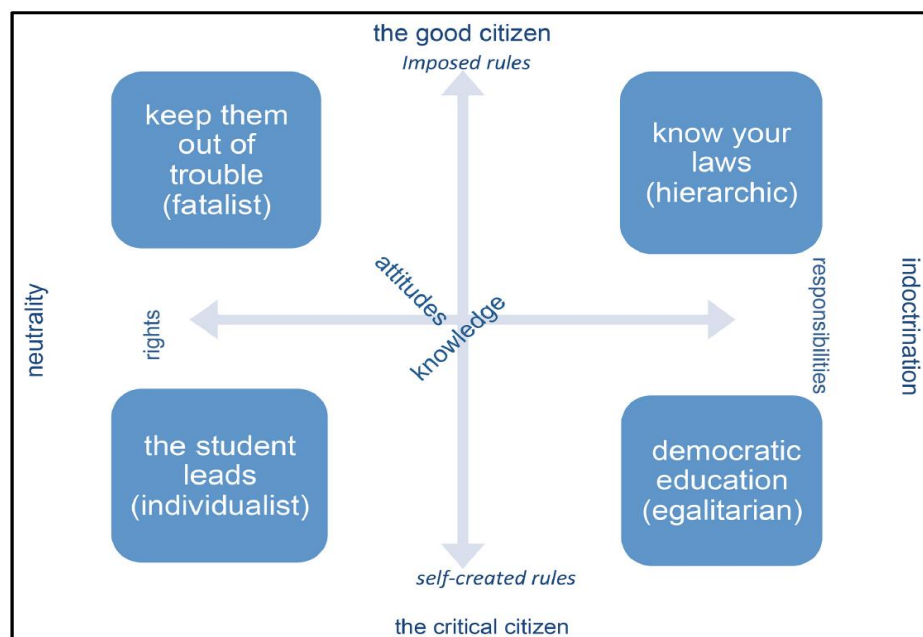
(Jeliazkova, 2014, p.65)

Figure 3.4. Grid-Group Model of Citizenship

Using the GGCT model, Evans (2007) suggests that the degree to which *solidarity* is valued is an indicator of the level of inclusivity in an organisation. If *procedures* are prioritised, a high value is probably placed on regulation and rigidity. Where

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experimentation is encouraged, this indicates a tendency to allow creativity and individual freedom within an organisation (Evans, 2007). Within an organisation, then:

- a hierarchical cultural bias exists where procedures and solidarity are prioritised
- an egalitarian cultural bias animates experimentation and solidarity
- an individualistic cultural bias favours experimentation and a sense of liability
- a fatalistic cultural bias is sensitive to liabilities and procedures are accepted as beyond alteration

One of the clear consequences of GGCT is that when there is a social problem, four dispositions can be called upon to provide four types of solution (Wildavsky and Dake, 1990). These cultural dispositions are derived intimately from the cultural dimensions of the society which everyone inhabits (Thomson et al., 1990), and which form our sensitivities to risk. These cultural dispositions embody the values, the attitudes and worldviews (cosmologies) that each individual holds (Stern et al., 1995). Variations in social solidarity and social regulation enable the 'cultural biases' around each of which there is a convergence of feeling, reasoning, perceiving and justifying what needs to be done.

It is crucial to note that organisational culture(s), household culture(s), national culture(s), the culture(s) of a social circle are integral, indivisible and inseparable from how individuals also evaluate risks and react to them (Chai et al., 2009). However as thought-styles are responsive to context – especially when insuperable problems are encountered - individuals can inhabit different thought styles in different areas of their lives, switching thought styles when moving between these (Thompson, 2008).

The theory proposes two main claims about the way that individuals and their relationships are organised, the first concerned with the perception of risk and the second to do with disposition towards affiliation. Fatalistic reasoning is especially risk averse and is inclined to suspicion of others and therefore isolation (Kahan, 2012). According to Douglas and Wildavsky (1982), perceptions of environmental risk vary distinctly

between thought styles (cited Rippl, 2002). The other claim is that members of a group tend to show an affinity with each other amounting to a way of life (Kahan, 2012), also known as the four solidarities. As well as forming our ways of life in *opposition* to other ways of life, the solidarity with which people feel that some connection instils reassurance (Tansey and O'Riordan, 1999). For Wildavsky and Dake (1990), people determine what they fear, not according to individual cognition, but *dynamically* according to opposing and shared world views (cited in Rippl, 2002). The features that constitute a disposition are never static (Verweij et al., 2011), and that is why an individual may be in 'more than one mind' exhibiting different selves at different times or in different contexts and roles (Thompson et al., 1990). These variations would be very difficult for explanations based on individual personality and 'animal spirits' (Keynes, 1936/2018)'dividual'.

However, as well as competing, each way of thinking demonstrates inter-dependence. For example, (individualist) market competition thrives if market actors are assured that any contracts they enter into can be enforced in (hierarchical) courts. That is, heterogeneity is functional (Thompson et al., 1990; Dake, 1991), enabling 'clumsy' or 'polyrational' solutions to intractable 'messy' problems affecting many persons which evolve into fresh problems as each solution to them is applied.

3.3.1. GGCT Thought Styles Reviewed

Each of the GGCT thought styles produces a view of the world that is coherent and complete in itself. For example, each has its own view of risk which is consistent with its view of nature. Each thought style also has its own view of each of the other thought styles, opposition to which enhances the clarity of our preferred way of thinking.

Under *individualism*, (low group and low grid) it makes exquisite sense to promote free exchange, competition, allocate winnings to winners and treat incompetence as the principle risk, weeded out by competition (Ripberger et al., 2015). This thought style is not much concerned with relationships, as there is a disregard for rules, and so loose networks are forged, and a preference for self-sufficiency is integral to this way of

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thinking. ('Stand on your own two feet'.) The strategies employed are transactional, where the aim is to gain at the expense of others (Vaughan, 2002; Verweij and Thompson, 2006). Value is placed on gains beneficial to the individual and not to anyone else. Individualism only leads to group membership out of pure self-interest (Schwartz, 1991). This culture has also been called 'market culture' and a free market model of existence is advocated; often this is accompanied by a materialistic lifestyle (Verweij and Thompson, 2006). The individualistic thought style views risks as *opportunities* and rules and regulations are viewed as obstructive. Thompson et al. (1990) note that though this thought style creates unwillingness to submit to anyone's control, the individual may seek nevertheless to exert control over others. Indeed, the more subordinates an individualist has reporting to them, the more powerful they appear as competitive players.

Note that large organisations can be highly competitive towards other large organisations. Yet individualism is difficult to scale outside of the market place, for large organisations are difficult to sustain without policies, processes and procedures, opening the door to hierarchy. This is an example of a thought style 'anomaly' mentioned above.

Fatalism, low group but high grid, shows high risk aversion and explains events as being shaped by good or bad luck and beyond anyone's control. This thought style perceives control as arising elsewhere, immune to alteration. A logical inference follows that the present situation is permanent (unless altered by improbable chance). Fatalism does not expect change for the better (Caulkins, 1999). There is no enthusiasm for group affiliation, and so solidarities based on this thought style have very weak bonds indeed. Suspicion prevails making it hard to establish and maintain create trusting bonds even with other fatalist thinkers who think the same way (Thompson et al., 1990). Treachery looms in the mind. Little action taken by this weak solidarity, however when things threaten the individual they will react quickly in self-defence. Collective bargaining is impossible (Vaughan, 2002). Chance features large in this worldview, quite logically, planning makes no meaningful sense. Actions are taken from desperation (Schwartz, 1991). 'Everybody for themselves.' For this thought style, the only aspiration is survival.

Fatalism can be a response to repressive leadership that governs brutally, and where the balance of power is severely skewed to the point that subordinates do not have any resources of their own to rely on. Indeed, a paradoxical condition of dependence on a strong leader may develop. Thompson et al. (1990) also suggest that this thought style may arise when individuals are excluded. None of this thinking is illogical. However fearful paralysis may worsen an already intimidating set of circumstances, which is of course an anomaly specific to this uninventive way of thinking. At best 'if it isn't broken, don't fix it'. 'If you are in a hole, stop digging.'

Hierarchy, high group and high grid, tends to emphasise the necessity for rule and for their impartial enforcement 'without fear or favour'. Bureaucratic systems satisfy this principle especially well: clear reporting lines, clear job descriptions; everybody 'knowing exactly where they stand' and 'doing what is expected of them'. For the hierarchical thought style, everyone has their prescribed position (O'Riordan and Jordan, 1999) and must work within the rules that apply impersonally to all members of the group (Tansey and Rayner 2008). For this thought style, those who are at the top of the hierarchy deserve to enjoy high status and to control all that is taking place within the group, but they too must follow the rules.

The membership of the group is highly organised but recognises the importance of order and authority to define all aspects of interactions (Thompson et al., 1990). If order or authority are challenged, there are clear mechanisms for dealing with the situation, making the group very stable and focussed on its objectives. Since there are clear rules and order, there is no need to engage in endless deliberations to solve problems and challenges; those at the top will make the final decisions that will be binding on all the members of the group, who must be obedient to the rules and regulations.

Risks are manageable and indeed managed so deviance is a preoccupation. One anomaly arising from this way of thinking is the creation of new deviants: it is quite easy for well-intentioned actors to find themselves non-compliant as the rule book is extended, catching

fresh exceptions. Hierarchy creates the phenomenon that it fears most, sustaining fresh rounds of rule-development and impartial enforcement.

Egalitarianism, high group and low grid, shows concern for all members of the group equally and to create boundaries against outsiders (Thompson et al., 1990). Problems are blamed on 'the system' which needs comprehensive change. In a group based on this thought style, members engage with each other on an equal basis in order to solve problems (Vaughan, 2002). Since such groups have clear membership and defined boundaries, there is a tendency to make sharp distinctions between themselves and members of other groups; 'us and them' (Rayner, 1992; Smullen, 2007). The level of solidarity in the group is crucial and highly valued and members feel that the only way they can keep their group intact is by making joint decisions, so members tend to work as a community in a team. Leadership here tends to be charismatic in character, the charismatic leader epitomising the group without standing above it. Leader and followers are as one. However, charisma is rare and difficult to replace. Egalitarian thinking is highly vulnerable to succession disputes followed by schism (sometimes violent) and collapse, dissolving into disappointment and bitter recrimination more consistent with fatalism.

Because egalitarian thinking is focussed on combatting existential threat it can be highly effective only if it is equal to the scale of the task. It may take more time to attain the desired transformation than this solidarity can manage to survive intact. It may end in any of the fates that this way of thinking abhors bureaucratisation, hierarchy, competition, self-preservation.

These four thought styles tend to influence the way an individual behaves. Although the thought styles compete, they are also dependent on each other, and each has its own weaknesses or limitations (Wouters and Maesschalck, 2014). To sum up the interdependence of these thought styles, Schwartz (1991, p.765) noted:

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...each way of life...undermines itself. Individualism would mean chaos without hierarchical authority to enforce contracts and repel enemies. To get work done and settle disputes, the egalitarian order needs hierarchy, too. Hierarchies, in turn, would be stagnant without the creative energy of individualism, incohesive without the binding force of equality, unstable without the passivity and acquiescence of fatalism.

Thompson et al. (1990) see thought styles as ways of life that exist in the context of society at large, all in alliance with each other (and in conflict). All such relationships are temporary even fragile; constantly shifting, and constantly generating fresh rounds of change as well as fresh rounds of anomaly. The world is not perfectable, partly because there are cultural biases in every evaluation criterion. What counts as success to one way of thinking represents a backward step to another. There are no right or wrong solutions though there are better and worse ones and 'clumsy solutions' offer at least something which each participating thought style values.

The authors points out that on the right-hand side of the GGCT quadrant - high group - hierarchical or egalitarian *groups* developed, but on the left-hand side of the quadrant - low group - fatalists and individualists manage, at best, to develop *networks*, each individual occupying a 'node' in a network that is unique to them. One network may intersect with another co-incidentally rather than deliberately.

3.3.2. Michael Thompson's Development of GGCT

Originally, GGCT was developed by Douglas (2007) and later extended by Thompson, Ellis and Wildavsky in *Cultural Theory* (1990). In the latter, the authors attempt to develop GGCT into a theory of "sociocultural viability" which explains the ways of life chosen by different groups in society. For example, they suggest that people's preferences can arise from their interactions with each other. This seems a reasonable explanation; if someone adopts a position of being strongly in favour of a course of action, someone else

who has reservations about it may dwell on those reservations until they find themselves in opposition to it. Here, and in some other GGCT writings, the thought styles are referred to as *solidarities,* meaning that they form the basis of affinity and group identity. In later writings, Thompson (2008) acknowledges that an individual might exhibit any of the four thought styles in response to different circumstances. Indeed, if they can manage to occupy what he calls the 'hermit position' at the centre of the GGCT diagram, they can appreciate the strengths (and limits) of each way of thinking from a dispassionate position that generates no special allegiances.

Thompson et al.'s *Cultural Theory* (1990) develops three useful concepts especially - *ways of life, social relations* and *cultural biases* - which give rise to worldviews and social structure. These exist alongside each other and everyone will be influenced by all these ways of life in one way or another. The way of life that an individual espouses can shape their understanding and thinking over a long period of time, making it hard to escape from it, especially if they see only what they expect to see:

- Hierarchy sees deviance everywhere
- Fatalism sees risk, treachery and constraint in all directions
- Egalitarian sees existential threats to mother nature and all who rely on her for their existence, in every ecology (Thompson et al., 1990)
- Individualism sees incompetence and lack of imagination everywhere

These ways of life are available, created and weak; however, when one has chosen a certain way of life, there is always the tendency to inhabit it for a long duration, especially if the thought style that governs it has inherent stability. Individuals and group members are bound by being part of the group but are also constrained by the rules of the group. Indeed, even low grid regulation is still regulation, though informal and unwritten.

Although Thompson and others describe thought styles as "ways of life" (Thompson et al., 1990), and describe the characteristics of people who might follow that way of life, these are, in fact, ideal types and should not be mistaken for personality traits nor even

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ideologies. For example, here exist right wing, exclusive, nationalist, racist enclaves as well as left wing anti-racist, internationalist, but nevertheless equally exclusive enclaves, exclusive of racists just as racists are energetically exclusive of anti-racists. These authors suggest that those adopting the egalitarian thought style may control their envy by adopting a humble lifestyle aspiring to be 'no better than anybody else' within their enclave.

Social relations are the way interpersonal relationships are organized. Thompson et al. (1990) indicate that interactions between people are the beginning of interpersonal associations and as such, are crucial for the way people relate with each other. There are, however, different types of interaction in different domains. As suggested above, in a place of work, social interaction might be governed by the way that authority is exercised which may be more (or less) strict than at home.

Cultural biases are those beliefs shared by a group, which include the values that are dearly held, and which govern the way things are done, and how they make sense of others. These views tend to be continuously negotiated over time, so people look for information from different sources which they assemble into a point-of-view. Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) argue that actors who have arrived at a given bias are likely to remain within their biases until an anomalous situation or an accumulation of contrary evidence forces them to move.

GGCT is a remarkably simple, two-axis model that manages to be also unusually comprehensive. It accounts for

- actors' social energy
- how thinking is enabled
- why actors think what they think
- why actors' reasoning changes

The actor referred to here can be at any scale (Thompson et al., 1990) from an individual sat on a park bench to an organisation of the size of NASA or a world religion. At any

instant an individual may be capable of more than one thought style while a massive actor such as an international relief agency might be capable of only one, taking a long time to make adjustments in the light of anomalies, unwanted and undesirable outcomes. The long-standing inability of the Catholic Church to address sexual abuse of children by its priests is one notorious example.

Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) note that when actors face the same situations, they often evaluate it and react in very different ways. The authors explore how risks are dealt with by first noting that although risks are ever present, the question that has mostly been asked is 'what would you like the risks to be?' instead of asking 'what are the risks?' (p.146). Their view is that risk(s) are everywhere and that the difference has always been about how they are perceived and assessed. Actors always face challenges, but the choice of how to deal with these challenges can only be answered within the thinking of the thought style(s) of the actor. Thompson et al. (1990) go further than describing the dimensions and thought styles of the GGCT quadrant model.

They introduce four further concepts that influence the way that the theory is applied: the *conditions of compatibility*, the *theorem of impossibility*, the *requisite variety law* and *surprise* (which has already been touched on). The authors note that if people with similar biases are put together, they are able to understand each other easily (Carlisle and Smith, 2005). This precept informs the 'condition of compatibility', where group members come together because they have common issues.

The 'theory of impossibility' states that there are only four prototypical ways of life and no more. Since all human groups can be placed somewhere on the grid dimension and also on the group dimension, it follows that the four thought styles must cover all the possibilities when the group is being analysed using those dimensions. The same can be said if other dimensions are used such as the two dimensions of the Competing Values Framework which also produces a quadrant of cultural styles (Cameron and Quinn, 2011).

The 'requisite variety' law states that all four of the thought styles must always be present. One or more may be more dominant than others but these thought styles define themselves in opposition to each other and, therefore, they need each other to function (Thompson, 2008). An obvious example of this would be the individualist who becomes an entrepreneur. A group of people who only had this thought style would not be able to devise and enforce laws of contract which are essential to the growth and running of their ventures, so they need hierarchists to do this. Since the rules that they also have within their organisations will not always benefit everyone equally there needs to be fatalism present. Additionally, since the entrepreneur would prefer there to be a degree of organisational citizenship behaviour among their employees to promote the smooth internal working of the organisation, some egalitarian thinking is also required. If, for some reason, any of these are supressed, there will be negative consequences. If hierarchy is supressed, there will be chaos. If fatalism is suppressed, employees will leave for other employment. If egalitarianism is suppressed, the employees will probably come together anyway, but to resist their employer.

Thompson et al.'s (1990) 'theory of surprise' posits that actors remain comfortable with their normal events and activities; they explain away unusual sporadic events, and it is only when there is a more pronounced unexpected event that thinking will alter. (The complacency which preceded the global financial crisis of 2007 would be an example.) In this view, Thompson et al. (1990) deal with an issue that Mary Douglas had highlighted, which is an extension of Durkheim's view that situations that are unexpected tend to lead to excessive use of power (Swedlow, 2002). Thompson et al. (1990) have indicated that, when the unexpected occurs, people tend to view it as a time for change but respond on the basis of their long-held world view. They indicate that the thought styles within the GGCT quadrant are useful for analysing the way individuals relate to each other and how a conceptual examination of the relationship can be used to explain how power and associations are formed. The work by Thompson et al. (1990) represents an analysis of key issues that impact on the way actors associate, providing evidence of problems of association, while suggesting that there is always a quest for rectification.

Thompson et al. (1990) assert that even though there are four prototypical ways of life, these do not have to have equal representation in any social sphere or any actor's life (Prendergast, 1998). When the different perspectives are represented in a group, it follows that they self-regulate (Thompson et al., 1990). In situations where there are groups of actors joined together either by grid or by group, the result is that order is created. As Thompson et al. (1990) suggest, when actors are bound by a particular perspective on life, they may not agree on all things; they may have to have shared dimensions that will then produce policies that will govern how they relate with each other. Considering the fact that people tend to maintain their biases for a long duration, when an individual moves from one to another pressure may mount to move back or on to the next (Thompson et al., 1990; Dietz, 1998). This highlights how disloyalty arises from within cultural biases (Steg and Sievers, 2000), but that disloyalty is policed by with the effect of the defector returning to the fold or being ejected forcibly.

What does each thought style see and seek? The quadrant given by Price et al. (2014), derived from Schwartz and Thompson (1990), identifies four key objects, which distinguish one thought style from another. These objects of perception are *physical nature, human nature, policy solutions and ways of life*. Perceptions of nature are a useful diagnostic when looking for thought styles.

3.3.2.1. Perceptions of physical nature

Thompson (1984) proposed that each thought style offers a different view of nature, which in turn influences thought styles' attitudes towards risk and favoured use of resources (Figure 3.3).

Four Rationalities

Prescribed
(externally imposed restrictions on choice)

Grid
+

Nature capricious

THE FATALIST

It doesn't matter who you vote for.

Nature perverse/tolerant

THE HIERARCHIST

A place for everything.

Individualized ——————————————— **Collectivized**

Group
–   +

Nature benign

THE INDIVIDUALIST

The bottom line.

Nature ephemeral

THE EGALITARIAN

Tread lightly on the earth.

–

Prescribing
(no externally imposed restrictions on choice)

Source: Schwarz, M. and M. Thompson, 1990, Divided We Stand:
Redefining Politics, Technology and Social Choice, p. 7.

(Schwarz and Thompson, 1990, p.7).

Figure 3.5. Rationalities

This model shows the different rationalities associated with each type of thought style. The fatalist, for instance, perceives nature as capricious; they believe that attempts at change will fail and that intervention is futile. The hierarchist, in contrast, views nature as stable until pushed beyond limits; everything is in order, and everything has a place. The individualist perceives nature as a resource, not harmful, and able to recover. Finally, for the egalitarian, nature is fragile and to be treated carefully. Accordingly, they cannot agree.

Idea of nature:
LOTTERY-CONTROLLED
CORNUCOPIA

Myths of Nature:
NATURE CAPRICIOUS

Idea of nature:
ISOMORPHIC

Myths of Nature:
NATURE PERVERSE /
TOLERANT

Idea of Nature:
FREELY AVAILABLE
CORNUCOPIA

Myth of Nature:
NATURE BENIGN

Idea of nature:
LOTTERY-CONTROLLED
CORNUCOPIA

Myths of Nature:
NATURE RED IN TOOTH
AND CLAW

Idea of nature:
ACCOUNTABLE

Myths of Nature:
NATURE EPHEMERAL

(Buck, 1989: 106, adapted from Thompson, 1984: 22).

Figure 3.6. Myths of Nature

According to Figure 3.4, hierarchy perceives nature as possibly beneficial or detrimental to human interest, so it requires a structured response to take advantage of its beneficial aspects and protect against its detrimental aspects. Egalitarianism perceives nature as being fragile and offering only limited resources, therefore it must be conserved. Individualism perceives nature as offering resources and opportunities which are there to be taken advantage of, so nature must be exploited before the resources run out. Finally, fatalism perceives nature as unpredictable. In the centre of Figure 3.4 is a fifth thought style, *autonomy*, which was a later addition to Douglas's original quadrant (alluded to above), an understanding of nature as benign, providing necessary resources. For Steg and Sievers (2000) each view is held widely. However, actors live in contexts and actors use myths of nature to clarify risks and take action.

3.3.2.2.　　　How they view each other

Thompson et al. (1990) builds on Schwartz and Bilsky's (1990) work on different thought styles and their perceptions of each other. As hinted at above, Schwartz suggests that thought styles undermine themselves through suppression of the others, whilst at the same time needing the other thought styles to accomplish their objectives. As Thompson et al. (1990) explains, for instance, individualism requires hierarchy in order to avoid market disorder, and as Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) argue, hierarchy can only operate through the creativity that emerges from individualism.

High "Group"

Egalitarian

"See individualists as selfish and irresponsible and hierarchists as out of touch and overbearing."

Hierarchical

"See the other paradigms as naïve and unbalanced, but may accept each has its place as long as the hierarchy allots and regulates those places."

Low "Grid"　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　High "Grid"

Individualist

"While individualists recognise the need for some hierarchy (more in theory than practice), they see the other paradigms as self-serving; hierarchists and egalitarians are hiding their own interests behind their paternalism and collectivism, while fatalists are simply excusing their laziness or lack of talent."

Fatalist

"View the other paradigms with indifference or scepticism, although they will tolerate them for the sake of a quiet life, or to help justify their own inaction."

Low "Group"

Note that the orientation of the axis has been switched but that their labels remain the same.

(Taylor, 2012, p.1).

Figure 3.7. How GGCT Thought Styles View Each Other

It has been argued that organisations should allow, encourage and even combine all four types, to avoid difficulties which may arise from the dominance of a particular thought style. As Loyens and Maesschalck (2014: 7) explain "…too much emphasis on hierarchy could lead to rule-fetishism, too much egalitarianism to schism, too much individualism to anarchy and too much fatalism to desperation". Whilst different thought styles may try to utilise control against each other, as Wildavsky (1987) argues, this diversity of thought and action is necessary, as the existence of those who are different enables each actor to identify themselves through difference. Thus, cultural conflict is necessary for cultural identity.

3.3.2.3. Autonomous thought style

It was Thompson who added a fifth thought style to the original four, *autonomy* (Thompson et al., 1990). Thompson noted that when actors withdraw from engagement they escape to a life that is quite unlike the fatalist defensive bunker.
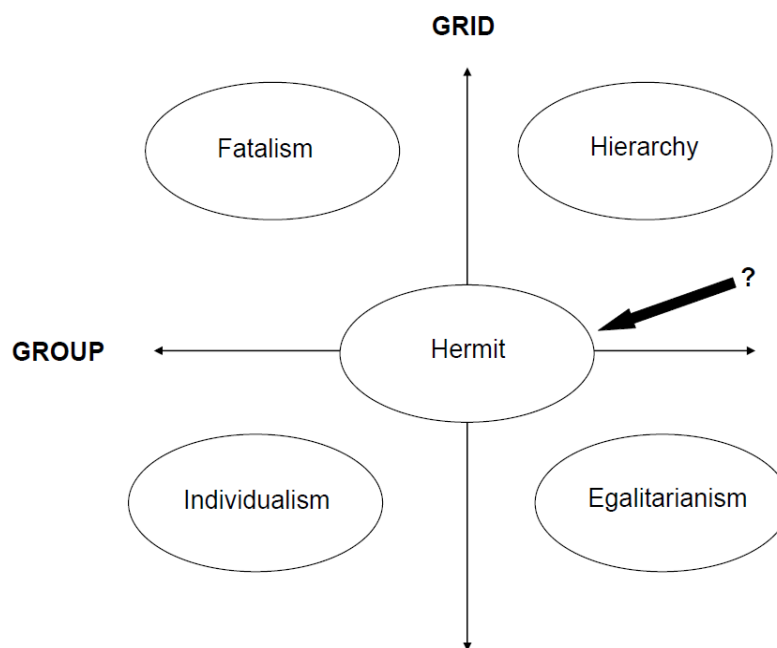
(Kahan, 2012, p.12)

Figure 3.8. A Fifth Thought Style?

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According to Thompson et al. (1990), a state of social detachment is available while nevertheless having something to contribute, for a hermit can see the value in all forms of reasoning because s/he lives a life apart (Thompson et al., 1990; Hoekstra, 1998b). Autonomy coupled with neutrality can be exercised where resources and skills are abundant (Thompson et al., 1990; Mamadouh, 1999) and withdrawal is feasible: a form of aloofness (Caulkins and Peters, 2002). It could be argued that, in reality, the hermit thought style does not exist since it would require a complete withdrawal from society which contradicts the premise that thought is only possible through sociality. Indeed, hermit thinking does not appear in Thompsons's later work (2008).

3.3.2.4.   Thompson's View on changes to cultural biases

Although each thought style offers a totalising view of nature, risk, action and so on, actors shift because none can attain definitive completeness in practice (Rayner, 1992). Before GGCT, the neo-Durkheimian literature on culture tended to offer just two models, hierarchy and individualism, referred to by others as 'Markets and Hierarchies', so any movement from one to the other was unidirectional (Thompson et al., 1990). GGCT, describes four destinations towards which actors can move. Thompson et al. (1990) indicated that, with the exception of fatalism, movement to other forms of bias is voluntary. This is because fatalists tend to have given up in life and are passive recipients of whatever comes their way, immune to pleasant surprises, so they do not see the need to shift their thinking. Fatalists may demonstrate less movement, but their movement can be initiated by others or by external forces. (One thinks of Trump's galvanising of the dispossessed and demoralised, moving them from the isolate to the enclave position.)

Thompson et al. (1990) argue that GGCT remains the most satisfactory explanation of social action available and that social science theories are themselves cultural creations which occupy different spaces across the GGCT typology. GGCT explains why some actors adopt versions of 'women and children first' while others advocate versions of 'everyone for themselves' (Thompson et al., 1990). At the level of society as a whole, it

may or may not be possible to easily shift actors from their viewpoints unless something drastic happens (Thompson and Wildavsky, 1982). This is an extension of Douglas's (1982) point that individuals tend to reach agreement on the rules that govern them and to remain committed to these rules until presented with anomaly, impurity and danger.

3.3.3. GGCT and Analysis of Sects

In the early 1980s, Douglas and Wildavsky collaborated to examine how risk perception shapes group thinking in the context of US politics (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983). To progress their social analysis, they suggest the concept of *border* and *centre*, where the former denotes the policing of institutional boundaries while the latter denotes control of social order. They explain the concept of border and centre through the example of a sect (Mamadouh, 1999). Sects are egalitarian/ enclaves calling on members to demonstrate support for their common cause (Franzwa and Lockhart, 1998; Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983) such as anti-corruption or a religious conviction. Sect members share a sense of a common danger and if that danger looms larger, this increases solidarity, even to the point of exaggerating the danger (Mamadouh, 1999). The border is the basis for inclusion or exclusion of people from the sect and it is defined by the issues that are themselves excluded by the centre. Thus, borders cannot exist without the centre.

This idea of border and centre is applicable to different groups and cultures and offers an important tool in examining how different groups exist. The types of culture identified by Douglas and Wildavsky (1982) on the basis of the border and centre framework include *Sectarian*, *Individualistic* and *Bureaucratic* (egalitarian, individualist, hierarchical) (Carlisle and Smith, 2005). Thompson (1997) agrees that institutions have considerable influence on members bound together by common ideals. Thus, actors may not leave their groups for as long as the ideal or danger that brought them together remains (Swedlow, 2002).

3.3.4. GGCT Study of Whistleblowing

Less than a handful of organisational silence studies have demonstrated a link between cultural biases and the types of silence. For example, fatalism, which is associated with chaos and futility, is acknowledged to be at the root of acquiescent silence, which is based on fear, and quiescent silence, which is based on despair. Fatalist silence is founded on reasonable anxiety concerning dire repercussions should any concerns be raised. The least bad outcome to actors inhabiting a fatalistic appraisal of risk is that the problem raised will be ignored by the complainee (Chai et al., 2009).

But individualist assessment of risk is inclined to viewing it as opportunity. Individualism enables contemplation of *opportunistic silence* when an actor judges whether or not it is in their interests to declare themselves (Knoll and van Dick, 2013a; 2013b). This silence flows from ulterior private motives. Egalitarianism partnership and solidarity may inspire *prosocial silence* (Loyens, 2013a; 2013b). It follows from GGCT that there ought to be hierarchical silences, biased by a preference for observing rules and regulations to ensure stability.

Loyens' (2013b) study of whistle-blowing - the antithesis of silence has important insights to offer about the breaking of silence. Because fatalists are often ultra-cautious, mistrusting and, therefore, silent researchers can more easily overlook fatalism than study it, preferring to record the much more conspicuous and often loud hierarchical, egalitarian and individual 'voices'. Researchers employing GGCT have tended to fail to consider *there may be hierarchical, egalitarian and individualistic reasons for silence* not simply fatalistic reasons and that all cultural silences(sic) should be open to cultural theory analysis.

Loyens (2013b) discusses the situation in Paris in 1961. The then President of France, Charles de Gaulle, a rather autocratic leader, ordered the police to 'hold the city', these orders were followed and resulted in the deaths of 200 Algerian nationalists, which was the highest death figure in any day that year (Evans, 2007). In this example, orders were

followed to the letter and there appears to have been clear communication between the police. This shows how the hierarchists tend to strictly follow the orders given because they are part of the work regulations, *whatever private reservations they may have had.* Hierarchical reasoning supposes that 'responsibility for whistle-blowing is far above my pay grade. It is for senior officers to report problems, not me.' Egalitarian silence would encompass a need to preserve secrecy until the moment to speak is right, to spare the embarrassment of others and to keep them safe, especially from hierarchical censure.

In Table 3.3 it can be seen that the four biases have three key elements: the central idea, specific elementary forms of conflict and a risk vulnerability (Loyens, 2013b). For example, the risk in fatalism is unwillingness, while the risk in individualism is chaos due to lack of cooperation, the risk in egalitarianism is inefficient decision making. Hierarchy brings its own risk: exaggerated faith that obedience to rules will save the day. Loyens (2013b) based his research on the study of Evans (2008), who had indicated that whistleblowing is an ambitious form of engagement. Thus:

> *A whistle-blower is generally defined as an employee who discloses potentially damaging information about their employer to an authority figure, such as their boss, the media, or a government official.*
> (Kranacher, 2006: 80)

	Low group	High group
High grid	**FATALISM** *Central idea*: Individuals are bounded by a system of rules that is beyond their control. *Conflicts* can be dealt with if you are lucky; just try to survive. *Risk* of inertia and the unwillingness to plan ahead or take necessary measures.	**HIERARCHY** *Central idea*: Rules prescribe roles and responsibilities within a well-defined group. *Conflicts* can be dealt with by referring to rules and authority. *Risk* of misplaced trust in procedural rules and authority.
Low grid	**INDIVIDUALISM**	**EGALITARIANISM**

Central idea: Individuals are entrepreneurs that operate in a competitive environment. *Conflicts* can be dealt with by one-on-one negotiation and bargaining. *Risk* of chaos due to a lack of cooperation and tendency to put the individual above the common good.	*Central idea*: Everyone is equal and should cooperate for the welfare of the group. *Conflicts* can be dealt with by group negotiation in order to reach consensus. *Risk* of inefficient decision making and even disruption of the group.

(Loyens, 2013, p.18).

Table 3.3. GGCT Central Ideas, Conflicts and Risks

Evans (2008) deduced that a whistle-blower possesses information about something that may be damaging to the organisation and that disclosure is *unauthorised*. A whistle-blower thus does not follow the rules that bind the chain of command (Vinten, 1999) though some organisations have tried to provide 'proper channels' for whistleblowing – an hierarchical solution. According to Asbrand (1987), the whistle-blower may also be privy to private information and anyone who engages in whistleblowing is essentially dissenting (Evans 2008). Glazer and Glazer 1989 (in Evans 2008) argue that whistle-blowers are important persons in an organisation, who have remained faithful and loyal to the organisation's mission and therefore speak out when they witness activities contrary to the mission (Vinten, 1999). This view conflicts with Qsqas and Kleiner (2001) who suggest that the reasons employers are wary of whistle-blowers is that they are seen as disloyal. Thus, there are two different positions on whistleblowing: one that it shows loyalty to the team, the other that it shows dissent and disrespect for hierarchy. The former is egalitarian whistleblowing and the latter a hierarchical criticism of it that values silence.

On the basis of Figure 3.7, hierachists appear best placed to volunteer information (as identified by Loyens, 2013). Yet Loyens (2013) finds that it is egalitarian actors who tend to disclose (what in their eyes is) wrongdoing, while the other three (hierarchical, individualistic and fatalistic) are much less likely to do so. By this assertion, Loyens (2013) noted that Evans (2008) places hierarchists among those who can volunteer

information if they can find an approved channel. Hierarchical actors struggle to make unauthorised declarations, even if these address unauthorised activity. They face irreconcilable choices and may retreat into fatalism as a consequence. For example, Evans (2008) quotes a Latvian army commander who joked that there can be no communication without orders and where there is no communication, orders cannot exist.

3.3.5. *Versions of GGCT*

Whilst there is basic agreement among academics working on thought styles (Douglas, 1982; Thompson et al., 1990; Wildavsky, 1994), differences persist. This is unsurprising as academics are cultural actors. Grendstad (2000) examined thought styles through the notion of equality. He suggests that egalitarian reasoning values the *result* whereas individualistic reasoning values *equality of opportunity*, hierarchical reasoning focuses on *procedural equality* (equality before the law) and fatalistic reasoning reasons that there can be '*no equality on this earth*'. However, there are different uses of GGCT.

While there is agreement that social regulation and social solidarity are the decisive social dimension (Dake, 1991), the 'group' dimension can be viewed from two points of view. On the one hand, is the view that the group is a collection of individuals who may be different in many ways but are drawn together by a common issue. On the other hand, it could be viewed as actors brought together by an identity common to them, which causes them to have a mutually beneficial relationship with each other (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1982).

The notion of power and survival has been highlighted as an issue that is central to the existence of a group, especially at times of uncertainty (Thompson et al. 1990; Douglas, 1986; Mamadouh, 1999, p.401). Thompson (1980) suggests that power and control will be present in any group, for instance, manipulation is collective in a sect and competitive for entrepreneurs. Thompson (1980) views power and control as being two sides of the same coin such that when an actor has a certain level of power, it may seek to control others for its own benefit notwithstanding the rules. Power binds a group together and

gives the group a way of responding to authority, enabling the group to relate. Order does not just happen spontaneously but is accentuated by re-ordering in the face of surprises galvanizing the group into a changed worldview (cosmology).

Thompson et al. (1990) noted that there is often a tendency to justify one's own behaviour or way of life and ignore others. For instance, where individualism is valued, then actors develop self-reliance and resourcefulness. Where egalitarianism is favoured the skills of consultation and conservation are cultivated. Where hierarchy is favoured actors develop discipline and control of urges. Fatalist actors develop indifference towards what they understand to be an unpredictable world and treat indifference as a virtue.

One differences between Wildvasky's and Thompson's views is the focus of the former on weakening at the centre, and by the latter on every gradation of the two dimensions. Douglas and Wildavsky, through the examination of religious sect membership, note that sects tend to be ignored while having considerable influence in American life. Central power ignores the periphery (Tansey and O'Riordan, 1999). Douglas tends to understand cosmologies as bi-polar while Thompson and Wildavsky treat both dimensions of GGCT as smooth and continuous spectra (Carlisle and Smith, 2005).

3.3.6. Limitations of GGCT

GGCT has been developed as an explanation of how sociality operates dynamically. However, this was not Mary Douglas' intention. She treated it more simply as a way of classifying and describing heterogeneity and not, for example, as a full explanation for how free will is experienced by individuals (Ostandar, 1982). Gross and Rayner (1985) even suggest that:

> … the *grid/group model does not preclude psychological, theories of how different personality types might gravitate towards one kind of social context or another. It does not tell us that economic inducements or deprivations dispose persons to*

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> *change their social organisations* (Gross and Rayner, 1985, p.xx).

Thus, the theoretical status of 'individuals' (Gross and Rayner, 1985) is not settled – Thompson has taken to calling them 'dividuals'. Wildavsky and Dake (1992) have been criticised for adding little more than Likert scales (Tansey and O'Riordan, 1999). It is also claimed that GGCT is far from being universal and has few applications, even that it is limited offering procedures that help when examining other theories (Morrow, 1994).

3.3.7. *Relevance of Grid-Group Cultural Theory*

From this review of GGCT, it can be seen that it is a likely to produce deeper insights into the nature of organisational silence than the theories of national culture outlined in Part A. Whereas each of those theories focuses on a narrow range of characteristics of a culture at the time that the observation takes place, GGCT is able to show how an institution is being constructed from moment to moment through the continual shifts in power between the different thought styles. It is also able to account for individual differences as well as how these add up to a group culture.

In this study of silence, it helps to understand silence in relation to how power operates (grid) and to the degree of priority of group over individual interests (group):

- The individualist thought style is goal orientated and can be expected to use silence if it serves the actor's ends
- The egalitarian thought style seeks equity and engagement, tend to interact with others using silence to protect others
- The fatalistic thought style is most likely to exhibit silence as an outcome of disengagement or for self-protection
- The hierarchical thought style rests on formality. It is conceivable that the hierarchical actor will not engage with others, if it is beyond their professional scope, which implies their silence is temporary (Mamadouh, 1999).

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However, any silence can be considered temporary until challenged by anomalies and surprises.

GGCT can encompass any actor regardless of its scale. Contrary to Mary Douglas, it does have explanatory power. The likelihood that actors will move between thought styles (and hold more than one at once) is promising in terms of practice-development. There is of course a challenge: to demonstrate that an approach dedicated to understanding 'four voices' can be applied to the study of four silences (and hybrids thereof).

3.4. Part C. Silence in Organisations

In this study, the researcher proposes the use of Grid-Group Cultural Theory to explain the silence phenomenon. Grid-Group Cultural Theory is an institutional theory as shown in Part B, which has seen voice as constructing organisations, so silence must have the same role. Therefore, this research will look at Grid-Group Cultural Theory and define a particular version to explain silence from the viewpoint of social theory. This research claims that silence is an investable part of all organisations, always in the process of becoming silent, so for this there is a need to understand this phenomenon and to change the organisation to have the ability to do that. The first step to understand this phenomenon is determining the causes which lead to the creation of silence, that looks beneath the surface of this phenomenon.

3.4.1. Definition of Organisational Silence

Silence can be interpreted differently by different people depending on who is silent or to whom the silence is shown. In order to examine silence, there is a need to consider the situations that might lead to silence in an organisation. The best way to understand silence is to consider why it occurs, then determine what causes it. Tannen (1985) suggested that silence implies 'anything but' which, according to Ephratt (2008), does not tell us anything and needs further examination. Silence as absence of speech has for long been held to be the main form of silence (Tannen, 1988; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Ephratt, 2008):

...being silent, keeping one's tongue, being calm, all mean silence in a general sense. In etymology, it can be easily understood. But within organisations, this must be a concept beyond simply passivity, which means that silence can have a message (Rezabeygi and Almasi, 2014: 300).

Several researchers have attempted to define the concept of silence in relation to employees, with considerable debate surrounding both definitions and the terminology applied to the concept. Debate exists, for instance, around whether silence should be considered an individual or collective phenomenon, or multidimensional. This subsequently impacts on whether it is defined as individual behaviour, which is employee silence (Kutanis *et al.*, 2014), or organisational silence, and perhaps highlights how efforts to define silence "…can quickly become engulfed in an endless array of complexities (Zembylas and Michaelides, 2004: 194).

In terms of regarding silence as individual behaviour, Pinder and Harlos (2001) consider silence to be the refusal by employees to voice their behavioural, cognitive and effective assessment of organisational situations. It is evident that silence has been characterised using a variety of terms for example 'withholding' (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne *et al.,* 2003; Song *et al.*, 2017), keeping one's tongue (Rezabeygi and Almasi, 2014) and denial of opportunity (Donaghey *et al*., 2011). Tannen (1985) also argues that 'silence' incorporates a range of feelings, opinions and actions, regarding it as a type of communication. All these terms make us consider silence as an induced issue or self-made decision by someone to not pass on the information that they have. These perspectives have potentially made a clear view of silence that is guiding the discussion on silence moving forward.

Tannen (1985) argues that employee silence is not limited to a lack of speech or formal voice, sound or language; rather employee silence may occur simultaneously with the withholding of either information, sound, language or speech. Such silence, then, should

not be regarded as a failure of employees to communicate (Argyris and Schon, 1978), but rather as the intentional withholding of information (Tangirala and Ramanujam, 2008; Song *et al.*, 2017), and thus a *communicative choice* (Van Dyne *et al*., 2003) or *behavioural choice* (Gambarotto and Cammozzo, 2003; Bagheri *et al.*, 2012) whereby employees withhold ideas, information, and opinions which may contribute to their work, or where employees refuse to submit their ideas and concerns regarding organisational problems (Nikmaran *et al.*, 2012; Brinsfield, 2013; Timming and Johnstone, 2013). This may especially be the case when such information may be considered to be negatively perceived by the audience (Balas-Timar Rad, 2016; Saqib and Arif, 2017), or result from the avoidance of potential problems (Nakane, 2006), or where the silence results from a response to injustice (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003), and thus a response to perceived risks (Huang *et al.*, 2005; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005). Furthermore, Delbridge (1998) and Ezzamel *et al.* (2000) affirm that silence is often characterised as a persistent strategy, where employees with low affection emotionally withdraw to handle unpleasant work issues within the organisation. Finally, Donaghey *et al.* (2011) suggest that employee silence occurs where workers do not have any opportunities to follow up on issues of concern to them, either because of the failure of a pre-existing 'voice' mechanism or because of a lack of these altogether. As a result, employees within an organisation see no point in speaking to an unresponsive overseer, since no one wants to be known to a "troublemaker" and to suffer from potential negative consequences (Freeman, 1996).

In contrast to the 'bottom up' perspective, which looks at employee motives for silence (Knoll and van Dick, 2013a), it has also been suggested that silence is actually a collective or organisational (top down) phenomenon (Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Henrikson and Dayton, 2006), and therefore as organisational silence. Argyris (1977), for example, discussed how silence does not always reflect personal choice, but can be produced by the norms and gains which are dominant within society or the organisation, which prevent people from freely expressing their opinions on technical and policy issues. It has been suggested, for instance, that silence can feel like the most suitable option for employees, where those who have exercised voice have

experienced retaliation or sanction (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011). Thus, individuals make the choice to remain silent, but this is in the context of the organisational hierarchy, and the context of the social system, where social and organisational norms influence individuals to remain silent (Umar and Hassan, 2013). This is supported by Bowen and Blackmon (2003) who define silence as employees keeping information to themselves which does not match with the general opinion structure of the organisation, as well as Saqib and Arif (2017) who explain that silence behaviour can occur when an individual has information which differs from the leadership perspective. This is sometimes referred to as the 'spiral of silence' theory (Ho *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, it has been shown that organisational silence can spread through an organisation, from established employees abandoning voice through bad experience, and new employees following suit and choosing silence; also referred to as 'learned helplessness' (Sayğan, 2011).

Aküzüm (2014) suggests that in the past, silence was regarded as obedience, but is now widely accepted to be a reaction of employees to the culture of the organisation. In this way, silence can also perhaps be regarded as being defined in relation to adherence and conformity or non-compliance to cultural norms and values. Nakane (2006), for example, claims that silence is an expression of politeness; whether positive in relation to signifying solidarity, or negative where it is used as a distancing strategy (see, for instance, Sifianou, 1997). Silence can also be regarded as collective in the sense that it may be transmitted between employees and team members, who may be encouraged to be silent (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003), perhaps further underlining its potentially negative impact on organisations.

Several sources highlight the multidimensional (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003) or multi-faceted nature of silence (Bell et al., 2011a; see also section 3.4.5 on Types of Silence). Brinsfield et al. (2009) also argue that silence cannot be seen as one or the other but may have both individual and organisational levels. In addition to debate around silence as individual, collective or multidimensional, scholars have also defined silence in relation to voice, through distinguishing it from voice. Keil and Park (2010), for example, discuss silence

as the ability to conceal information. They provide the example of an employee within an organisation remaining silent, and in such cases, it may be that no one else will know about this specific information, unless the potential whistleblower reports them. Furthermore, Pinder and Harlos (2001) define silence as the absence of voice as it has its own form of communication, involving a range of cognitions, emotions, or intentions such as objection or endorsement. Additionally, Zehir and Erdogan (2011) suggest that the phenomenon of employee silence might take on different meanings depending on its underlying motives.

In summary, there is lack of consensus in the literature surrounding the definition of silence. Most earlier researchers hold the position that the decision to remain silent rests with the employee; however, literature also makes it clear that the causes of silence are, in most cases, outside the control of the employee. This aspect is explored further in subsequent sections in the discussion on causes of silence (see section 3.4.4). In this research, silence is defined as the withholding and concealing of any information, suggestion or opinions, from both employees and managers, deliberately. The research explores the concept of silence using Grid-Group Cultural Theory, which asserts the importance of examining both an individual and collective perspective. Therefore, there is a need to conceptualise silence in detail as a phenomenon. The following section attempts to achieve this in order to discuss its applicability in the case of female educational institutions in Saudi Arabia.

3.4.2. *Silence and Voice*

In addition to the debate surrounding definitions of silence, there has also been some lack of consensus around the relationship between silence and voice, as well as perceptions of voice. Silence and voice have, for a long time, been considered to be related (Bagheri *et al.*, 2012; Timming and Johnstone, 2013; Sholekar and Shoghi, 2017), with the suggestion that the presence of one is the opposite of the other. This view has elicited a lot of debate with the quest to identify the boundaries that exist between the two. Uncertainty surrounds whether silence and voice should be considered opposites, or

whether silence should be viewed as a distinct concept (Timming and Johnstone, 2013), with some suggesting that silence is more complex, referring not only to lack of speech, but also to the withholding of other forms of communication, such as written information (Nikmaran *et al.*, 2012). Creed (2003) claims that voice and silence are interrelated and intertwined strategic forms of communication, which assumes that the absence of one would maximise the other. Furthermore, Van Dyne *et al.* (2003) and Song *et al.* (2017) suggest that silence and voice have tended to be regarded as being on opposite ends of the spectrum (see, for instance, Morrison, 2011; Wang and Hsieh, 2013; Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015), with silence indicating the intentional withholding of information (as discussed earlier), while voice represents the vocal expression of opinion. Tucker *et al*. (2008) found that employees find safety in silence because of the work situation, but that they can also raise their voices when they feel that there are changes that can be made if they speak out. Thus, silence and voice have been seen as two approaches to solving problems, with silence being a personal defence while voice being a communal defence. According to Zehir and Erdogan (2011), voice has for long been viewed as dissent, selling out to management or even whistleblowing at corporate level, and on the other hand, silence has been deemed as intentional withholding of information that could be valuable to the organisation. They indicated that in most organisations, the nature of and existence of silence is occasioned by the work relationships that exist in the organisation between the management and their employees. Similarly, Vakola and Bouradas (2005) have attempted to demonstrate the continuum between voice and silence, by labelling voice as a defiance and silence as a moral and ethical expectation especially for employees above their managers. They noted that employees are expected to keep silent because they do not know anything and as such are able to remain in good terms with the managers of the organisations. Being a continuum, the study shows that in some organisations, the scope to speak out is given, but it is not wide a space for employees to speak about everything.

It has been argued, however, that where voice is lacking, it does not always indicate that intentional silence is present:

...the key feature that differentiates silence and voice is not the presence or absence of speaking up, but the actor's motivation to withhold versus express ideas, information, and opinions about work-related improvements (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003: 1360).

This is supported by the work of Gambarotto and Cammozzo (2010) who state that silence is not just the opposite of voice, it is a choice that an employee makes on the basis of opportunity costs that can be obtained. In such a case, voice is considered to represent non-conformity while silence represents conformity. Such a premise fails to examine the positive contribution that employees make to the organisation when they raise legitimate and constructive criticism. Speaking up in the workplace has therefore been variously referred to as 'employee voice', 'whistleblowing', 'issue selling', 'championing' and 'dissent' (Kassing, 2001), depending on how the researcher perceives the concept of voice. We therefore see similar conflict of opinion as explained earlier in relation to silence.

It has also been recognised that the concepts of voice and silence are not entirely separable as opposites, but rather they overlap. Detert and Edmondson (2011), for example, highlight how employees may remain silent because voice is generally deemed as risky, as it could lead to personal consequences, which employees find to be less desirable. This can include being labelled negatively by colleagues and superiors, or risking promotion, other benefits or losing employment altogether (Morrison, Wheeler-Smith, and Kamdar, 2011). Thus, socially learned beliefs tend to make voice risky or dangerous, leading to silence (Detert and Edmondson, 2011). On the contrary, Grant (2013) argues that although voice is often considered risky, lack of it is also risky. Moreover, Fletcher and Watson (2007) indicate that silence and volubility cannot always be deemed as a bipolar existence of power and powerlessness or superiority and subordination, if anything, those who are silent tend to demonstrate through their silence that they are the ones who wield more power than those who engage in talk. In this case, it is worth considering who has the voice and who has no voice. The discussion of power, here, is perhaps, however,

flawed, especially when looking at silence from a wider perspective as including the withholding of written information (Liu *et al*., 2011).

It has also been suggested that the differences between silence and voice are more complex than is often claimed. It is argued, for instance, that employee silence is not necessarily an absence of voice (Van Dyne *et al.,* 2003; Zembylas and Michaelides, 2004; Umar and Hassan 2013; Morrison, 2014; Donovan et al., 2016), but may reflect an individual having little to say of value, lack of engagement at work, lack of participation in some activities or even lack of offering information when needed (Brinsfield 2013; Akbarian *et al.*, 2015; Timming and Johnstone 2013). Furthermore, if voice is regarded as the opposite of silence, then other forms of communication are not represented here, such as writing (Nikmaran *et al*., 2012). In addition, interpreting the difference between silence and voice can be complex. Adams *et al*. (2006), for instance, question whether non-voting indicates a kind of representation or satisfaction with existing policies or gives a hint about fatalistic resignation.

Further noting the complexities of recognising the differences between silence and voice, Zembylas and Michaelides (2004) suggest that silence comprises discourse, representing a silent and implicit language; and so, in order to be silent, one must have something to say. For Balas-Timar Rad (2016: 1) "What motivates silence becomes an inhibitor for voice and alternatively silence's inhibitors become motivators for voice". Thus, on a conceptual level, silence denotes the absence of voice, and voice represents the intentional decision not to stay silent, but on an empirical level, the correlation between voice and silence is unclear, as a result of the difficulties related to observing the employee's silence. From a sociological viewpoint, the difference between voice and silence is seen in the examination of gender differences, as noted by Simpson and Lewis (2005) who have shown the relationship between silence and voice by indicating that in workplaces, women tend to show their visibility through voice, and thus their voice is a way of challenging the male dominant culture that exists at work. Silence, on the other hand, does, thus not necessarily imply quiet, it simply means that the women are not bringing

themselves forward to be visible. Thus, the differences between silence and voice are not easy to understand.

In summary, the evidence suggests that the relationship between silence and voice is unclear in the organisational behaviour literature. Based on the views presented above, it is evident that there is still general misconception that silence and voice are on opposite ends of a spectrum. In this study, silence and voice are regarded as related but are not considered to represent opposite concepts. There is also a need to consider silence from its widest perspective, which should include withholding spoken or written communication, or part of the information from the intended person.

3.4.3. Conceptualisation of Silence

It is important to examine how silence is conceptualised within the literature, as it appears that the ways in which researchers have conceptualised and measured silence differs greatly from how they define it. Based on the various definitions of silence as given above (section 3.4.1), the starting point in the examination of this concept is that there are divergent viewpoints. Even though, for example, there are differences in definition between researchers regarding silence, when looking at the conceptualisation of silence, the differences become even more distinctive, ambiguous and complex. Where the real difficulties lay, then, is in interpreting and transforming such a concept into a legitimate form which can be effectively and reliably measured (Brinsfield, 2013). Among early studies, for example, Greene (1940) examined the phenomenon of silence across Western and Eastern religions. Greene's work raised several questions regarding the conceptualisation of silence and whether it is more or less of a problem in the Western or Eastern religious context. Writing from an ontological perspective, Dauenhauer (1973) attempted to clarify the nature of silence and argued that silence can be positive in a range of settings. Dauenhauer emphasised that silence is not merely the background against which sound expression holds. However, Dauenhauer (1973) suggested that some aspects of silence are clear, understood and widely accepted, while other silences can be noticed only after close inspection of what remains unsaid.

Looking at some of the more recent studies, the diversity in approaches to conceptualising silence becomes clear. Some researchers have conceptualised silence through focusing simply on one form of silence within their research. Research has focused, for example, on just defensive silence to conceptualise silence (Kim *et al*., 2014; Kutanis *et al.*, 2014; Kiewitz *et al.*, 2016). Kim *et al*. (2014) showed, for instance, that practicing defensive silence and having unclear official rules reduced nurses' willingness to report errors. As they indicated, their findings were in agreement with work of Sutcliffe *et al.* (2004) who claimed that poor communication within organisations is a key element of medical mistakes. Relying on just one type of silence in order to make such claims is problematic, as silence is not only defensive. Likewise, Dedahanov *et al.* (2016) used just relational silence, thus, reducing this concept to the extent to which employees attempt to maintain the relationship with their managers only. They investigate the relationship between power distance, collectivism and relational silence (in South Korea), and claim that where power is frequently used by managers over employees, withholding of information occurs as the individuals attempt to avoid conflict with their supervisors and managers. This focus on the avoidance of conflict with others seems to overlook the possible explanation that fear plays a role here.

Other studies have looked at silence according to several types of silence. Riantoputra *et al.* (2016), for example, conceptualised silence as two forms of silence; acquiescent and defensive. Van Dyne *et al.* (2003), on the other hand, conceptualise silence according to three types of silence, including acquiescent, defensive and pro-social. Similarly, and following the work of Van Dyne *et al.* (2003), Song *et al.* (2017) developed and tested a model of leaders' destructive personalities, trust in leaders and employee silence, also conceptualising silence as three types of silence: acquiescent, defensive and prosocial. Other studies have also used a similar approach, conceptualising silence according to these three forms of silence (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011; Wang and Hsieh, 2013; Akuzum, 2014; Laeeque and Bakhtawari, 2014; Rhee *et al.*, 2014; Dedahanov *et al.*, 2015; Husrevsahi, 2015; Saglam, 2016; Tavakoli *et al.*, 2016; Sholekar and Shoghi, 2017). Others have gone further, however, conceptualising silence according to four types of

silence; acquiescent, quiescent, pro social and opportunistic (Knoll and van Dick, 2013a), and five types of silence: acquiescent, defensive, prosocial, deviant and diffident (Brinsfield et al., 2009). In addition, Chou and Chang (2017) conceptualise silence using a different categorisation: unsolicited predetermined employee silence, unsolicited based on employee silence and solicited target based on employee silence.

Other studies have conceptualised silence in different ways, according to the reasons for silence. Pinder and Harlos (2001), for instance, confirm that employee silence can be conceptualised theoretically and practically as individual-level behaviour and emotional experience. These two conceptualisations guide their arguments regarding the causal factors of silence in an organisation. In addition, Jain (2015) measures silence via the ways in which employees perceive their managers, levels of fear, interpersonal skills, employee levels of assertion and introversion, and lack of confidence, using a scale on self-esteem and self-maintenance image. Toker *et al.* (2014) also examine the factors impacting on silence in organisations, focusing on administrative and organisational reasons, fears related to work, lack of experience, the fear of isolation and fear of relations, although it is worth noting that they do not justify their choice for selecting these reasons. Studies by Karaca (2013) and Harbalioglu and Gultekin (2014) and Yurdakul *et al.* (2016) examined reasons emerging from administrative and organisational levels, fear related to work, lack of experience, fear of isolation, fear of damaging the relationships, building on the scale developed by Cakici. Finally, Haskins and Freeman (2015) conceptualise silence according to the presence of other persons; the trust between patients and the caregiver; embarrassment and humiliation of the actor; hierarchical structures and relations and experience and knowledge gap, and fears of negative consequences.

Several qualitative studies have also explored the concept of silence through the reasons for silence (Ladany et al., 2004; Schwappach and Gehring, 2014; Seren et al., 2018). Research by Schwappach and Gehring (2014), for instance, explored the factors which impacted on healthcare professionals' decision to remain silent with regard to safety

concerns for patients. These included the presence of other persons, hierarchical structures and relations, limited time, fears of negative consequences, occupational group constellation and futility and resignation. The aim of the study was to explore factors that affect hospital staff's decisions to voice safety concerns or to remain silent and to describe the trade-offs they make, their motivations and barriers to speaking up, with co-workers and supervisors. "While doctors and nurses felt strong obligation to prevent errors reaching individual patients, they were not engaged in voicing concerns beyond this immediacy. Our results offer in-depth insight into fears and conditions conducive of silence and voicing and can be used for educational interventions and leader reinforcement" (p.1). In a study which was similarly situated in a healthcare setting, Seren *et al.* (2018) explored the reasons for physicians' and nurses' silence in public hospitals. These included administrative and organisational reasons, concerns about the job, lack of experience, fear of isolation, fear of damaging relationships. They conclude that administrative and organisational factors were the key reasons for silence. These studies, therefore, conceptualise silence through the reasons for silence rather than through types of silence.

When scholars choose to conceptualise silence according to types or reasons, there is no justification or criteria provided by the scholars as to why they select such types/reasons. For example, in relation to opportunistic silence (as mentioned by Knoll and van Dick, 2013a), which identifies this type of withholding information according to when individuals withhold information or opinions regarding their beliefs in competition could be explained as being typical of the individualistic thought style in GGCT (Thompson et al., 1990). Similarly, many scholars discuss quiescent silence and they identify it as a type of silence produced by individuals who fear the consequences of speaking up. This is typical fatalistic thought style, where individuals try to avoid being at risk.

Several other studies have conceptualised silence according to fear (Neuwirth *et al.,* 2007; Brinsfield, 2012; Matthes *et al*., 2012; Kim, 2012; Jahanbakhshian, *et al*., 2015; Hesam and Raeesi, 2016; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016; Pirie, 2016; Riantoputra *et al*., 2016),

injustice (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Mirmohhamdi and Marefat, 2014; Demiralay and Lorcu 2015; Zahed, 2015; Huang and Huang, 2016) or perceptions of risk (Milliken and Morrison, 2003). In terms of fear, studies on organisational silence have looked at how fear stems from a number of factors, including the structure of an organisation, the culture of an organisation and the nature of employment that the workforce are in. Noelle-Neumann (1974) has been credited with coining the term 'spiral of silence', where the authors indicate that, due to our social nature, we tend to fear that we will be isolated from people who we do not want to be isolated from. Furthermore, Kish-Gephart *et al*. (2009) noted that while many reasons have been given as to why employees withhold information, the main factor for this silence is the fear that they will lose social capital and that their superiors are more knowledgeable and so in this way, the views given by the employees will not add value to the organisation or its performance.

Grant (2013) found that employees engage in silence due to the potential risks associated with voice, because quite often, this voice is viewed to be a challenge to the existing situation in the organisation. He indicated that the negative emotions of fear have for a long time made employees withhold information or choose silence over voice. Brinsfield (2012) argues that silence is created not just by fear or risk avoidance. In contrast to previous studies, such as Pinder and Harlos (2001), where silence is related to perceptions of injustice, and Milliken and Morrison (2003) who relate silence to perceived risk, for Brinsfield (2012) the nature of silence results from unfair or unethical situations. In addition, research has also looked at silence as related to perceptions of violence, or to symbolic violence (McCormack, 2017). Research by Liu *et al.* (2009) explores an alternative approach which emphasises the importance of acknowledging psychological factors when conceptualising silence. They found that if the employees are at odds with their managers, this may lead to silence, but if the employees are in an anxious state, they are more likely to speak up. Nonetheless, it seems that all of these studies restrict the reasons for silence to fear, injustice, unfairness and perceptions of risk, when in fact silence also emerges as a result of many other factors, thus presenting a limited picture, or partial explanation for the silence phenomenon.

Some conceptualise silence as a climate of silence. Vakola and Bouradas (2005), for example, conceptualize different dimensions of silence; silence climate and silence behaviour. They consider climate of silence as being the result of top managements' attitudes to silence, supervisors' attitudes to silence and the communication opportunities available to employees. They conceptualize silence behaviour as the extent to which employees are able to express their disagreement. Morrison (2011) also looked at group voice climate, examining shared beliefs about the risks and effectiveness of expressing voice. Likewise, Detert and Edmondson (2011) assessed employees' taken-for-granted beliefs about when and why speaking up at work is risky or inappropriate. They also found that some individuals may speak freely, while at the same time ensure that they do not pass crucial information when needed, because they have evaluated the potential repercussions, and this has created fear in them. This view is in line with research which questions what silence really entails, so for instance, not necessarily in spoken words, but what is written and what is not said, even during speaking periods (Akbarian *et al*., 2015). Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) and Xu *et al*. (2015) measure silence as to the extent that employees withhold ideas, concerns or information about critical work issues.

Where these studies used *withholding* as the key factor, other studies have used *disagreement* as the predominant measure. Mirmohhamdi and Marefat (2014), for instance, conceptualise silence as the ease of employees dissenting with managers. Similarly, Ardakani and Mehrabanfar (2015) conceptualise silence as silence behaviour and they measure it as the inability of employees to show disagreement or share suggestions with top management. In this study, which used a quasi-experimental method and implemented a suggestion system, the level of silence was evaluated before and after the implementation. Results showed meaningful differences between the value of silence at pre and post-test. Nonetheless, it could be argued that the way that they conceptualised silence is very limited, as they simply consider silence as not showing disagreement. As mentioned above, Vakola and Bouradas (2005) also conceptualised silence as the inability of employees to show disagreement with management. Their results show a positive correlation between top management attitudes to silence and supervisor attitudes to

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silence. They claim that this indicates that employees may formulate a silence or voice behaviour according to how they see supervisors' attitude to voice expression. It could be argued, however, that they also limit the meaning of silence to simply showing or not showing disagreement.

Some studies have tried to overcome the limitations of previous research by exploring silence in several different ways within the same study. Mengenci (2015), for example, looked first at organisational silence climate (according to Vakola and Bouradas, 2005, who consider organisational silence as supervisor attitude to silence, management attitudes to silence, behaviour and communication opportunities), and second, employee silence behaviour. The latter is measured according to acquiescent, defensive and prosocial silence. Fard and Karimi (2015) also combined organisational silence (which included top management attitudes to silence, supervisors' attitudes to silence, communication opportunities and employees silence behaviour) and employee silence behaviour, similarly using the work of Vakola and Bourdas (2005). Furthermore, Alparslan *et al.* (2015) combines both the reasons for silence and types of silence in order to conceptualise silence. The study looked at silence according to management and acquiescent silence, and silence based on prosocial tendency and on the maintenance of good relationships. Nonetheless, such studies assume that climate of silence produces silence behaviour and believe that climate of silence is only the attitudes of supervisors and managers. This is problematic as climate of silence is more complex than this, including for example, the policies and structures of organisations.

Several studies assume that silence has only one direction, coming from the bottom upwards (employees towards supervisors/managers) (Milliken *et al.*, 2003; Knoll and van Dick, 2013a; Jain, 2015). Milliken *et al.*'s (2003) work, for example, has been influential in the field of organisational silence, and has prompted a range of further research in the area. It examines the issues that employees fail to raise with their managers and the reasons behind this, drawing directly on the perspective of employees through their own words, thus providing in-depth insights here. Gambarotto and Cammozzo (2010) present

a case study within their research which highlights employee silence as the outcome of bottom-up innovation introduced into the University of Padova. The researchers assume, however, that silence emerges only from the employees towards the managers. This overlooks the possibility of silence from managers to employees, or between employees, which provides a restrictive perspective on the complexities of silence. Furthermore, Knoll and van Dick (2013a) adopted a quantitative method, to develop a scale to assess the four types of silence; quiescent, acquiescent, opportunistic and prosocial. This study could be considered one of the most important studies on silence, providing a significant contribution to understandings of different types of silence. It is worth noting, however, that the perspective of silence as something that comes from the bottom up, again is a limited way of viewing silence. As with Milliken *et al.* (2003), in focusing simply on the relationship between subordinates and managers, they overlook how silence can also occur between colleagues. Finally, in Dedahanov *et al.*'s (2016) study, which indicated a relationship between power distance, collectivism and silence, and specifically relational silence, the researchers seemed to refer to relational silence only in terms of employees maintaining a good relationship with their managers, which does not seem to take account of other significant relationships such as those with colleagues and clients/customers or others. Thus, it is possible that the results may be misleading, as the use of the term relational silence indicates broader employee relationships, but in the context of the study, the concept is only used in reference to employees' concerns with those above them. The current study therefore avoids such an assumption, acknowledging instead that silence might emerge from many different directions within the organisation.

As demonstrated above, silence has been conceptualised in a variety of ways, according to the perspectives of the scholars. Scholars have conceptualised silence through types or reasons of silence, or through specific perceptions of issues such as fear, risk, injustice or uncertainty, or as related to psychological feelings, or in relation to climate of silence. In the current study, the approach followed is that where scholars have focused on different types of silence, as the researcher asserts the importance of acknowledging internal motivations, rather than external factors.

3.4.4. Causes of Organisational Silence

There is much debate and disagreement surrounding the causes of silence, with studies highlighting a range of different causes which relate to factors of an organisational, individual, and socio-cultural or contextual nature. This section explores some of the different causes presented within the organisational silence literature. Before the key causal factors are discussed, however, it is important to first note the variation in the distinction between independent and dependent variables within the literature on the silence phenomenon.

3.4.4.1. Independent and Dependent Variables

Most of the studies in the organisational silence literature look at silence as the dependent variable, which is created by independent variables (causes). Riantoputra *et al.* (2016), for example, used acquiescent and defensive silence as dependent variables in their study in the Indonesian context, with psychological safety, voice efficacy, task cohesion, perceived contract breach (PCB) and job-based psychological ownership as independent variables. They found voice efficacy, psychological safety, task cohesion and PCB to impact on silence behaviour. Balas-Timar Rad (2016) also considered employee silence as the dependent variable within their study on employees in a Romanian textile company, which was affected by trust in supervisor, trust in colleagues and trust in organisation (as independent variables). Furthermore, Tavakoli *et al.* (2016) studies different types of silence (organisational, acquiescent, defensive and prosocial) as dependent variables and quality of work life as the independent variable. The research indicated different results relating to types of silence and quality of work life, showing a negative relationship between quality of work life, and defensive and submissive silence, while the association between quality of work life and prosocial silence was not significant. Saglam (2016) used the same dependent variables as Tavakoli *et al.* (2016), but in the context of Turkey and using different independent variables (sensibility to employees, trust to administrator, openness to modernity and the communication climate), and demonstrated a positive significant relationship between organisational trust and organisational silence. The

research showed Defensive silence was also used as a dependent variable in research by Kiewitz *et al.* (2016), with independent variables including abusive supervision, fear, assertiveness, and individual perceptions of a climate of fear, amongst employees within a manufacturing organisation in the Philippines. Their research suggested that the first stage of the problem was the association between abusive supervision and fear of subordinates, which later created defensive silence.

In contrast, there are also studies which have viewed silence as the independent variable. Laeeque and Bakhtawari (2014), in the context of Pakistan, for example, used employee silence as the independent variable (acquiescent, defensive and prosocial), and organisational commitment as the dependent variable. The research indicated a negative relationship between silence and organisational commitment, so when silence increases, silence decreases. Aeen *et al.* (2014) similarly investigated organisational silence and commitment, with silence as the independent variable and organisational commitment as the dependent variable. They also included organisational rumours, however, as the mediating variable, asserting the importance of this on the extent to which the independent variable influences the dependent variable. In addition, in the context of Turkey, Zehir and Erdogan (2011) examined employee silence through looking at three types of silence; acquiescence, defensive and prosocial, perceiving these as independent variables, to identify the impact of these types of silence on ethical leadership and then employee performance. The study reinforces the influence of leaders and managers on employee silence and indicates the importance of ethical leadership. The focus on silence as the independent variable, however, arguably does not assist in enhancing understanding of the phenomenon.

In addition to studies which perceive silence to be the dependent or independent variables, there is also research which has used it as the mediating variable. Mirmohhamdi and Marefat (2014), for instance, looked at organisational silence as the mediator variable between organisational justice as the independent variable and organisational commitment as the dependent variable. Whilst the findings showed that there was a

significant negative relationship between organisational justice and silence, the research also identified no significant relationship between organisational silence and commitment. Furthermore, Managheb *et al.* (2018) used organisational silence as the mediating variable between job performance (dependent variable) and organisational climate (independent variable). The research suggested that if organisational climate was improved, the greater the job performance, and subsequently organisational silence was reduced. Finally, for Saqib and Arif (2017), in research in Pakistan, employee silence was the mediating variable between organisational performance as the dependent variable and toxic leadership behaviour as the independent variable and showed how abusive supervision and 'toxic' leadership behaviour could cause employee silence.

As shown above, whilst there is some evidence of literature which views silence as the independent or mediating variable, most studies regard silence as the dependent variable. It could be argued, then, that the organisational silence literature seems to contend that (rational) individuals evaluate the situation that they are being placed in (for example, if they feel that they cannot trust their manager) and if that context is unfavourable, for example, poor organisational practices (in terms of a climate of openness, communication or fear), poor procedures, absence of procedures, or there are abusive supervisors (as independent variables), then the employee decides to fall silent (which is the dependent variable). The following sections demonstrate how the studies look at a variety of independent variables (the causes of silence), with a focus on organisational, individual and socio-cultural and contextual factors.

3.4.4.2. Organisational Factors

Looking first at organisational reasons, studies have explored issues such as leadership styles, injustice, risk and climate of silence. An influential study by Vakola and Bouradas (2005), for instance, applied quantitative methods to investigate aspects of the silence climate, employee silence and job attitudes, through the perspective of the employees. The study found that the attitudes of managers and supervisors, and their openness with

employees, as well as the opportunities they provide to employees to speak up, impacts on silence within organisations. The study makes an important distinction between the direct managers (supervisors) and top managers, indicating that supervisor attitudes to silence are more influential than the attitudes of top management. The researchers do not clearly identify the dependent variables within the study, however, as it is unclear whether such variables are, for instance, job satisfaction or silence behaviour. The study also found that silence behaviour could lead to low commitment, but the concept of commitment is arguably more complex than suggested here, with potentially more factors impacting on such a concept than indicated in the study. Nonetheless, the study provides important insights into the role of supervisors and managers in causing silence, and such factors have been further explored in a range of subsequent studies.

Mayhew *et al*. (2006) identify three causes of organisational silence: top management attitudes to silence, supervisors' attitude to silence, and communication opportunity. Research by Xu *et al.* (2015) also showed how abusive supervision and negative or 'toxic' leadership behaviour could cause employee silence. Finally, Morrison and Milliken (2000, p.722) argue that, theoretically, senior managers with different assumptions should design different types of organisational systems that, over time, may be successful in stimulating honest upward communication. The view by Morrison and Milliken (2000) assumes, then, that senior managers have the ability to create an environment where silence takes place or where silence is eliminated. The assumption that the attitudes of supervisors and managers creates silence, however, is arguably reductionist. Whilst this may be part of the explanation for organisational silence, it is not the only issue of significance here.

Still within the workplace, for example, it has been found that there are official and thus hierarchical expectations that can lead to silence. Tyler *et al*. (2000), for instance, noted that the existence of formal relationships tends to cause silence in organisation. This is expected, especially in areas where there are strong corporate policies and where the structures that are in existence are so formal. Furthermore, Aküzüm (2014) found that

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teachers in Turkey cited confidentiality issues for their lack of sharing some information about their students. The research used the relational survey model with 357 class teachers and using an organisational justice scale (where three levels of justice were measured, including distributive, procedural and interactional justice), and an organisational silence scale (including three types of organisational silence; acquiescent, defensive and prosocial). Interactional justice was found to be higher than other levels of justice, and prosocial silence was the highest perceived type of silence expressed amongst the teachers, compared to defensive, which was the lowest. The research suggested that justice was a key factor in explaining organisational silence. It is possible to question such a claim, however, as the study found different directions for the relationship between justice and types of silence.

An overriding cause of silence in organisations has been presented as the existence of risk. Risk identification is, however, an active endeavour of the person who views the likelihood of the existence of risk; it can be the employee or the manager (Agote *et al*., 2015). The risks include the fear of the unknown, and as such, silence occurrence is mainly seen through the prism of fear (Pinder and Halos, 2001; Kutanis *et al*., 2014). Milliken *et al.* (2003) interviewed employees regarding their decision to remain silent. The most frequently mentioned reason was fear of being regarded or labelled negatively. In a similar manner, Akbarian *et al*. (2015) suggest the main cause of organisational silence is fear and that job insecurity leads to fear of exclusion especially with regards to career goals. Ewing (1977) observes that organisations are often intolerant of criticisms and disagreement, and that employees may withhold vital information in order not to attract censure. This is a form of defensive silence, mainly caused by fear (cited in Milliken *et al*., 2003). Finally, Richard (2003) indicates that in some organisations, the freedom to speak is usually monitored closely and employees may not be in a position to say anything without worrying about the consequences of what they say (cited in Akbarian et al., 2015). In addition, sense of embarrassment also leads to silence in specific situations, such as whilst talking about highly sensitive issues such as sex, religion, private life and money or income (*Ibid*.). Silence could also exhibit as a group/collective

phenomenon that arises in situations when people remain silent on the pretext that they have done nothing wrong, despite knowing or witnessing unethical issues/behaviour in the organisations (*Ibid.*).

As shown, then, there are a range of organisational factors which can lead to organisational silence, and it is difficult to attribute one single cause, as many studies have seemed to do. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding, recognition of the range of organisational factors at work is necessary. Park et al. (2008) showed, for instance, that organisational structures and policies, managerial practices and the dissimilarity between employees and managers can all contribute to a climate of silence, causing employees to remain silent. Within this, we have also seen how risk, fear and injustice can impact on these processes. With respect to management, it has been suggested that factors such as fear of getting negative feedback, supposed biases about employees, the personality of managers, and equality at board level have effects. Also, of importance are lack of trust between employee and employer, and employee and management and risks in communicating (Akbarian *et al.*, 2015; Khalid and Ahmed, 2016). We can see, then, an 'institutional problem' being presented as a cause of silence. It is important, however, not to overlook other significant factors at play, such as individualistic, social and contextual issues.

3.4.4.3. Individual Reasons

Several studies have highlighted the importance of individual factors in causing organisational silence. Psychologists consider the most important reason for employees sometimes remaining silent about their concerns is the "mum effect" (Rosen and Tesser, 1970) which is observed when individuals have a general unwillingness to transfer negative information because of the uncomfortable message associated with being the bearer of bad news (Conlee and Tesser, 1973 cited in Milliken et al., 2003). The problem with this all-inclusive explanation is that a general unwillingness does not explain the particular circumstances under which silence is broken, and the bad news told. More

recent research from the organisational literature has also provided a range of insights into how individual factors can affect silence. These have included the role of emotional intelligence and trust to manager (Kutanis *et al.*, 2014), self-esteem and the locus of control (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003), self-image maintenance (Jain, 2015) and self-protection (Detert and Edmondson, 2011). Furthermore, silence has been deemed to be caused by certain emotional circumstances, for instance, anger, guilt, frustration (Malekpoor and Fakhr-Eddini, 2015). These factors can affect individuals differently, for instance, there are those who will talk and share their frustration when they are frustrated, and there are those who will not say a thing when they are frustrated. Timming and Johnstone (2013) argued that some employees have personalities that make them more susceptible to anti-democratic thoughts, and as such, the decision to speak up or to remain silent has arguably as much to do with internal personality structures as it does with external organisational structure.

The emotional state that a person is facing can therefore have external or internal causes but according to Hafnidar (2013), these can be exacerbated by other factors in the organisation (cited in Abid et al., 2015). Liu *et al.* (2009), for example, showed that different leadership styles (as mentioned above) affect employees' inner feelings, and a negative psychological state contributes to withholding of opinions in an organisational context. In addition, Kutanis *et al.* (2014) focused on one type of employee silence; defensive (or fear-based) silence, and its relationship with emotional intelligence and trust of managers. The study was quantitative in nature, drawing on data from employees in a dental hospital in Istanbul, Turkey, and found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and trust to manager. This study assumed the fear is the only reason to produce the silence, so the author concentrated on one type of silence; defensive. Whilst the research found a positive, but weak and insignificant relationship between trust for manager and fear based silence, which contradicted previous literature, it was indicated that this may relate to cultural differences.

Research has also looked at how self-esteem and the locus of control can be seen to cause silence (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003), and according to this study, a link is made between silence and those individual psychological factors. In terms of fear (which comes across as the main cause of silence), Richard (2003) has indicated that in most cases the consequences of our speaking out can lead to silence, where people may decide that they will not engage, but rather remain silent in order to not face the consequences (cited in Akbarian et al. 2015). Kiewitz *et al.* (2016) examine other internal individual factors; subordinate assertiveness, and regard it as the mediating variable between abusive supervision and subordinate's fear. They highlight, for example, that with low assertiveness, with the impact of perceptions of fear and perceiving abusive supervision, the level of defensive silence will be high. These previous studies which have been conducted to explain silence using internal individual factors (including locus of control, self-esteem and assertiveness) as causes of silence. It is possible, for instance, that a relationship would be established between level of self-esteem and level of silence, but it could be argued that this does not offer sufficient insights into - or explanation of - silence which is regarded as withholding of opinions, suggestions and information. People who have low self-esteem or low assertiveness already have obstacles to their communication with others, so this does not appear to accurately reflect intentional withholding of information.

Looking further at the role of self-image, Jain (2015) applied a mixed method approach, within the Indian context, to investigate the phenomena of employee silence through exploring the relationship between supervisor and subordinate, but also silence and turnover intention in view of job satisfaction. Drawing on the perspectives of employees from private, public and multinational organisations, the researcher established that the causes of silence included fear of retaliation, internal motivation, self-competence and self-image. Thus, whilst this study provides insights into employee silence in the Indian context, and indicates that silence is a dynamic phenomenon, there is no clear identification of the variable of silence. He does not identify the nature of silence effectively, but rather provides random estimations of reasons for silence, which

participants are required to apply to their own situations. The researcher focuses on how, for instance, employees view authority, whether they are transparent or not, or lack assertiveness. Thus, he brings some elements in regarding the attributes of employees, and some elements on the relationship between the subordinate and the supervisor together, exploring many factors under the same variable, which arguably leads to ambiguity here about the nature of this variable. Thus, poor validity of the measurement scale is suspected. Furthermore, the use of such pre-determined categories within the survey aspect of the research may have influenced or directed the participants, which raises questions about reliability.

3.4.4.4. Socio-Cultural and Contextual Factors

In addition to organisational and individual factors, several studies have examined socio-cultural and contextual factors for explaining silence within organisations, exploring social factors and cultural contexts (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015), as well as factors such as power distance (Petkova et al., 2015; Dedahanov et al., 2016) and conflict with organisational norms and values (Schilling and Kluge, 2009). Kawabata and Gastaldo's (2015) work, for example, which draws on previous literature to explore the concept of silence - with a particular focus on the context of Japan - explains silence as reflecting social expectations, and in Japan, found that silence was not regarded as an absence of communication, but instead could be perceived as a communication strategy which conveyed a great deal. The research provides important and detailed insights into different cultures and their use of silence, and significantly asserts the importance of using different models within different cultural contexts to explore silence. Additionally, Sholekar and Shoghi (2017) investigated how four dimensions of culture; involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission, impact on three main types of silence: obedient, defensive and prosocial silence. The study was based on university staff in Azad University in Tehran. The results indicated that organisational culture had a significant impact on organisational silence and voice of faculty members. However, it was not clear how prominent silence

is within this organisation, what the dominant features (values) of the culture were, or what dominant types of silence were presented there.

Research by Huang *et al.* (2005) looked at collective silence within organisational contexts across 24 countries, and thus drew on data from several different cultures, examining the differences between countries with large power distance cultures and those with small power distance cultures. The study examined formalized employee involvement, perceived participative climate and power distance. They found a significant relationship between power distance and collective silence. Therefore, they show a relationship between two variables, but it is not clear whether if the level of power distance were to change within an organisation, that will have a direct impact the level of silence within the organisation. In addition, importantly, the study's approach to measuring withholding opinion is arguably not valid. For example, asking participants how they rate their own weaknesses and strengths, does not seem to accurately reflect whether they are silent or not. Thus, some of the factors used to measure issues of withholding are questionable in their validity. In another study which explored power distance, as well as collectivism, Dedahanov *et al.* (2016) explored the relationship between these and silence, and stress in industrial companies in South Korea. They conceptualized silence as one type of silence (relational) and consider silence to be the effect of power distance and collective dimensions and as a cause of stress. It is also possible, however, that other influential variables in relation to silence are overlooked, and the researchers do not seem to acknowledge that power distance and collectivism may be only part of the explanation for silence here. The reliance on Hofstede's model, and on just two of these dimensions, for explaining silence - whilst underlining the importance of the relationship between several factors - is arguably limited as it provides an incomplete picture of the way in which silence works between, for example, employees and their managers.

3.4.4.5.   *Summary*

What can be seen, then, from the organisational silence literature is that what is 'organisational' about these silences is: the causes are external to those individuals (coming from the management for example); the silent individuals share similar reasons for falling silent, whether or not they are aware of each other's reasons for falling silent, or even if they do not know that a silence has descended; the organisations suffers from these silences by, for example, not being aware of valuable information that the silent individuals are withholding. In the case of the latter situation, silence itself becomes a cause of avoidable problems in the organisation. At this point, the organisational silence literature seems to argue that organisational silence turns from being a dependent variable into an independent variable, which has its own damaging effects. It could also be argued, however, that the assumption that individuals simply 'exist', and that they act rationally to maximize 'utility' or to protect whatever utility they possess, are assumptions that few organisational silence writers are willing to state explicitly, nor to examine critically. It is also noteworthy that whilst most of the literature on silence has presented silence as an organisational phenomenon; it has not explicitly linked the occurrence of silence to a classification of thought styles which may be generated a the organisational level. This potentially important gap is systematically addressed in the present study.

There are a range of factors that lead to organisational silence, and it is important to be aware of the potential impact of all of these. As Saqib and Arif (2017) argue, the reasons for employee silence behaviour could relate to leadership behaviours, the personality of the follower, or socio-cultural factors like power distance. We can see that there are emotional causes, work or operational causes, and managerial or policy-related causes all at play, as key causes of silence in the organisation. Different causes of silence depict different relationships with different types of silence. In the next section, the types of silence are therefore discussed.

3.4.5. Types of Silence

A range of research on organisational silence has examined different types/forms of silence, as well as the association between organisational factors and silence (Brinsfield, 2013). This has included, for instance, studies on communication opportunities and the frequency of expressed opinions (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005), and research on the relationship between silence and centralisation (Park and Keil, 2009). Neither of these studies, however, investigated the intentions of - and motivations behind - remaining silent, which cannot simply be characterised by the behaviour of remaining silent (Dedahanov *et al.*, 2015). This section reviews existing evidence on types of silence and explores potential limitations and gaps in knowledge here. It should be noted that the types of silence (prosocial, acquiescent, quiescent and opportunistic) mainly examine the causes of silence and the form in which silence occurs. For example, in prosocial silence, the idea is to keep silent whilst protecting others; this is a form and a cause. Thus, in the discussion of the types of silence, we are examining the form of silence as they are. For the purposes of the current research, silence is understood to involve the withholding of information both written and unwritten. An understanding of the types of silence thus requires an understanding of the causes.

Different types of silence emerge from different employee motives (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne *et al.,* 2003), and it is thus important to distinguishing between these to understand the silence phenomenon (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011). Early researchers within the field of silence, referred to a range of different types of silence, such as psycholinguistic, interactive and sociocultural silences (Bruneau, 1973), supportive silence and inexpressive silence (Molseed, 1989 cited Tasdoven and Kaya, 2014) and deep silence, true silence and open silence (Muldoon, 1996). Later, within the organisational behaviour field, Pinder and Harlos (2001) adopted some of these forms of silence, categorising them instead as just two types; quiescent and acquiescent. Van Dyne *et al.* (2003) subsequently added a third type; prosocial and re-named quiescent silence as defensive silence to encompass elements of fear. Researchers have tended to follow

these scholars in the ways in which they classify types of silence, with only slight variations in terminology. Rezabeygi and Almasi (2014), for instance, labelled the types submissive, defensive and friendly silence, but referred to the same forms of silence. Similarly, Mirmohhamdi and Marefat (2014) refer to acquiescent, self-protective and other-oriented silence, which encompass the above forms of silence. An additional category of opportunistic silence has also been included by Knoll and Van Dick (2013a). Furthermore, research has also attempted to combine a range of these different classifications; including acquiescent, defensive, prosocial, deviant, diffident, ineffectual, disengagement and opportunistic silence (Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017).

Some scholars have focused on just one type of silence, particularly defensive silence, in order to look in more detail at silence as something related to fear (Kim *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2017), or on types of silence which relate to specific issues, such as race (Diem and Carpenter, 2013). Further classification of defensive silence has also been made, with Gambarotto and Cammozzo (2014) offering four types: non-deliberative defensive silence (high level of fear), schema-driven defensive silence (low level fear allowing for action), deliberative defensive silence (low level fear allowing time to consider the cost of voice) and habituated silence (passive action regarding fear). In addition, some scholars have included types of silence which arguably fall outside the definition of silence. Brinsfield (2013), for example, classified silence according to five types of silence: deviant silence, relational silence, defensive silence, diffident silence, and ineffectual silence. When examined carefully, it is evident that he makes some overlap between types of silence. He also uses deviant silence and diffident silence, with the former referring to unethical errors which people do not speak up about, and the latter being about the lack of confidence that prevents people from speaking up. In both, we believe they are outside the definition of silence, as when talking about silence, we are not thinking about unethical or moral issues, or lack of confidence, and we would not assume that the breaking of silence would occur through pushing people to admit to unethical behaviour. If people hide something, it is likely to relate to factors outside of immoral or confidence issues.

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Whilst a range of different labels have been used within the literature to describe different types of silence, then, when closely examined, it appears that these types overlap and tend to encompass four main types of silence. For the purposes of the following discussion, the researcher uses the most commonly applied labels for the four main types of silence addressed in the literature; quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial and opportunistic. Quiescent silence has sometimes been referred to as defensive (Bagheri *et al.*, 2012; De Wang and Hsieh, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2014; Kutanis *et al.*, 2014; Rhee *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2017); acquiescent has variously termed submissive silence (Foshat and Zarei, 2017) and obedience silence (Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015); and pro-social silence has been labelled as pro-active (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003; Kutanis *et al.*, 2014) and altruistic silence (Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015; Foshat and Zarei, 2017). Opportunistic silence, on the other hand, has received relatively little attention (although see Knoll and Van Dick, 2013a and Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017). These scholars built on the early work of Ferris and Judge (1991) in the field of human resources, who referred to opportunistic silence as that which emerges from the self-centred or egotistic nature of employees to hide something in order to benefit.

3.4.5.1.   Quiescent Silence

Quiescent silence, sometimes referred to as defensive silence, occurs when employees choose to remain silent even though, and perhaps because, they are not comfortable. It is often associated with psychological safety (Edmonson, 1999). Some scholars divide silence into two main types; passive and proactive. Passive is used to refer to acquiescent silence, whilst proactive includes defensive and prosocial silence (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003; Mirmohhamdi and Marefat; 2014). Defensive silence is therefore regarded as proactive, but also a form of avoidance behaviour (Kiewitz *et al.*, 2016), which is deliberate (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). As Van Dyne *et al.* (2003: 1367) explain, "Defensive silence is intentional and proactive behaviour that is intent to protect the self from external threats". Harbalioğlu and Gültekin (2014) stated that this occurs when an individual decides that sharing information with others is too personally risky. It is also more commonly

associated with particular emotions, for instance, anger, fear, cynicism and despair (in contrast to acquiescent which is associated with resignation) (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). Jahanbakhshian *et al.* (2015) argue, however, that it is not about a simple difference between being passive or proactive, but rather silence is complicated and multi-dimensional, and therefore sometimes silence is also strategic. This is also supported by Laeeque and Bakhtawari (2014) who suggest that employee silence can be pre-planned behaviour in order to protect the individual from negative consequences.

Defensive silence, it is argued, is aimed at protecting the employee themselves (Aydin *et al.*, 2016), from, for instance, punishment (Milliken *et al.*, 2003; Bisel and Arterburn, 2012; Altinkurt, 2014), retaliation (Milliken *et al.*, 2003), exclusion or sanctions (Kiewitz *et al.*, 2016), being labelled a trouble-maker or whistle blower (Brinsfield, 2013; Akinci et al., 2014; Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017), damaging of relationship with others (Kiewitz *et al.*, 2016), loss of job (Guo *et al.*, 2018), not gaining a promotion (Azukum, 2014; Guo *et al.*, 2018), or not gaining some other form of reward (Van Dyne *et al.,* 2003). Although silence may arise because of fear of what might happen if employees give voice to their perceptions, defensive silence also tends to exist when employees are not sure of what will happen to them, if they try to 'rock the boat' (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). Thus, employees fail to share their knowledge and thoughts for fear of negative consequences (Azukum, 2004; Riantoputra *et al.*, 2016). It has also been suggested that quiescent silence often occurs when employees deem themselves to be lesser performers, or when they do not feel secure (Altinkurt, 2014), and is experienced when employees are subjected to a relationship with an authoritarian leader (Guo *et al.*, 2018). As such, it is suggested that quiescent silence exists where power flows from the top to the bottom in an organisational structure (Blackman and Sadler-Smith, 2009; Morrison and Rothman, 2009). Studies on this type of silence have thus examined how power can be the underlying basis for inducing a state of silence in an organisation (Pinder and Harlos, 2001).

Scholars have also looked further at quiescent or defensive silence, separating it into several different forms. Gambarotto and Cammozzo (2014), for instance, discuss how fear-related silence can present as different types of silence. This includes non-deliberative defensive silence, which is where individuals feel they cannot speak because of high level fear, or schema-driven defensive silence, where low-level fear enables deliberate action from the employee. In addition, deliberative defensive silence refers again to a low level form of fear where individuals can weigh up the cost of speaking, and finally, habituated silence relates to passive behaviour which prevents negative outcomes. Such insights provide developed understanding of silence based on fear, and according to level of fear, and further research here would be beneficial to the field.

Whilst the majority of scholars look at quiescent silence as any practice of silence related to fear, some scholars have perhaps taken the concept to extremes. Harbalioğlu and Gültekin (2014) mention that defensive silence emerges (and similarly, deviant silence for Brinsfield, 2013) from a sense of guilt about personal faults or mistakes. It could be argued that such a notion falls outside of the scope of the definition of organisational silence addressed within this research, and by the majority of scholars in this field. If, for example, employees hide personal behaviour or action which is immoral or unethical, this cannot be considered silence; it is a moral and ethical issue. We would therefore not assume that people would be likely to tell their managers about such action, and it can thus, not be considered a form of organisational silence. In the current research, then, quiescent silence reflects any behaviour or withholding of information, views and suggestions related to fear and negative consequences.

3.4.5.2. Acquiescent Silence

Acquiescent silence, like quiescent silence, has been examined in many studies, and has its origins in the work of Hirschman (1970) and Kahn (1990) who believe that there are always problems in organisations and, by implication, any number of reasons for silence. The literature has shown how silence can also be caused by a sense of hopelessness or

resignation (Pinder and Harlos, 2001) and low self-efficacy (Riantoputra *et al.*, 2016). Thus, people have many motivations for remaining silent, one of which relates to feelings of disengagement (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003), which might relate to neglect or obedience (Akuzum, 2014), and it is this which is considered acquiescent silence. As Van Dyne *et al.* (2003) explain, acquiescent silence is something which involves passive behaviour, or employees being submissive. Mirmohhamdi and Marefat (2014: 1776) state, for instance, that this form of silence involves individuals refraining "from providing ideas, information and opinions according to submission to any condition".

Acquiescent silence usually develops when there is widespread realisation that it may not be possible to make any meaningful changes to the situation (Kahn 1990; Cakici, 2008; Harbalioğlu and Gültekin, 2014; Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015; Riantoputra *et al.*, 2016). Individuals feel inadequate and believe that their thoughts will not be valued or result in any significant contribution to the organisation (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Yildiz, 2013; Altinkurt, 2014), will not be considered worthy by senior executives (Managheb *et al.*, 2018), or they feel personally incapable of influencing the situation (Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017). It may also be that they have made suggestions in the past that have been ignored, thus leading to an inducement to remain silent (Morrison, 2014). Thus, this form of silence emerges when employees feel certain that their opinions will not make a difference (Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017), or when they do not have a desire to make a difference in the organisation (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011). This leads to a tolerance and acceptance of the situation (Riantoputra *et al.*, 2016), or employee obedience, where there is "full acceptance of organisational conditions and situations without questioning and stresses on the limited awareness of current alternatives" (Harbalioğlu and Gültekin, 2014: 154). Dimitrias and Vakola (2003) similarly highlight the importance of employees not being aware of alternatives when they engage in this form of silence. Not speaking out may indicate a sense of exasperation among employees that might have existed for a long period of time (Burman, 2011).

3.4.5.3.   *Prosocial Silence*

Prosocial silence tends to sit between the two extremes of silence types; acquiescent and quiescent. Van Dyne *et al.* (2003: 1368) define this form of silence as "withholding work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organisation - based on altruism or cooperative motives". It is a type of silence which is considered intentional and discretionary (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003), and in contrast to acquiescent silence, indicates an awareness of alternatives, allowing individuals to consciously decide to withhold information or ideas (Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003). It is therefore a comfortable form of silence, which Geiger and Swim (2016) denote might be exercised selectively, especially on matters that someone may choose to accept or ignore (Bolino, 2016). The argument that we can see emerging here is that the person keeping silent has some degree of choice or freedom unlike in quiescent and acquiescent silence. Thus, prosocial silence is an intentional, deliberate and non-passive form of silence (Mirmohhamdi and Marefat, 2014; Sholekar and Shoghi, 2017), which is described as being similar to organisational citizenship behaviour (Mirmohhamdi and Marefat, 2014).

This form of silence also centres around others or on the organisation (Korsgaard *et al.*, 1997). Prosocial silence, for instance, depicts a situation where the employees decide that it is worth their silence, because if they speak out, they may cause a state where policies are disregarded or where policies are enforced with relation to a certain issue of interest (Deniz *et al*., 2013; Rhee *et al*., 2014). This form of silence is associated with the fact that employees may be of the view that silence is good for the organisation. It is suggested that such silence is not caused by organisational pressure, but rather it indicates employees' willingness to demonstrate cooperation with the organisation (Fletcher and Watson, 2007; Whiteside and Barclay, 2013), and to not share information where this would be considered undesirable (Tan, 2014; Tavakoli *et al.,* 2016). It may also be that individuals feel the need to protect friends or colleagues who have been implicated in a problematic situation (Richard 2003, cited in Akbarian et al., 2015). It is suggested, then, that prosocial silence occurs in two ways; either the employee stays silent to ensure the

benefit of the organisation, or remains silent to protect or ensure advantages for other workers (Laeeque and Bakhtawari, 2014; Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017).

Prosocial silence is a type of silence that thus can indicate that the organisation is being managed in the right way, but at the same time, it can also depict underlying issues in the organisation, such that the employees are comfortable not to speak about and think of in the organisation at any one time (Dedahanov *et al*., 2016). The need to keep some information from others, can be beneficial in some circumstances but not in all (Bolino, 2016). The temporary motive that can warrant the prosocial silence to persist in the organisation may however result in other forms of silence in the organisation (Mazzei 2007). Questions have been raised about whether the employees who depict prosocial silence are loyal to the organisation or not (Gleeson 2016; Pirie, 2016). When they remain silent, employees shift attention from the organisation and thus their full commitment to the good of the organisation is compromised (Gleeson, 2016). According to Detert and Edmondson (2011), the situation in the organisation that makes keeping quiet the norm could be the self-censorship relating to taken-for-granted rules, which employees have learnt to follow. Nevertheless, this concept neither properly explains the taken-for-granted rules nor provides a link between silence and the rules.

3.4.5.4. Opportunistic Silence

Studies on opportunistic silence have, to date, been limited and as such, this type of silence remains under-examined. This form of silence refers to employees withholding information for one's own gain (Knoll and van Dick, 2013a), or keeping quiet for personal gain (Loyens, 2013a; 2013b). It involves the placing of personal goals, motives and gains above the goals of the organisation (Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017) and draws on Williamson's concept of opportunism (Williamson 1985), which is presented as self-interest. Opportunism is presented as self-seeking tendency that overrides the other needs, and as such the examination of this form of silence is such that it allows the person withholding the information to have a degree of freedom as to when and how to withhold

or release such information. This individualistic tendency is mainly based on the need to compete with others, and as such, when information is withheld, there is need to gain (Knoll and van Dick, 2013a). We quickly identify a sense of individualistic thought style, here, where persons withholding information tend to have a motive to gain from withholding information (Brinsfield, 2009). The individualism or individualistic or self-centeredness that characterises this form of silence also gives us an idea about the nature of the person withholding such information.

3.4.5.5. *Types of Silence and the Significance of Thought Styles*

It is clear, then, that scholars in the literature on silence give a variety of classifications of the types of silence. Based on the findings of the literature review and discussion given above, it can be seen that although the literature on silence is relatively developed, there are a number of views on silence that are subjective and require further inquiry. There is no doubt that there is a need to examine whether there exist other forms of silence and how they arise in organisations, which are the focus of the present study. Whilst the literature covers four main types of silence, for instance, the current study argues that there are a variety of different types of silence; more than the literature indicates. In addition, the current study seeks to identify the association between the existing and any other form of silence with the thought styles.

The current study claims that existing literature ignores the position of hierarchy thought style, and this leads to different types of silence which have not been covered in the literature. This research focused on the work of Knoll and van Dick (2013a), which is considered one of the most important studies in recent years, and employed their view of types of silence. Knoll and van Dick (2013a) place their work within the field of psychology which is closely related with issues of organisational behaviour of the employees. The authors state that individual behaviour can inform silence or prohibitive voice and employees tend to experience these scenarios when they are challenged to their economic, social and legal environment. The authors highlight four forms of silence that

can exist in an organisation: quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial and opportunistic. These are similar to those classified by other authors, but with the addition of one of the most important types of silence which has tended to be overlooked in the literature; opportunistic. The current research deduced, however, that Knoll and van Dick (2013a) are unaware about the link between three types of silence, which they stated; quiescent, acquiescent and prosocial with three types of thought styles; fatalistic, hierarchical and egalitarian, even though they provide a clear understanding of the types of silence. So the current study relies on their work about the types of silence, and tried to explore the previous claim about the potential for more types of silence within the organisation.

As previously mentioned, the literature on organisational silence could be argued to be lacking in explanatory value, and so within the current research, an alternative perspective is proposed to address such limitations; the GGCT approach. Although GGCT is good at understanding what is going on in people's heads, it does not begin with the 'pre-social' individual actors that the organisational silence writers begin with. Thompson et al. (1990) use the concept of the 'dividual' to emphasise that any individual is a cultural subject (with thoughts that are enabled culturally). It has been stressed that GGCT does *not* posit the existence of billions of individuals and makes no use of the concept of 'personality'. GGCT is a sociological, rather than a psychological, theory so it is not concerned with individual differences. In this paradigm rather than people being individuals, they are cultural subjects whose opinions result from having been immersed in societies characterized by variations in social regulation and variations in social solidarity.

It could be argued that GGCT offers a more appropriate approach to handling variations in thinking than the organisational silence literature in general. It explains how feelings, thoughts and actions arise and it does so far more dynamically than the organisational silence literature. GGCT explains what feelings, thoughts and actions are available to us. Pre-social individuals just could not feel, think and act as we do. They would only have the limited repertoires of 'animal spirits', as the economist Keynes called them

(1936/2018). An individual's animal spirits do not quality as an explanation, because it places the supposed cause - personalities - beyond the reach of theory. The pre-social individual, utility-maximizing personality assumed by so many organisational silence writers is invisible to us. The literature does not explain why individuals have the personalities they happen to have; they just 'are'. Nor does it have much to say on why individuals have the particular preferences which they have, nor why they want what they want. GGCT, by contrast, argues that one person differs from the next and is similar to another in ways that are easy to understand (dynamic and conflicting thought styles), as social qualities, without relying on any 'animal spirits' (Keynes, 1936/2018) which may inhabit us. Of course it is not inconceivable that some proportion of our feelings are biological in origin, but it is not necessary to make that assumption in order to arrive at a dynamic explanation for the diversity of silences indicated in the literature, and an explanation as to why silence types are not infinite in their variety.

The findings from the current study - as offered by the interviewees - fitted easily into the GGCT typology. The reasoning described, for instance, was rational, yet there is a minimum of four ways of being rational. The Rational Choice Theory that is implicit in most organisational silence literature cannot offer a transparent explanation for the different ways in which actors read the context they are in. The result is that organisational silence writers have overlooked silence types that GGCT enables us to detect and understand in detail. GGCT also explains why silences (of any type) come to an end. The transition from silence to voice is as culturally dynamic as are the silences themselves. In the current study, for instance, it is suggested that quiescent silence is linked with the *fatalistic* thought style. This occurs in particular in relation to the power relationship between employee and manager. In a study by Loyens (2013: unpaged) which examined the link between thought styles and peer reporting, and emphasised that when employees take the position of fatalism, actually they would not report peers, because they believe that "it is not any of my business and being a snitch would only make life more difficult". Another perspective, however, that is said to result in fatalistic tendency, quite different in its causal factors; is proposed by Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran (2005) in their

study on whistleblowing in organisations. They found that it is not only the managers who may cause employees to show quiescent silence, but fellow employees. This situation can arise, for example, when people remain silent because of apprehension or fear of reprisal from potential perpetrators who may cause trouble for them. Thus, observance of this type of silence could also be a reflection of an individualistic and egalitarian thought style. Thus, previous literature suggests that power is an important organisational factor because it fosters an environment of fear that leads to silence, perhaps relating to the fatalistic position of those remaining silent.

Thus, behind the organisational silence literature (which appears to be sociological) is a pre-social model of the actor. Organisational silences, as described by the writers, are really 'arenas' in which already formed persons encounter each other and try to improve whatever their situation happens to be. Most organisational silence writing refers to what looks like a social phenomenon (the organisation) without understanding that organisations are in a permanent state of being made and unmade culturally. Thompson et al. (1990) are very clear: and talk of 'organising and disorganising', rather than organisations and personalities. Individuals are in a state of organizing and organising just as much as organisations are because individuals and 'organisations' are intelligible cultural phenomena, not animals. Of course, many of us act as 'competitive utility maximisers', but that way of life is as much a cultural creation as are any of the three other thought styles.

3.4.6.   Silence and Context

In this section, the researcher synthesises the findings of the review of literature onorganisational silencewith a focus on silence in the context. This section is divided in to three subsections. The first subsection reports the findings of literature on silence in relation to three specific context theories i.e. Hofstede's (2008) cultural theory, Lewis' theory of values (Railton, 2015) and Hall's (1976) theory of high/low context. The second subsection presents the findings on literature on silence in a general context and focuses on cultural in general and other factors influencing silence. The third subsection

synthesises the findings of the review of literature on silence in specific contexts including silence in the context of Muslim countries.

3.4.6.1.   Silence and Context Theories

The findings of literature review undertaken by the researcher reveal that earlier researchers have applied different theories and models such as Hofstede's (2008) model, high and low context by (Hall, 1976) and values theory (Railton, 2015) for studying silence in organisations. The most commonly earlier researchers have applied cultural factors, such as high/low power distance, high/low context, masculinity/femininity and collectivism/individualism in different contexts (Petkova *et al*., 2015). However, the results are puzzling because the findings are similar in some studies despite being conducted in different contexts/countries while some studies show differences in the findings. For example, researchers have used cultural dimensions of the Hofstede's model to study silence but their results are inconsistent. The literature review shows that power distance leads to acquiescent silence and punishment produces defensive silence in a study that involved participants from 24 countries (Huang *et al*., 2005) and the same findings were noted in a study undertaken in only one country, in South Korea (Rhee *et al*., 2014); however, a study in the context of Singapore found no relationship between power distance and silence (Ho *et al*., 2013). These contradictory findings compel the researcher to ponder on the reasons for the differences as mentioned above. The researcher argues that the contradictory findings may suggest that it is not the context that makes findings similar or dissimilar but it is the theoretical underpinning such as the use of Hofstede's cultural model that results in differences in the findings. It is also argued that since researchers could not control the context/countries but they can change their theoretical stances to study silence to avoid inconsistencies.

Some researchers have studied silence using Hofstede's model in combination with other theories. For example, Botero and Van Dyne (2009) studied silence in the context of Columbia and the US by jointly applying the power distance dimension of Hofstede's

model (1980) and the Leader Member Exchange (LXM) theory, which relates to the quality of relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate (Dansereau *et al*., 1975; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995 cited by Botero and Van Dyne, 2009) where a high level of LMX relationship promotes speaking up while a low level of LMX relationship supports silence (Fasithurst, 1993; Krone, 1991, 1992 cited by Botero and Van Dyne, 2009). They found a significant positive relationship between the power distance and LMX despite historical differences in cultural values in the two countries (Botero and Van Dyne, 2009). These findings may suggest that consideration of only cultural dimensions might not be helpful in knowing the silence phenomena in different nations, which may need additional theoretical model(s) to better understand the phenomena. This argument could be supported from the findings of empirical studies onorganisational silencethat applied high power distance and collectivism in different contexts, in India (Jain, 2015), Nigeria (Umar and Hassan, 2013) and South Korea (Dedahanov *et al*., 2016), but concluded that social and cultural perspectives (Jain, 2015) and cultural values (Umar and Hassan, 2013) were imperative for better understanding of the silence phenomena.

Interesting findings are reported by Petkova *et al*. (2015), who studied silence in Japan and Finland, that are different from each other on Hofstede's cultural dimensions but found that there were similarities in the perception, use and preferences of remaining silent due to similarities in social values (such as privacy) and sensitivity to feedback (face saving). These authors concluded that spiritual or religious values and inner psychological experiences and emotions play a role in silence (Petkova *et al*., 2015). The findings of Petkova *et al.* (2015) suggest that the parameters explaining silence can be similar is two context/countries (for instance, Japan and Finland) even when they stand away from each other on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Findings of another study that applied Hofstede's model in two different contexts i.e. South Korea and the USA and reported that collectivist societies (such as South Korean) tend to say more albeit more politely than in individualistic societies (such as the US) that are more vocal (Choi *et al*., 2016); hence, the observance of silence could be different between the two types of societies/contexts. A literature review of fifteen studies on silence conducted in Thailand

concluded that silence in Asia is generally viewed differently (mainly respectful) as opposed to the way it is viewed in the Western world (Komolsevin et al 2010). This perspective has been supported by a later study that applied Collectivism vs Individualism dimension of Hofstede's model in the context of Japan reported that silence may be a form of communication is some societies like Japan, which is not the case in some of the Western countries (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015).

These findings may propose that Hofstede's model might not be suitable and sufficient in explaining silence phenomena in a particular context. Therefore, several researchers have criticised Hofstede's cultural model for a number of limitations (Eringa *et al*., 2015). For example, the binary construction of cultural dimensions in Hofstede's model that represents a developed and modern view characterising the Western countries and an undeveloped, traditional and backword view that represents the rest of the world (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007). Hofstede's model has also been challenged to be static and not dynamic and it provides a very simplistic view of cultural variations (Signorini *et al*., 2009 cited by Eringa *et al.*, 2015). The validity of Hofstede's model has been criticised because it presents a Western, post-colonial scientific view (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007). Thus, researchers like Orr and Hauser (2008, p. 16) have called for revisiting of Hofstede's cultural dimensions in the context of cross-cultural attitudes in the present times.

In addition, researchers have questioned Hofstede' methodological approach i.e. using surveys for studying employees' perspectives and applying the results to the whole nation, which is not suitable for studying cultural differences between nations (McSweeney, 2002). This weakness has been accepted by Hofstede (2001) who has suggested other researchers to suggest other methods of data collection in addition to surveys. Hofstede's cultural model especially its dimensions have also come under attack and alleged to be politically influenced (Jones and Alony, 2007). Moreover, Hofstede's model is strongly quantitative in nature (Fougère and Moulettes, 2007), which may suggest that Hofstede's model might not be suitable for qualitative enquiry.

Taking note of the weaknesses in the Hofstede's model, researchers like Nishimura et al (2008) applied three principles from three different theories/models, for instance, high/low context culture (Hall, 1976, 1983), individualism/collectivism dimension (Hofstede, 2008) and Western vs. Eastern values and cultural categories of communication for studying silence and other communication styles in Finland, India and Japan and concluded that combining of all these three principles provided provide better understanding of communication styles. However, the researcher argues that combining of three different theories to explain the silence in diverse contexts without a convincing reasoning by Nishimura *et al*. (2008) suggest that these theories separately are probably not sufficient to explain the silence phenomena. The researcher therefore claims that the GGCT may be an alternate theory that could provide a more suitable theoretical framework in explaining the silence phenomena.

3.4.6.2. Silence and Context: Culture Factors in General

A number of studies have shown that organisational silence results because of organisational culture (Premeaux, 2001; Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Milliken *et al.,* 2003; Danaeefard *et al*. 2011; Nikolaou et al., 2011; Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015; Akbarian *et al*. 2015; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016). In addition, empirical literature shows that specific types of organisational culture are associated with specific types of silence such as the association of support culture with pro-social silence (Taskiran *et al*., 2015). A number of earlier studies have shown that employees observe silence due to organisational culture and individual factors (such as Milliken *et al.,* 2003; Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Walumbwa and Schaubroeck, 2009; De Wang and Hsieh, 2013), which is because silence is not an individualist static phenomenon but a group dynamic that reflects some sort of a group/society level agreement to observe silence is specific situations (Zerubavel, 2006 cited in Karaca, 2013). Thus, it may be argued that silence does not comes from within an individual, but it is a reflection of a society level phenomenon. Hence, the study of silence needs a good examination of culture looking through different lenses such as 'culture as a pattern,

culture as authorship, culture as a boundary and culture as a critical dialog' (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2016).

However, organisational culture is influenced not only by the internal culture such as the management and a hierarchical order (Jahanbakhshian *et al*., 2015) but also by the external culture that moves to the organisation (Garon 2012; Sholekar and Shoghi 2017). For example, Milliken and Morrison (2003) and Milliken *et al.* (2003) studied silence with a focus on the culture in general and they argue that people remain silent when they see that other people will not support their position. Employees could remain silent due to self-protective practices and authoritative standards and rules in organisations (Argyris, 1977 cited by Milliken *et al*., 2003) and when there is less supportive or unfavourable context and a higher uncertainty and fear of negative repercussions (Milliken *et al*., 2003). These viewpoints suggest that silence is produced by the culture of the context, which has been called as the systematic culture of silence in organisations (Huang *et al*., 2005).

However, some researchers have reported that silence is produced by psychological factors that arise from the personality characteristics of an employee (Premeaux and Bedeian, 2003; Donaghey *et al*., 2011). Therefore, studying silence phenomenon in specific contexts/organisations need consideration of not only approaches of organisational, cognitive, and social sciences but also the study of sociotechnical systems and theories and a deeper examination and analysis at different levels, for instance, individual, organisational and social levels (Henriksen and Dayton, 2006). In addition, the overview of the findings of many studies on silence reported above shows that there is a relationship between silence and culture, which could be the national culture or organisational culture, as described in the following sub-section.

3.4.6.3. *Silence in Specific Contexts Including Muslim Countries*

This subsection provides an overview of the relationship between silence and culture in specific contexts, with a special focus on developing countries in general with a particular attention to Muslim countries in the Middle East, which offer interesting contexts to study

silence due to their unique cultural, social, religious and economic settings. Earlier studies show that silence is viewed differently in the Western countries and other countries; for example, silence is generally viewed as respectful in high context countries such as Thailand (Komolsevin *et al.,* 2010), Nigeria (Umar and Hassan, 2013) and Japan (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015), which is opposed to the way it is viewed in the Western, low context, world (Komolsevin *et al.*, 2010).

However, earlier research on silence shows that country indicators are not enough for explaining the cultural differences because there are large cultural differences between regions in a country; hence, different cultural dimensions may be considered for studying silence in specific countries (Kassa *et al.*, 2014). Silence may also be influenced by the strategic motives, for example, Japanese people may use silence as a strategy for face saving (Nakane, 2006) while others use silence as a strategy for being polite (Sifianou, 1997).

Earlier studies also show that specific country context provide varying evidence on the association between silence and the culture. For example, a study of silence using power distance and collectivism in the context of India reveals that consideration of social and cultural perspectives were imperative for understanding of silence in the country (Jain, 2015). The empirical studies on silence in the context of South Korea shows that power distance and collectivism produce acquiescent silence but they have no influence on prosocial silence while punishment increases defensive silence (Rhee *et al.*, 2014) and relational silence is promoted by power distance and collectivism (Dedahanov *et al.*, 2016). The findings from two developing Asian countries show that specific cultural dimensions of Hofstede's model have association with some particular types of silence but not all types of silence and there is varying evidence on the association between silence and cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism. Therefore, one wonders whether the differences in the association between types of silence and type of cultural dimensions are because of the differences in the country context or the limitation of the cultural dimensions in explaining the silence types and silence phenomena.

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Researchers such as Lu and Xie (2013) have argued that silence is influenced by specific national cultures such as the Chinese culture because of its unique values like Confucianism and collectivism. Evidence from Japan shows that silence is may be a form of communication and a reflection of the national cultural norms, uneasiness and absence of agreement and social expectations such as being evasive and using expressions such as giving complex reasoning and talking about numerous things to show the silence (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015). A recent study undertaken in the USA and South Korea shows that collectivist societies (such as South Korea) have a tendency to say more albeit more politely than in individualistic societies (such as the USA) (Choi *et al*., 2016). Evidence from Turkey - a muslim country in the Middle East - shows that remaining silent or practicing silence is considered as a 'cultural norm' in the Turkish society (Eroğlu *et al.,* 2011 cited by Alparslan *et al*., 2015).

Several studies show that the national culture in developing countries including Muslim countries such as Turkey and Iran show that silence is a national problem that has permeated in to the organisations (Akbarian *et al.* 2015; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016). A deeper look in to these studies from these Muslim countries reveals that the silence is presented at two levels: the first level involves seniors vs. subordinates (Akbarian *et al*., 2015), and the second level relates masculinity vs femininity orientations, which exists in these countries (Akbarian *et al.,* 2015; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016). Iran and Turkey have an orientation of masculinity, and as such, the positions at work are male dominated, and due to cultural practices, women tend not to question the activities of the men at workplace, even if they are people of the same job level (Akbarian *et al*., 2015). In addition, inequalities in power result in to silent only at the member level but also at the managerial level (Askun Celik *et al*., 2010). These findings show that silence at various levels is promoted by the culture at both the national and the organisational levels.

3.4.6.4.   Summary

The present study has examined the concept of organisational silence and it provides a review of literature on national and organisational culture. The synthesis of the findings of the literature shows that culture is one of the main factors that greatly influences organisational silence. However, the findings vary between studies with some studies reporting similar findings despite being undertaken in different contexts and countries while findings differ between studies despite using the similar theoretical underpinnings such as use of same cultural dimension of Hofstede's model. Some researchers have even attempted to apply three different theories, for instance, Hofstede's (2008) cultural dimension model, high and low context by Hall (1976) and values theory by Lewis (see Railton, 2015) for studying silence in organisations and found seminaries in the silence in countries, for example, in Japan and Finland, that differ on the cultural and various other dimensions.

These findings suggest reconsideration of the theoretical underpinnings and applying alternate theories such as the GGCT, which hitherto has not been applied, to explore silence in specific contexts. The researcher advocates applying GGCT for studying silence in a specific context because it provides a cultural grid divided into four quadrants, each of which represents a particular cultural perspective that can be measured on a scale ranging from a low to a high level (Douglas, 1978; Thompson *et al*., 1990). Although the researcher is not aware of any prior study that applied the GGCT to study silence phenomena, a study by Loyens (2013) that investigated applied the GGCT to report different styles of peer reporting (whistleblowing) assuming that organisational cultures induce peer reporting provides inspiration for studying the silence (instead of whistleblowing) through the GGCT framework. The researcher therefore had developed a new conceptual framework that applies the GGCT to qualitatively explore the silence phenomena in the context of education organisations in Saudi Arabia, as described in the following chapter.

3.4.7. Key Theories of Silence

This section highlights the main theoretical approaches used within studies that have examined the concept of silence within organisational behaviour. These include two key theories: the 'Spiral of Silence' and the 'mum' effect, as well as several other significant theories such as McGregor's theory of X and Y, the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the Politeness Theory, and the Defensive Theory. This section provides an overview of these and explains why they have not been selected for application in the current study.

3.4.7.1.   Spiral of Silence

One theory surrounding silence which has received considerable discussion is the 'spiral of silence' and has its roots in the work of Noelle-Neumann (1991), who stated that deviant persons often tend to be threatened with isolation in their societies. The theory suggests those who are silent in the workplace, and thus fail to voice issues, gradually tend to believe that their view is no longer valid because - due to their silence - the views of other people are heard (Moy *et al*., 2001; Askay 2014). According to Scheuffle and Moy (2000), the individuals who have different opinions (and are thus in the minority), may refrain from disclosing (or expressing) their views, in order to be part of the majority. As a result, over time, organisations may incur loss of creative and/or corrective. This spiral is closely linked to the culture that has been created in the organisation, which in many cases leads the workforce to remain silent on all issues taking place. In line with the well-known/so called notion of 'fearing isolation' that obligates people to keep silent (see Neuwirth *et al*., 2007; Toker *et al*., 2014; Yurdakul *et al*., 2016); the spiral occurs when an organisation lacks effective communication between the management and its human capital; its employees (Bowen and Blackmon, 2003; Askay, 2014). This arguably prevents performance improvements or even organisational survival.

Research indicates that the spiral of silence is not limited to any one society or region, instead occurring across many societies (Ho et al., 2013). Furthermore, the silence may occur as a response to groups, as well as individuals. Altinkurt (2014) indicated, for

instance, that silence is caused by fear of punishment at work, but can be aimed at protecting a group (of workers) as a political tactic, when the silence relates to the fear that if the information is given out, it might harm the group. This spiral can also be found to exist at personal levels of engagement, not simply at the workplace level, through fear of exposure (Bowen and Blackmon 2003). Malaspina (2014) suggests that the only way to break this spiral is if new conditions are created that can be built upon, such as creating a work environment in which the views of the workers are shown to count.

The spiral of silence theory highlights the need for the management of organisations to ensure that there are avenues in the organisation that makes it possible for the views to be treated equally. It thus provides an important insight into the issue of silence, through highlighting the need for management of organisations to consider their views, but it is important to also understand each individual according to their disposition (Malaspina 2014). This involves considering the attitudes and behaviour which an individual may showcase (Ho et al., 2013). The importance of this insightful/perspective theory overtly resides in disclosing factors that impact the individuals' unwillingness to reveal their impression towards/against others. Thus, the assumption that silence is static and one-dimensional, was considered in the current research to provide only a limited understanding of silence; rather, silence is complex and a dynamic phenomenon.

3.4.7.2. 'Mum' Effect

The need to pass messages between the parties concerned has dominated studies on organisation management and organisational behaviour over the years (Karlsen, 2015; Reid 2015). More recently, the importance of voicing or withholding information has become an important issue within the discussion of relationships that are formed within organisations and which are contextualised by different external forces. The 'mum' effect is often used to refer to where employees withhold information from the organisation (Dibble and Levine, 2010), or hide information that should not be hidden (Ramingwong and Ramingwong, 2013). It has been suggested that it can occur when subordinates are

reluctant to disagree with their supervisors, and thus engage in hierarchal silence (Bisel and Arterburn, 2012), or when an employee does not wish to give bad news to another person or group for fear of the reactions to that news, or the impact it might have on those to whom it is delivered. The 'mum effect', then, as it was originally defined, meant not talking because of concerns for the other party. These two issues - whether relating to not speaking about something that is wrong in the organisation, or not sharing information with others because of the sense of empathy - constitute an individual disposition that is guided by either organisational or personality factors, resulting in two main 'mum' behaviours; sugar-coating and avoidance (Marler *et al.*, 2012).

There are a number of factors that can lead to the 'mum effect' occurring in an organisation. Of significance, for instance, is the existing culture within the organisation, which Ramingwong and Sajeev (2010) indicate can deter employees from engaging with each other or with the organisation. In organisations where the culture that is prevailing is such that does not allow for information to be passed across, this might cause some people to keep 'mum'. Research which has considered the views of the people who have remained 'mum', has shown that they tend to so as they believe there is no harm in it (Bisel *et al.,* 2011). It appears that those who expect the information tend to disagree, however, and it has been shown that managers tend to want information which subordinates are reluctant to give, which has been viewed as unethical workplace behaviour (Sajeev and Ramingwong, 2010; Bisel *et al*., 2011; Zanin *et al*., 2015). Thus, it is regarded as a risky endeavour by Ramingwong and Sajeev (2010), who indicated that when information that is valuable is left out, the risk to the organisation may increase, because such information may prove crucial. Nonetheless, as Zanin *et al.* (2015) argue, the 'mum effect' is in fact created by the managers, and therefore efforts must be made by the organisation to reduce this in order to allow for what they call 'ethical dissent'.

From the studies presented, the question of 'mum' appears to take two major forms; first, it is the fear of not passing on information with a view that the recipient may be hurt. This information is thus both official and social (Bisel *et al*., 2011). Second, it relates to

passage of information between junior staff members and their managers or managers and their junior staff members. These two strands have thus defined the scope of 'mum', but also exposed the 'mum effect' to obvious shortcomings. It does not, for instance, exhaustively present a view of social backgrounds or other workplace conditions that might lead to the 'mum effect'. The suggestion that employers should encourage their employees to speak about unethical issues or unethical requests, is in itself encouraging whistleblowing, however, whether such can be accepted by employees or not, is subjective and needs further examination.

3.4.7.3.   Other Theories Used to Explain the Silence Phenomenon

Besides the two theories examined above, several other theories have been employed to examine the silence phenomenon, although to a lesser extent than the spiral of silence and the 'mum effect'. One such theory – McGregor's Theory X and Y (1960) examined the differences in perception that managers have for different staff members. Morrison and Milliken (2000), for instance, indicate that managers view employees as untrustworthy and self-interested, which itself may impact on the organisation, through managers or employees remaining silent (cited in Yildiz, 2013). It is not clear, however, how this view held by managers leads to silence, unless employees themselves know what the managers think about them. This theory also provides only a unidirectional flow of information (that is, information moving from the top to the bottom) (Russ, 2011), providing a limited picture here. It also focuses solely on the perspective of the management, thus overlooking that of the employees. The prescriptive basis of the theory is thus its biggest undoing considering the scope of the present study, because it is crucial to consider how silence at an individual or organisational level takes place and its causal factors.

The Planned Behaviour Theory has also been proposed to explain silence (Ajzen, 2011), and is based on an intention-behaviour correlation, where a person can change or take a certain behavioural stand due to their intentions. Ajzen (2011) noted that people's behaviour can change over time, due to events that might be beyond the control of the

person. In the study of silence using planned behaviour theory, Husrevsahi (2015) noted that there is an expectation that might drive the employees, for instance, if there is a desired outcome that might arise, an employee will talk, and otherwise they will remain silent. This perspective is based on the views of silence that have been outlined in previous studies, for example, where silence is either a protestation or a result of other factors and, as such, we do not find it to be new. In addition, this theory fails to provide a holistic view of why silence takes place in the organisation, and the assumption that there is always a 'rewarding' motive to raise voice may not necessarily be true. To this extent, considering the question of silence, using this theory, it is evident that whereas it provides us with a degree of understanding of the behaviour of the person who is showcasing silent behaviour, the theory fails to provide a clear indication as to how silence results from environmental factors. It should also be noted that speaking out may result from complaint or complement (Tucker *et al*., 2008).

The Theory of Politeness (also known as the politeness model) postulates that people observe silence to adhere to cultural norms regarding what is an appropriate conversation and what is an inappropriate conversation (Brown and Levinson, 1987 cited by Dyne et al., 2003). This theory has been applied by earlier researchers such as Scollon (1985), Brown and Levinson (1987), Sifianou (1997), Dyne et al. (2003) and Nakane (2006). Nakane (2006) applied the politeness theory to study silence among students of Japanese and Australian origin and found that Japanese students observe silence as an expression of politeness. The literature shows that politeness could be used as either positive or negative strategy, which could be an act of developing rapport and solidarity or a tactic for staying away (Saville-Troike, 1985; Tannen, 1985 cited by Sifianou, 1997). It is noteworthy that the politeness theory has cultural orientations that vary in people based on the cultural orientations of their countries, for example, American individuals have different cultural orientations to Japanese individuals (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Nakane, 2006) and South Koreans (Choi *et al*., 2016). Nonetheless, it could be argued that there are different types of silences which cannot be explained by the politeness

theory that may be applicable only in a specific context. Hence, the researcher suggests that the politeness theory may not be sufficient in explaining silence in a scientific way.

Another theory which has been applied to explain silence is the Theory of Defensive Silence which states that defensive silence is an act of self-protection or defence (Dyne *et al.*, 2003), which may involve concealment of information for the purpose of protection or because of fear (Perkins, 2014). Silence because of fear has been reported in several studies (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Milliken *et al.*, 2003; Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003; Xiaotwao *et al.*, 2008; Brinsfield, 2009; Kish-Gephart *et al.*, 2009). It was Perkins (2012; 2014), however, who developed a conceptual framework based on the defensive silence theory for studying withholding of information in communication because of fear. Here, three factors - trust, openness of communication and power - lead to withholding of information. The underlying view behind withholding of information could be a mental capacity and ability to assess the risks that might occur and as such, if the risks appear to be monumental, there will be a tendency to keep silent and vice-versa (Milliken *et al.*, 2003). Although, Perkins (2012; 2014) reports development and application of a conceptual framework based on the defensive silence theory, the main focus of his work was on 'communication project-manager-to-project-sponsor communication', rather than on silence in organisations. Therefore, such a theory cannot be fully applied for studying occupation silence, although it might be used as a type or construct of silence (see, for instance, Alparslan *et al.*, 2015).

The review of the literature shows that in studying organisational silence, researchers have also applied 'communication theory' (for example, Van Dyne *et al.*, 1995; Donaghey *et al.*, 2011), the labour process theory (LPT) (Ezzamel *et al.,* 2004), while some researchers have used hierarchical structure and organisational characteristics (Milliken *et al.*, 2003) and institutional arrangements (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). However, these theoretical stances look into silence from a narrow perspective, for example, through the view of institutional arrangements (Pinder and Harlos, 2001), which might be insufficient and ineffective in alleviating the silence through prompting raising

the voice. In another study, Saqib and Arif (2017) mention the theory of conservation as a way of explaining silence within the organisation. They suggest that if subordinates feel that their managers will not respond positively to what they have to say, they prefer to engage in avoidance behaviour. Tavakoli *et al.* (2016) have also indicated the value of Equity theory for explaining silence. They state that when employees feel they are within an unequal organisation, they present themselves as indifferent, resulting in silence. It can be concluded that extant literature on organisational silence has adopted a somewhat naive view about silence from the perspective of organisational employees. Finally, theories of personality suggest that people's personalities predict their behaviour and silence in organisations at a micro level, which appears within the frame of personality features (Malekpoor and Fakhr-Eddini, 2015). From the view of theories of personality, it can be expected that personality is one of the effective components in organisational silence. According to this perspective, silence can be reviewed and analysed from the angle of differences and features of the personality of individuals.

3.4.7.4. Summary

There are two popular theories for explaining silence; the spiral of silence and the 'mum effect', but there are some attempts by some scholars to apply other existing theories to the phenomenon. Some of these have been addressed above. These theories have tended to examine just one aspect of silence, or to be built upon one-dimensional assumptions, thus failing to provide a clear viewpoint about how silence is practiced in the organisation. Looking at silence as a phenomenon, we find a variety of dimensions and reasons for its creation. As a result, we require an appropriate social theory to explain silence as a whole. For the purposes of the current research, it is suggested that CCGT provides this more thorough and holistic perspective for examining and explaining silence.

3.5. Assessing the Contribution of Existing Literature

Most of the studies tend to apply quantitative methods to investigate silence (Huang *et al.,* 2005; Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Knoll and van Dick, 2013a; Yildiz, 2013; Wang

and Hsieh, 2013; Akuzum, 2014; Kim *et al.,* 2014; Kutanis *et al.,* 2014; Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015; Husrevsahi, 2015; Dedahanov *et al*., 2016). Of the remaining studies, reviews of the literature or developed a theoretical framework to understand silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003), and few studies applied qualitative methods (Milliken *et al.* 2003; Brinsfield, 2012; Jain, 2015), although for the latter, these were sometimes used in combination with quantitative approaches. Whilst many of the quantitative studies have provided important insights, they are perhaps limited in the extent to which they explain silence. Kutanis *et al*.'s research (2014), for example, focused on one type of employee silence; defensive (or fear-based) silence, and its relationship with emotional intelligence and trust of managers. The study collected data from employees in a dental hospital in Istanbul, Turkey and found a positive and significant relationship between emotional intelligence and trust to manager. The reliance on quantitative measures to obtain the experiences of employees, however, may be largely restrictive, as it does not allow the employees to share their experiences openly, and to present the issues that they consider to be significant.

The studies based on literature reviews or theoretical frameworks, whilst lacking in empirical evidence, have provided significant depth of analysis of how the silence phenomenon has been studied in organisational silence. Pinder and Harlos (2001), for instance, provide one of the most important studies in the field, developing a model which explores the cause, forms and meanings of silence, looking at the issue from an individual rather than an organisational level. Focusing specifically on two main forms of silence; quiescence and acquiescence, the researchers look at the role of employee perspectives on injustice within organisations and how this impacts on employee silence. They also examine the importance of context within instances of injustice. The study raises important questions about the nature of silence, questioning assumptions around silence relating simply to spoken or oral language, and presenting the possibility that silence may be broken through other forms of communication, such as by letter or email, or through body language. In line with the current researcher's beliefs, the research suggests that managers need to look beyond assumptions that silence indicates agreement or

contentment. Silence can, in fact, as they suggest, hide a range of different emotions and motivations. Furthermore, the work of Van Dyne *et al.* (2003) is important for understanding the key types of silence, including acquiescent, defensive and prosocial, as well as three parallel types of voice. It provides a more detailed and comprehensive overview of the reasons behind silence than previous studies, highlighting several different reasons for silence, including fear, co-operation with others, or the desire for self-protection. It also asserts the importance of not regarding silence and voice as polar opposites.

Whilst these studies have provided significant contributions in studying the silence phenomenon, it is important to also highlight their shortcomings. Pinder and Harlos (2001), for example, focus solely on two main forms of silence; quiescence and acquiescence, despite the fact that these are not the only forms of silence amongst employees (as shown by Van Dyne *et al.*, 2003). They do acknowledge this, however, and suggest that further research is required into the causes of different forms of silence. In addition, Van Dyne *et* al. (2003), in highlighting the limitations of their own study, particularly in relation to overlooking individual attributes, perhaps make the findings of their study appear more complicated than necessary, especially through overlapping the types of silence and causes of silence. This is a common limitation of the literature in the field, where explanation and evidence for the reasons behind silence is lacking.

The focus of the studies varies but arguably each of these provides only a partial explanation of the silence phenomenon. Several studies assume that silence has only one direction, coming from the bottom upwards (employees towards supervisors/managers) (Milliken *et al.*, 2003; Knoll and van Dick, 2013a; Jain, 2015). Milliken *et al.*'s (2003) work, for example, has been influential in the field of organisational silence, and has prompted a range of further research in the area. It examines the issues that employees fail to raise with their managers and the reasons behind this, drawing directly on the perspective of employees through their own words, thus providing in-depth insights here. The researchers assume, however, that silence emerges only from the employees towards

the managers. This overlooks the possibility of silence from managers to employees, or between employees, which provides a restrictive perspective on the complexities of silence. Furthermore, Knoll and van Dick (2013a) adopted a quantitative method, to develop a scale to assess the four types of silence; quiescent, acquiescent, opportunistic and prosocial. This study could be considered one of the most important studies on silence, providing a significant contribution to understandings of different types of silence. It is worth noting, however, that the perspective of silence as something that comes from the bottom up, again is a limited way of viewing silence. As with Milliken *et al.* (2003), in focusing simply on the relationship between subordinates and managers, they overlook how silence can also occur between colleagues. Finally, in Dedahanov *et al.*'s (2016) study, which indicated a relationship between power distance, collectivism and silence, and specifically relational silence, the researchers seemed to refer to relational silence only in terms of employees maintaining a good relationship with their managers, which does not seem to take account of other significant relationships such as those with colleagues and clients/customers or others. Thus, it is possible that the results may be misleading, as the use of the term relational silence indicates broader employee relationships, but in the context of the study, the concept is only used in reference to employees' concerns with those above them.

Some of the variables used to explain the reasons for silence, are arguably insufficient explanations. Studies have focused, for example, on power distance (Petkova, 2015; Dedahanov *et al.,* 2016), emotional intelligence and trust to manager (Kutanis *et al.*, 2014), self-esteem, self-image maintenance (Jain, 2015), justice (Akuzum, 2014), individualism and collectivism (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015). Dedahanov *et al.*'s (2016) study, for example, which focused especially on two dimensions of Hofstede's model; power distance and collectivism, and the relationship between these and silence and stress. It is also possible, however, that other influential variables in relation to silence are overlooked, and the researchers do not seem to acknowledge that power distance and collectivism may be only part of the explanation for silence here. The reliance on Hofstede's model, and on just two of these dimensions, for explaining silence – whilst

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underlining the importance of the relationship between several factors – is arguably limited as it provides an incomplete picture of the way in which silence works between, for example, employees and their managers. In research by Akuzum (2014), which examined the impact of organisational injustice level on organisational silence amongst teachers in Turkey, it was indicated that perceptions of the three types of justice had a negative and significant relationship with acquiescent silence and defensive silence, but a positive relationship with prosocial silence. As they study the relationship between justice and types of silence, however, and found different directions for the relationship between justice and types of silence, this perhaps questions the claim made by the researcher that justice is an essential factor in explaining organisational silence. Finally, in Kawabata and Gastaldo's (2015) work, which draws on previous literature to explore the concept silence - with a particular focus on the context of Japan - the researchers explain silence as reflecting social expectations, and in Japan, found that silence was not regarded as an absence of communication, but instead could be perceived as a communication strategy which conveyed a great deal. The research provides important and detailed insights into different cultures and their use of silence, and significantly asserts the importance of using different models within different cultural contexts to explore silence.

The application of dependent and independent variables within the studies also raises important questions about the validity of the findings for explaining silence. Most of the studies consider silence as the dependent variable, but some studies have viewed silence as the independent variable. Zehir and Erdogan (2011), for instance, examined employee silence through looking at three types of silence; acquiescence, defensive and prosocial, perceiving these as independent variables, to identify the impact of these types of silence on ethical leadership and then employee performance. The study reinforces the influence of leaders and managers on employee silence and indicates the importance of ethical leadership. The shift in studying silence as an independent arguably does not assist in enhancing understanding of the phenomenon.

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3.5.1. An Overview of Findings in the Literature

This literature review examined studies that have been conducted since the year 2001 to 2017. The findings are presented as themes that have emerged from the literature and the key articles under these themes. The overriding theme is that of silence as a key factor, with typology of silence presented in different aspects. Other factors presented here are either the outcomes of silence or causes of silence, mainly within an organisation.

Table 3.5 covers all types of silence reported across the organisational silence literature and this presents the researcher with the question: Might there be an overall explanation for all types observed? Could there be other forms of silence not captured within existing literature and is there a systematic and comprehensive way of capturing them?

Types of silence	Authors
Acquiescent, defensive silence, and Prosocial silence	Van Dyne et al. (2003)
Obedient silence, defensive silence, altruistic silence	Ardakani and Mehrabanfar (2015)
Deep silence, true silence and open silence	Muldoon (1996) cited in Gendron (2011)
Defensive silence	Song et al. (2017)
Defensive silence, accepted silence, silence for the benefit of organisation	Bagheri et al. (2012) cited by Tayfun Çatir (2013)
Deviant, relational, diffident, ineffectual, and disengaged silence	Brinsfield (2013) cited by Dedahanov et al. (2015)
Quiescent and Acquiescent silence	Pinder and Harlos (2001)
Defensive silence, accepted silence, silence for the benefit of organisation	Bagheri et al. (2012) cited by Tayfun Çatir (2013)
Acquiescent silence, proactive silence, defensive silence	Kutanis et al. (2014)
Acquiescent silence and defensive silence	De Wang and Hsieh (2013)
Acquiescent silence, defensive silence, Prosocial silence	Rhee et al. (2014)
Acquiescent silence, defensive silence	Huang et al. (2005)
Acquiescent silence, defensive silence	Dedahanov and Rhee (2015)
Acquiescent silence, defensive silence, Prosocial silence	Aküzüm (2014)

Supportive silences, inexpressive silences	Molseed (1989) cited by Tasdoven and Kaya (2014)
Submissive silence, defensive silence, and altruistic silence	Foshat and Zarei (2017)
Acquiescent, defensive and Prosocial silence	Taskiran et al. (2015)
Quiescent, Acquiescent, Prosocial, and opportunistic	Knoll and Van Dick (2013a)

Table 3.5. Types of Silence

Figure 3.9 Key Limitations in the Existing Literature
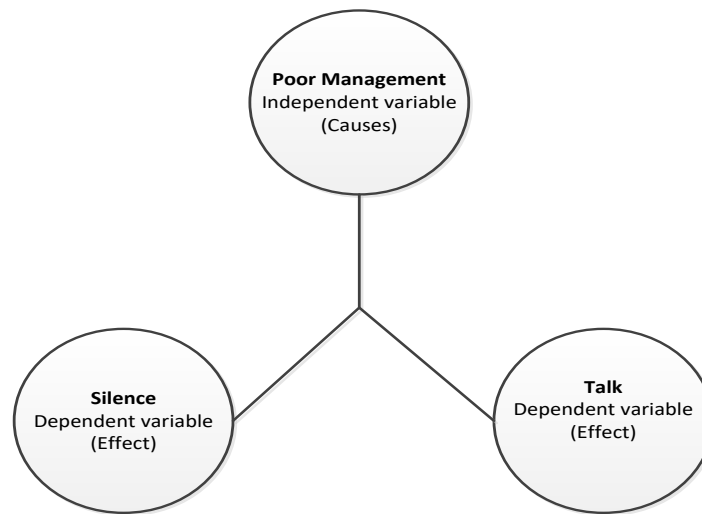
1. As indicated in Figure 3.9, it seems there is no clear link between the independent variables and the dependent variables in studying the phenomenon of silence.
2. Most of the studies tend to apply quantitative methods to investigate silence.
3. Studies based on literature reviews or theoretical frameworks, have provided significant depth of analysis.
4. Several studies have been limited by the focus on only one or two forms of silence.
5. The focus of the studies varies but each of these provides only a partial explanation of the silence phenomenon.
6. Some variables used to explain the reasons for silence are insufficient explanations.
7. The application of dependent and independent variables within the studies also raises important questions about the validity of the findings for explaining silence.
8. The literature is not dynamic and does not explain why silence is broken by communication e.g. by the 'me too movement'.
9. The explanation of (1) is common sense. Everybody knows that the frightening boss may cause junior staff to stay silent out of fear. The list is not 'informative'.
10. The theory that employees would if their managers were better, it's a theory with a hierarchical bias!

11. GGCT is dynamic, goes beyond common sense, and is transparent, parsimonious and comprehensive.

12. The existing literature has helped to develop a useful typology of silences.

13. Yet GGCT develops a better, more discerning typology which subsumes the existing typology while adding extra cases.

14. Many models of silence are limited to structured equations modelling which finds associations many variables without to offering much, if any explanations for why the relationships exist.

15. I suspect that the existing literature is poor on policy recommendations because it has none to offer. If you say 'silence is caused by bad management' this has no practical effect, because it is the managers who are in charge and they will be resistant to the idea that they need to change.

16. GGCT states that to get talk started, simply expose each thought style to all others reasoning conflicting opinions will form and we suspect, their opinions will be voiced.

3.5.2. *Knowledge Gap*

The general gap in the knowledge of organisational silence is that of a lack of a middle level theory (Merton, 1967) that pulls together the various empirical studies of the phenomenon to show how their findings could be combined to give a holistic depiction of the topic and provide explanations of the different aspects of the phenomenon.

A more specific gap in knowledge also appeared from the review of the literature of the empirical studies of this phenomenon. When trying to identify the link between types of silence according to Knoll and Van Dick (2013a) and thought styles according to Thompson et al. (1990), it became apparent that there was no type of organisational silence that corresponded to the hierarchical thought style.

3.6. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined three bodies of literature: national culture, GGCT and organisational silence.

In the section on the literature of national culture, three types of national culture theory were examined: those dealing with selected dimensions, those dealing with styles of communication and those dealing with values. Although each of these could throw some light on the nature of women's workplace silence in Saudi Arabia, because they could only provide high level generalisations and because they produce a static snapshot representation of the culture, they were not adequate to the aims of this research.

On the other hand, as this literature review demonstrates, GGCT is a middle-level theory (Merton, 1967) that explains patterns behaviour that are not immediately apparent in the data from our experience. GGCT is not a theory that can be proved or disproved. In fact, Douglas thought that it is not a theory at all but a heuristic that allows us to see patterns in data. Since the four thought styles of GGCT are always present even when one or more of them are being supressed, at the same time they compete with each other and support each other in complex, dynamic patterns. Additionally, GGCT is fractal, that is it works at all levels of analysis including the individual actor, the organisationand the nation. For these reasons, GGCT was chosen as the theoretical basis for this study.

This chapter has examined a number of views on Grid-Group Cultural Theory and its association with silence. The literature has drawn from various disciplines and outlined the understanding that is held in the academic field on the question of silence. Silence has been found to be an effect or result of something that is taking place in the organisation. Most of the studies on silence have opined that silence can be caused by discomfort, by fear, the need to protect others and also the sense of despair. Whereas most studies identify employees as being silent towards their managers, it is also evident that managers or superiors also can be silent for various reasons.

Thirdly, the literature of organisational silence was reviewed. This was found to be a patchwork of overlapping concepts and incomplete categorisations consisting of mostly positivist, quantitative studies. The most successful of the categorisations of organisational silence was that of Knoll and Van Dick (2013a) which has a four-part categorisation: quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial and opportunistic silences.

In this review, different forms of cultural biases as given in the GGCT are associated with certain types of silence. The egalitarian thought style has been associated with prosocial silence, fatalistic thought style has been associated with quiescent and acquiescent silence, and individualistic thought style has been associated with opportunistic silence. It has, however, been seen that there is lacking an association between the hierarchical thought style and any type of silence.

These gaps in knowledge on this phenomenon lead to the propositions laid out in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Chapter Introduction

This framework has been guided by the literature in the domains of organisational silence and culture. It became evident from reviewing the literature that there was a need to explore silences holistically and systematically as a dynamic phenomenon. The promise of GGCT is that it contains the potential to uncover more silence types and to provide explanations for how silences operate as cultural phenomena. GGCT explains why individuals, groups or larger institutions think, feel and act, and it does so simply through the use of just two dimensions. The literature review shows that there was a need to ask whether all silences had been found and more importantly what are their relationships in the minds of reasonable persons. Thus, the relationship between GGCT thought styles and types of silence is central to this research study. This conceptual framework proposes a relationship between types of silence observed in organisations and thought styles types specified by GGCT. First, the framework is outlined. Next, its propositions are described in detail and attempt to establish its importance, followed by a summary.

4.2. Background to the Development of the Conceptual Framework

The literature review found several studies that report various types of silence (Table 4.1). The most common types of silence reported are *Acquiescent*, *Quiescent*, *Prosocial* and O*pportunistic* (Table 4.1). Some researchers have used different names for describing similar silences which, when examined carefully, are the same. For example, defensive silence (Dyne *et al.*, 2003; Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015) and Quiescent silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Knoll and Van Dick, 2013a) share the same cause, that is, fear. Therefore, when re-evaluated carefully, the literature points to a consensus that there are just four main types of silence (Ardakani and Mehrabanfar, 2015).

A precise definition and understanding of culture – what it is and how it operates - is notable for its absence in almost all of the organisational silence literature and for reasons we have given. Earlier empirical research suggests that organisational silence occurs because of a variety of organisational, management, individual and cultural factors (Nikolaou and Bourantas, 2011; De Wang and Hsieh, 2013), though culture is often defined vaguely.

Although the organisational silence literature is valuable for identifying types of organisational silence, it is static and often common-sense based - it does not take a researcher to tell us that when we are frightened, we may fall silent. GGCT indicates that silences must be dynamic because thought style interaction is dynamic; one form of reasoning may provoke alternative forms of reasoning. In addition, GGCT is sensitive to context and to how what may be mistaken for the same context will be read very differently from the different positions specified by GGCT: Fatalist reasoning is very fearful, Hierarchical reasoning less fearful, Egalitarian reasoning optimistic and Individualistic thinking has a very high-risk appetite, transforming fear into 'the thrill of competition'.

Not all subordinates and not all managers feel the same way. Employees' engagement in silence thus comes as a result of dynamic reactions to contexts that are felt, understood and acted on differently, which in turn creates fresh contexts eliciting new rounds of feelings, thoughts and actions. By applying GGCT to organisational silence, it can be seen that all forms of silence and voice are contingent and temporary, not settled and permanent. This understanding is a radical departure from *both* prevailing organisational silence research and from the models of national culture discussed in Chapter 3 Part A. It becomes easier to see that change is probable even in apparently 'conservative' institutions, persons and nation-states. Thus, the more Hierarchical, Individualist, Egalitarian or Fatalistic an institutional or national culture might be, the *more likely* it is that other voices will be provoked into reasoning differently. That is, paradoxically, the more entrenched a thought-style, the more exposed it is to change.

Silence and voice never emanate simply from within an individual. Even those who are psychologically extrovert will find reasons for silence. Ontologically speaking, silence is a contextually dynamic and reasonable phenomenon. Different types of silence can prompt each other in quick succession (Huang *et al.*, 2005). They change from one to another and can dissolve into different voices quickly. In this study, thought styles influence each type of silence. Cultural reasonings pre-exist making them available and this is why we can be in 'more than one mind' at once, reading context without settling on one understanding of it.

The researcher's suspicion is that because reasoning is enabled socially (after Durkheim's important essay *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*) it is the thought styles that come first. However, silences are outcomes, which create contexts for further rounds of conflict among the thought styles. Thought styles are reasonable but show very different sensitivities to the same and different forms of risk. Part of this disequilibrium is because each thought style can solve problems that the others cannot (Thompson, 2008). GGCT provides a better framework for studying silence phenomena because it is conspicuously:

- Comprehensive
- Systematic
- Dynamic
- Parsimonious
- Simple to use

It has the potential to get beneath the surface in a way no other approach to organisational silence has accomplished so far, by examining the nature of the relationships between competing 'ways of life', and not just the four prototypes (Fatalistic, Hierarchical Individualistic and Egalitarian), also known as thought styles or cultural biases (Douglas, 1978; Thompson *et al.*, 1990). It shows that disagreement is reasonable, and that actors' reasons are known to themselves (and not to do with unconscious psychological processes, animal natures and instincts).

The existing literature on organisational silence does not provides any explicit evidence about, and a link between, the thought styles and types of silence. Nonetheless, when the researcher looked carefully at the work on types of silence by Knoll and Van Dick (2013a), the researcher found that whilst reporting four types of silence: Quiescent, Acquiescent, Prosocial, and opportunistic, these researchers inadvertently subsumed three thought styles i.e. Fatalistic, Egalitarian and Individualistic. When re-reading Knoll and Van Dick (2013a), with her grasp of GGCT, she found that Quiescent and Acquiescent types of silence conform to the Fatalistic thought style; the opportunistic type of silence epitomises the individualistic thought style and the Prosocial type of silence shows strong egalitarian reasoning. This is interesting also because it poses questions as to what Hierarchical and Hybrid silences there might be.

In Figure 4.1, the researcher has illustrated this representation of the four types of silence in Knoll and Van Dick (2013a) on the four quadrants of GGCT presented in Thompson et al. (1990). It should be noted that from Figure 4.1 there is no type of silence yet specified by the organisational silence literature that conforms to the hierarchical thought style itself. This finding may suggest that the four types of silence reported by Knoll and Van Dick (2013a) might not be enough to cover all possible types of silence. Therefore, there could be other types of silence in addition to the existing four types of silence widely accepted in the organisational silence literature, and as reported by Knoll and Van Dick (2013a). Other types of silence, hitherto unrecognised, could be produced by the hierarchical thought style.

FATALISTIC Quiescent and Acquiescent	**HIERARCHICAL** ?
INDIVIDUALISTIC Opportunistic	**EGALITARIAN** Prosocial
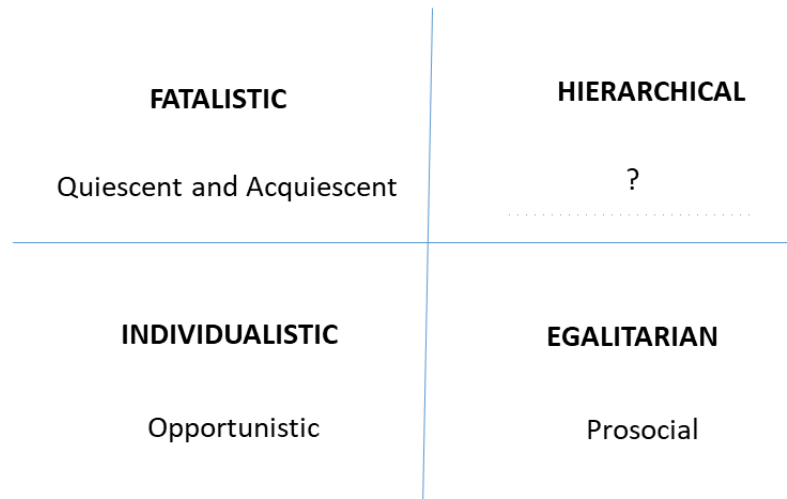
Source: the author

Figure 4.1. Mapping Silence Types to Thought Styles

There have been no earlier studies that have applied GGCT to types of silence, however, a study by Loyens (2013) addresses both silence and its reciprocal, *whistleblowing*, applying GGCT to report different styles of peer reporting on the assumption that thought styles induce peer reporting (Figure 4.2).

The findings of Loyens (2013) show that employees have reasons for reporting or not reporting on their peers. Loyens's descriptions of both the 'peer reporting' and 'no peer reporting' amount to descriptions of voice and silence. In addition, explanations of 'no peer reporting' given under each of four thought styles represent particular type(s) of silence. For example, the explanation of 'no peer reporting' given under Fatalism shows reasonable fatalistic concerned for maintaining one's own survival and we read here an implicit match for Quiescent and Acquiescent types of silence.

FATALISM	HIERARCHY
Peer reporting: You don't have a lot of choice, because you could get punished if you don't report. What if they find out you knew about it?	*Peer reporting*: Reporting is in line with orders, rules and procedures, and it is your responsibility to do it; escalating concerns through the chain of command.
No peer reporting: It is not any of my business and being a snitch would only make life more difficult.	*No peer reporting*: It is not your role to report; you are a team player who does not want to rock the boat.
INDIVIDUALISM	EGALITARIANISM
Peer reporting: Strategic, opportunistic behaviour aimed at personal benefits (e.g., career planning).	*Peer reporting*: We are the pure ones who should ban the bad ones or the 'rotten apple' (sense of righteousness); behaviour harms the group.
No peer reporting: Opportunistic behaviour aimed at personal benefits; keep quiet for your own sake (e.g., negative deal-making, precautions for the future).	*No peer reporting*: Unethical behaviour is not framed as unethical; group loyalty is more important.

(based on Loyens, 2013)

Figure 4.2. Organisational Cultures and Peer Reporting Styles

Organisational silence researchers report silence in four forms: prosocial, quiescent, acquiescent and opportunistic. Meanwhile GGCT specifies four main thought styles: egalitarian, individualistic, hierarchical and fatalistic. Questions arise about the causal relationship between thought-styles and silence, and for that matter between thought styles and voice, and between voice and silence.

4.3. Conceptual Framework

From the literature review, it is clear that thought styles exist prior to silence rather than the other way around. It is the conflicting reasoning contained in thought styles that introduces dynamism and change in forms of organisational silence (and causes the breaking of silences). It is also evident from the literature review that there is a need to examine silence holistically and systematically in relation to various thought styles given in GGCT – not just as a set of ad hoc relationships as is more typical of organisational silence researchers. It is proposed that each silence type can be identified with one or more thought style. The relationship between the GGCT (i.e. thought styles / cultural biases) and types of silence is central to this study.

Drawing on Evans (2008) and Loyens (2013), and going beyond the organisational silence literature, there ought to exist official silences. Possibly, hierarchical reasoning may have a predisposition for voice, but only when expression of opinion does not compromise the actor's official position. Hierarchical reasoning for silence might be as follows: 'It is not my job to say anything about that, so I will it to others whose job it is to be concerned about it. I may even worsen the problem by commenting without authority on the problem that others will be dealing with already. I will therefore maintain an official silence on this matter. It is above my pay grade.'

In short, types of silence should be mapped against thought styles using this process to infer other types of silence yet to be reported, and then substantiating these types with clear empirical evidence of their existence, in an epistemologically *realist* fashion. It is proposed that through GGCT, how respondents appraise their contexts and the silences they arrive at will make sense, not just to the researcher, but to the respondent.

Although this is for the future, as a trainer, the author sees the potential of GGCT for enhancing the reflexivity of her respondents. The premise could be that the reasonableness of contrary reasoning will enable re-examination of one's own reasoning.

This framework is shown in Figure 4.3. It is divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant of the framework should give rise to one thought style and at least one type of silence:

- The upper left quadrant comprises the fatalistic thought style and quiescent and acquiescent types of silence.
- The upper right quadrant of the framework includes the hierarchical thought style while the silence type(s) in this quadrant are proposed as 'respectful silence' and any other types of silence that are the reasonable outcome of hierarchical thought.
- The lower left quadrant in the framework comprises the individualistic reasoning which informs opportunistic silence.
- The lower right quadrant indicates the egalitarian reasoning and the silences it informs; principally, prosocial silence.
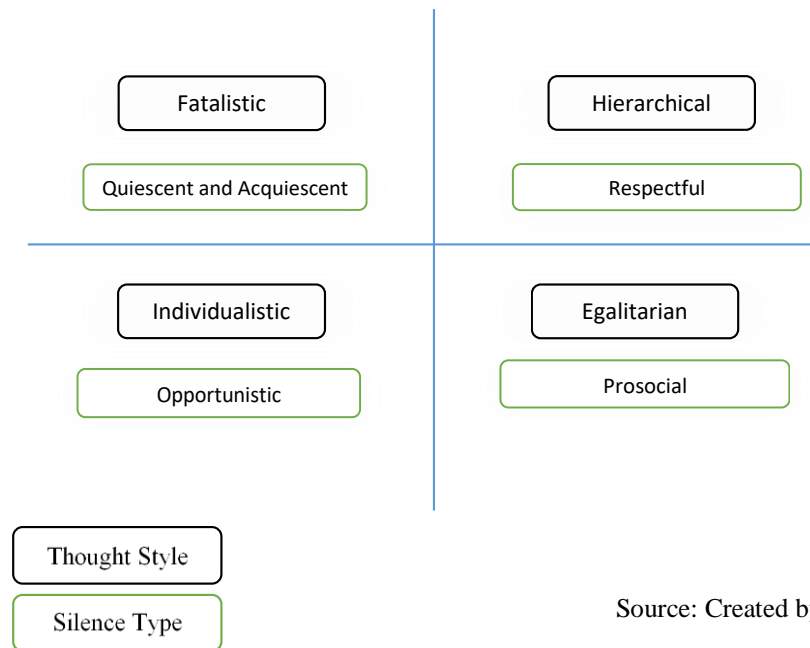
Figure 4.3. Conceptual Framework: Thought Styles and Silence Types

Proposition 1. It is proposed that there are more types of silence than currently reported in the literature.

This proposition suggests that in addition to the existing four main types of silence (i.e. quiescent, acquiescent, opportunistic and prosocial), there are other types of silence such as respectful silence.

Proposition 2. The framework proposes that specific thought styles produce particular type(s) of silence.

This proposition suggests that four major thought styles produce one or more types of silence. This proposition is therefore sub-divided in to four sub-propositions as follows:

Proposition 2.1: *The fatalistic thought style produces quiescent and acquiescent types of silence.*

Proposition 2.2: *The hierarchical thought style produces respectful type of silence.*

Proposition 2.3: *The individualistic thought style produces opportunistic type of silence.*

Proposition 2.4: *The egalitarian thought style produces prosocial type of silence.*

Proposition 3. The framework proposes that GGCT is a parsimonious framework for understanding silence phenomena in context.

This proposition is based on Ockham's Razor (Russell, 2013), a heuristic device which asserts that if a simple explanation manages as well as a complex one, then use the simpler approach. It can be argued straightforwardly, without reference to personality, national cultures, and without using more than two dimensions (social regulation and social solidarity) that specific thought-styles inform particular silences.

4.4. Importance of the Conceptual Framework

It is not new to claim that silences exist in context. However, it is new to claim that organisational silence types are the outcome of reasonable understandings of context that differ in their reading of risk. It is easy to claim, as many have done that fear induces

silence. It is new to claim that one person's reasonable fear is another person's exciting opportunity and therefore a reason to be expressive and boastful. No context is the same context for everybody. For example, GGCT explains why fear silences the fatalistic but transforms into vocal expression among the egalitarian as a collective demand for deliverance from existential threat. Because all respondents are cultural subjects, the GGCT framework should be operationalisable in ways that are readily intelligible to them as well as to the organisational silence research community – which is itself a cultural accomplishment of the four thought-styles.

4.5. Summary

This chapter has outlined a pathway to re-examining organisational silence. It was necessary to explain the development of the conceptual framework against the valuable contribution (silence types) and deficiencies of the organisational silence literature (its unsystematic and static treatments of silence and voice). The researcher is thankful for the work of Knoll and Dick (2013a) who have begun to associate thought styles with silences and for Evans's (2008) work, built on by Loyens (2013), which hints at a relationship between the hierarchical thought style and silence. The researcher has proposed a framework that associates all four thought styles with types of silence, each of which is treated as reasonable. Silence is not treated as irrational and cultural subjects are not simple 'utility-maximising' pre-social agents).

CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1.   Chapter Introduction

It is acknowledged in the organisational silence literature that it is challenging to research silence since, by definition, it is a concealed phenomenon, not directly observable (Fletcher, 1974; Johnson, 1995; Golafshani, 2003). At the same time, determining the suitability of methods for the research aim and objectives can be complex in any research (Darke *et al*., 1998), yet it remains crucial. This chapter therefore specifies the means used to address the research questions, providing detailed explanation of the steps taken in seeking, examining, analysing and explaining the issue of silence, and thus outlining the core methodology.

Methodology is defined as a framework within which a study is conducted (Leedy, 1989; Leedy and Ormrod, 2013) or as a path by which research is carried out (Collis and Hussey, 2013), providing reasoned justification of the overall approach, design and implementation characteristics of methods selected by a researcher (Crotty, 1998; Berg, 2004). It comprises *the study* of combinations of techniques applied to research inquiries, while the term *methods* refers more narrowly to techniques for collecting and analysing data (Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2009).

It is suggested that the most fundamental step is to first identify the philosophy that governs the study as this indicates how an aim, objective or research question(s) should be approached and how a research design should be implemented (Holden and Lynch, 2004). In addition, there are inter-relationships between the selected methodology, philosophy, the methods applied and the epistemological view of the researcher (Berg, 2004; Easterby-Smith *et al*., 2009). The chapter therefore begins by outlining the research philosophy. It is explained that because silence cannot be observed directly, the research must be considered *realist*. This is an epistemological stance suited to the study of phenomena that are considered to exist but in a hidden state. Whether the absence of communication represents deliberate withholding of thought, or complete satisfaction

with the status quo cannot be judged immediately but requires probing (Keat and Urry, 1982). This discussion is followed by an explanation of the research strategy, approach and methods of data generation. The sample and sampling strategy are then discussed, before the approach taken to data transcription and analysis is explained. This is followed by the key ethical considerations, issues of reliability, validity, researcher reflexivity and the research challenges.

5.2. Research Philosophy

5.2.1. Ontological and Epistemological Positions

Ontology and epistemology are important and inevitable abstractions around which philosophers remain in disagreement. It is necessary to state the researcher's position while acknowledging other possibilities. The term *ontology* refers to the study of the nature of being or the nature of reality (Gilbert, 2008; Saunders *et al*., 2009; Scotland, 2012). Ontology deals with "the way the social world and the social phenomena or entities that make it up are viewed" (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p.24). It is "what has to be examined" (Bryman, 2012, p.32), and relates to concepts about existence and the relationship between individuals and society as well as the physical world (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). Thus, ontological questions raise the issue of the fundamental beliefs of the researcher about how s/he perceives that the world operates (Saunders *et al*., 2009).

Since the middle of the 20th century, positivism has been the dominant paradigm in the social sciences (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015) though it has been challenged by realism and others. The positivist position suggests that objective truth comes from general principles and laws (Brewerton and Millward, 2001). Positivists assert that truth is found only in what can be seen and measured (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

However, contrary to this position realists argue that, in fact, reality is not necessarily immediately observable but includes underlying structures, events and mechanisms that are independent of both the individual actors and the observer(s) (Chia, 2002). Thus, from

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the realists' viewpoint the objective of a research inquiry involving investigation of organisational structure, strategy or culture, including organisational silence, could be studied through systematic methods (Chia, 2002). These arguments suggest that from the qualitative perspective, reality is dependent on perceptions and experiences that vary from one person to another and could change with time and context (Eriksson and Kavalainen, 2016, p.15-17). The present study has therefore adopted the critical realist paradigm (Chia, 2002, p.10), recognising that how the underlying phenomenon of organisational silence is perceived by subjects may have much to teach us, especially when subjective meanings are compared, and patterns are found. This may, especially, enable the detection of silence types (Eriksson and Kavalainen, 2016, p.15-17). This study therefore chooses to explore organisational silence from the subjectivist perspective. It should be noted that the study sought the views of both the management and the subordinates, and both are subjects in the context of this study.

From an objectivist, functionalist, point-of-view (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) it can be argued that the concept of organisational silence is generated as a functional result of leadership, hierarchies or top-down management approaches and organisational silence can be objectively measured and analysed. Thus, typically functionalists impute ill-health to phenomena, while assuming that these non-obvious qualities can be measured indirectly. Classically, one such example is Durkheim's assertion that a social disease, *anomie,* which is a state of listlessness due to lack of social structure, could be measured indirectly by tracking increases and decreases in official suicide statistics (Durkheim, 2005/1897). On the other hand, a subjectivist point-of-view would argue that organisational silence is best understood via the sense making used by subjects; that is, as Weber (1964) and later Coldwell (2007) put it, employees may provide sufficient explanation at the level of meaning. From this standpoint, it is important to identify and attach subjects' meanings to organisational silence, even as a social phenomenon. For example, a meaning that an employee could attach to their own silence might be 'I remain silent because I want to survive here!'.

The term *epistemology* refers to "the theory of knowledge and how we know things" (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p.476). It relates to "the study of knowledge" (Eriksson and Kavalainen, 2016, p.11) and it focuses on what is already known and how it is known (Powell et al., 2011). In addition, *epistemology* includes "what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study" (Saunders et al., 2007, p.102), and is a separate dimension to ontology, but at the intersection between it and ontology exists the "study of the relationship between the researcher and the one being researched" (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 59). From the epistemological viewpoint, objectivists suggest that the world is external and independent of our theories whereas subjectivists suggest that knowing and accessing the external world is possible only through our own observations and interpretations (Eriksson and Kavalainen, 2016, p. 11), thus objectivity is not attainable.

Debate rages as to whether knowledge can be created either through extrapolation from empirical observation even without theory, the view held by the *empiricists*, or through deduction from immutable principals and laws arrived at by the logical verification which is the view held by the rationalists (Chia, 2002, p. 6; Collis and Hussey, 2009, p. 59). It is frequently asserted, particularly in business school research methods textbooks, that objective knowledge requires quantitative techniques while subjectivists treat qualitative methods as necessary (Powell et al., 2011). This dichotomy is quite recent, however, tending to conflate ontological, epistemic and technical issues into one simple choice. Such conflation is misleading, for epistemology and ontology are independent philosophical dimensions which allow for more than two positions, and this is further complicated by the presence of positivist, realist and empiricist epistemological positions.

In this study, the researcher has accepted that silence may have many natures and that its nature as a beneath-the-surface phenomenon, that it is real but best accessed by realist techniques which have to be strong on theory. Additionally, the importance of hearing what actors have to say about their own silences is recognised, especially their reasoning. This assembly should enable detection of silence types in a way that other methodologies would struggle to detect and distinguish. Although the current dogma found in business

and management research is that our only choice is between 'quantitative positivism' and 'qualitative interpretivism', this distinction could be considered over-simplistic and misleading. As silences are not directly observable, empiricism and positivism are ruled out in favour of realism. This means neither that silences cannot be studied qualitatively nor that silences cannot be classified according to their meanings to silent actors. It should not be forgotten that ontological and epistemological judgements and choices of technique are independent of each other (orthogonal), and that how we 'articulate' these dimensions is also a matter of judgement. In the current case, the research has been driven by pragmatic considerations of what is likely to work on behalf of the particular research aims.

It is acknowledged that social phenomena are created through the actions of social actors (Matthews and Ross, 2010; Saunders *et al*., 2007) and the feelings and meanings of the individuals attached to the social phenomena matter (Berg, 2004). The underlying reality is socially constructed which means that realities are also personal among actors whose reasoning takes place in the contexts, spaces, times and assumptions made (Chilsa and Kawulich, 2012, p.56). Therefore, recognising the subject's perspective (Powell et al., 2011), the present researcher applies qualitative techniques to studying organisational silence, as have many earlier previous researchers in the field (Detert and Trevino, 2010; Yildiz, 2013; Schwappach and Gehring, 2014; Ullström *et al*., 2014; Salajegheh *et al*., 2015; Manley *et al*., 2016), albeit using new theoretical equipment (GGCT). In summary, this study on the ontological dimension is subjectivist, while on the epistemological dimension, this study is realist (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 depicts and summarises the methodological position of the researcher. As mentioned, epistemologically speaking, knowledge of silences, which are the result of concealment, is not obtainable by direct observation (by definition). organisational silence is a supposedly collective cultural phenomenon which especially calls for a theoeretical treatment and interviewing (Kesby, 2000), in order to gather knowledge of what lies concealed 'beneath the surface' of the everyday life of the organisation. This

places the study towards the right-hand (realist) end of the horizontal axis. Simultaneously, but separately, the nature (ontology) of silence is of a deliberative act rather than of unthinking 'behaviour'. This places the study towards the subjective end of the ontological axis. The critical realist perspective is considered particularly suitable for the current study in the exploration of organisational silence, as the latter is generated by reasoning that is as much external as internal to an individual. It is thus misleading to describe silence as either subjective or objective (Husrevsahi, 2015).

Qualitative

Subjectivism

The research quadrant of this study

Empiricism	**Positivism**	**Realism**
(Berkeley, Booth)		(Francis Bacon, Karl Popper) (Plato)
'facts speak for themselves'		'all science is provisional' 'underlying essences'
'trust the evidence of experience'		

Objectivism

Quantitative
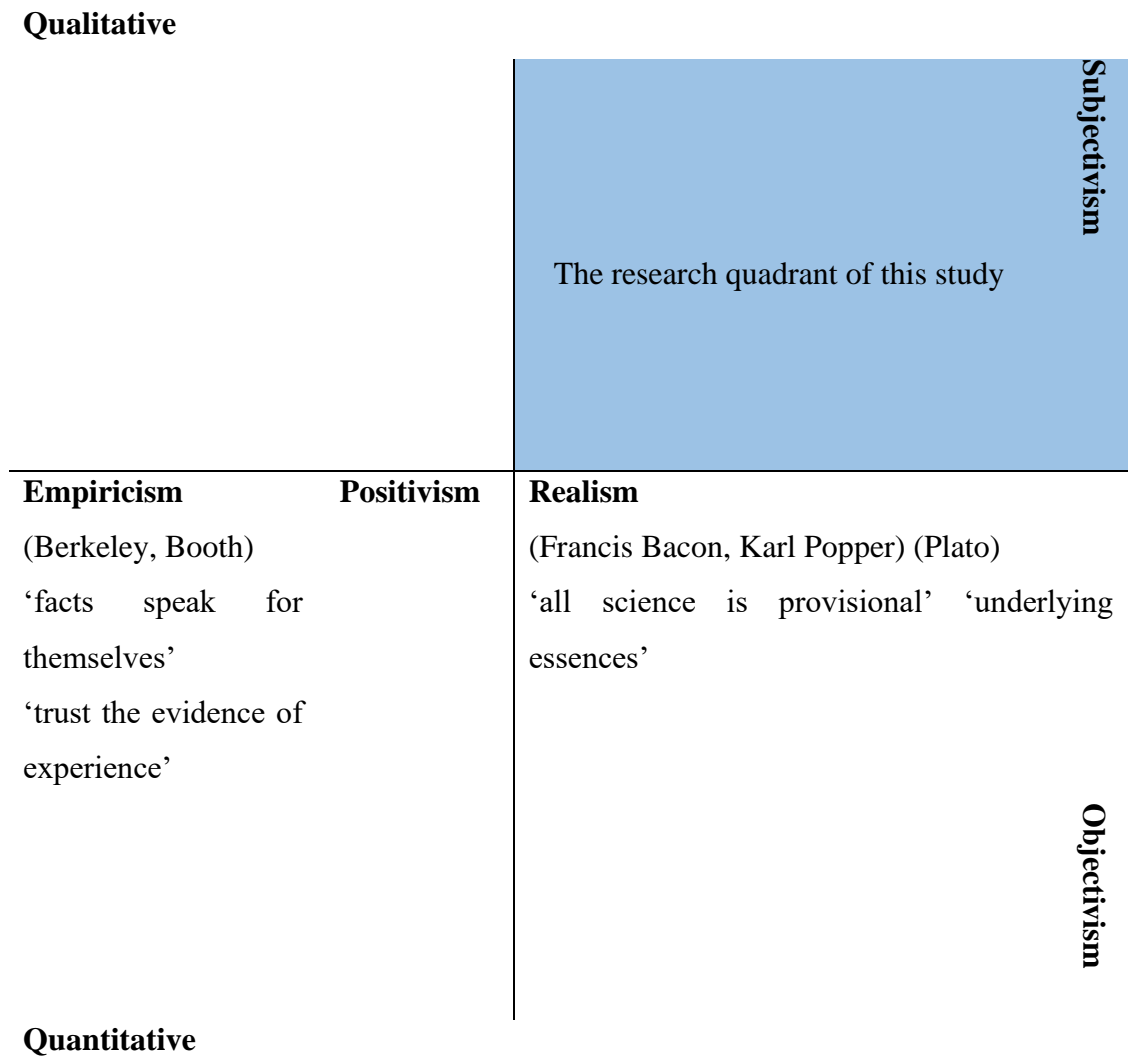
(Designed by author with regard to discussion with Dr Stephen Smith, July 2016)

Figure 5.1 Study's Methodological Position Described in 2 Dimensions

5.2.2. The Critical Realist Perspective

Fleetwood (2004, p.29) argues that critical realism is "not synonymous with discourses such as naïve realism, empirical realism, positivism, scientism or other associated empiricist paraphernalia: in fact, it is antithetical to these discourses". Realism differs from the positivist paradigm in that the latter considers the importance of 'facts' in

examining a phenomenon. The positivist paradigm presupposes the importance of objective reasoning in examining social realities (Saunders *et al*., 2009). Through positivism, the preference is to gather data about observed phenomena and where there is a causal relationship the researcher can develop law like generalisations (Gill and Jonson, 2010). In contrast, realism tends to underscore the influences of structures in social events and can only be observed indirectly (Walliman, 2015). Realism therefore emerges from a different ontological and epistemological position, underlining that:

> …regularities in the patterning of social activities are brought about by the underlying mechanisms constituted by people's reasoning and the resources they are able to summon in a particular context
> (Pawson and Tilley, 1997: 220).

Furthermore, it has been suggested that from the realist perspective, people's interpretations of the world have a direct influence on their actions. This can subsequently impact on reality (Easton, 2010).

Realists therefore believe that reality exists independently of our minds and our perceptions (Bhaskar, 1989; Crotty, 1998; Matthews and Ross, 2010). We do not have an objective view of the world, but instead, reality is grounded in specific worldviews, and knowledge can only be partial and incomplete. For realists, "…there are real underlying causes, structures, processes, and entities that give rise to the observations we make of the world, natural and social" (Little, 2014: unpaged). It is generally acknowledged that there are two main forms of realism; direct and critical. Direct, or naïve realism, interprets reality through the human senses, with the perceived object being the object itself. It is argued, however, that objects are sometimes deceptive, and may appear different to what they actually are. Thus, for critical realists, whilst people experience images of the real world, these can have unintended effects that may not be evident or may not accurately portray the real world (Dudovskiy, undated). As Fletcher (2016, p.5) suggests, however,

"…it tends to be acknowledged that if a researcher selects realism as their research philosophy, they will assume the role of a critical realist".

The critical realist approach or philosophy is often associated with the work of Roy Bhaskar (1978) and was initially referred to as 'transcendental realism' or 'critical naturalism'. Bhaskar defines critical realism as:

> …the proposal that there are (The) Real universal generative mechanisms out in the world that we may or may not know about, sense or not sense. That these mechanisms create the possibility of an (The) Actual event, from which we interpret as (The) Empirical data, in our own unique way, never forgetting that we are only seeing a very small part of a very big real world we are part of.
> (2017a, p.xx)

The critical realist ontology perceives reality as existing independently of people's perceptions, comprehensions and assumptions. Thus, the 'real' does not simply represent the physical or material, but rather the 'real' is considered to be that which "…has an effect or makes a difference" (Fleetwood, 2004, p.27). Epistemologically, critical realists regard understanding of that reality to be constructed through people's viewpoints and positions. Thus, the researcher must focus not simply on the events themselves, but the mechanisms which may generate them. As Danermark *et al.* (2002, p.5) explain "When they are experienced they become an empirical fact. If we are to attain knowledge about underlying causal mechanisms we must focus on these mechanisms, not only on the empirically observable events". Within the specific field of interest, the mechanisms which are commonly the focus of realist social research relate to "…the interactions between individuals and groups considered as agents and their interaction with other groups in the context of larger collectivities" (Ackroyd, 2004, p.141). At the same time, research tends to go beyond experiences and beliefs of particular groups, to explore the

processes that explain structures, and to do this through drawing on "…the reflective views that participants have on their circumstances" (*Ibid.,* p.142).

It is argued that the critical realist approach does not dictate the means by which researchers conduct their studies, providing instead recommendations and guidelines for researchers which are based upon ontological and epistemological contentions that avoid the limitations posed by the positivist, idealist and relativist approaches (Sayer, 2004). Nonetheless, it has been suggested that within research informed by a critical realist approach, there are three key steps: "…identification of demi-regularities, abduction (also known as theoretical redescription), and retroduction" (Fletcher, 2016, p.8), although some uncertainty surrounds the suitability of the use of the critical realist approach for both quantitative and qualitative research. From this discussion of the realist ontology, it might be argued that quantitative research methods cannot fully capture reality at its deepest level, reflecting instead, reality that can be observed at the empirical level (Maxwell, 2012). It may be, then, that qualitative research is more effective in the identification of demi-regularities (rough trends or tendencies, rather than laws) (Vincent and O'Mahoney, 2016). Fletcher (2016, p.4) argues, however, that whilst critical realism "functions as a general methodological framework for research…[it]…is not associated with any particular set of methods". Indeed, it is widely argued that critical realists are not prescriptive in relation to methods as the key intention is to determine generative mechanisms which cause events. Thus, it is not believed that qualitative and quantitative approaches are incompatible, but rather researchers should be free to select their investigatory tools as it is held that "…valuable insights cannot be produced by the routine use of particular research techniques" (Ackroyd, 2004, p.128). In this sense, both quantitative and qualitative methods assist in the identification of demi-regularities and thus from this perspective, both quantitative and qualitative methods are considered suitable for research informed by critical realism.

Nonetheless, both realists and critical realists have criticised the rationale behind research that employs entirely quantitative methods, particularly in relation to the view of

causality. The assumption that a causal relationship is established, for example, through observation of regular associations between variable A causing variable B, is argued to be limited (Roberts, 2014). Critical realists suggest that this empiricist viewpoint explores the epistemological, observable properties but overlooks the ontological. So, whilst critical realists do not reject quantitative methods entirely, they do assert the need to explore causal processes in greater depth than quantitative methods allow (Maxwell, 2012). As Roberts (2014, p.7) asserts, "Variables can certainly explore patterns of behaviour but they are often not so well equipped at explaining the social structures and their associated powers and capacities (causal mechanisms) which underline such patterns". Quantitative methods may be used, then, prior to or in addition to qualitative methods (Fleetwood and Ackroyd, 2004; Zachariadis *et al.*, 2013), and the qualitative methods can then explain observable patterns and processes, or once a theory has been generated, it may be empirically tested.

Whilst the literature has tended to offer limited insights into the practical application of critical realism within research, it has been shown that when applying a critical realist approach, critical realists - like many other researchers - often begin with a research question which may have been guided by an initial theory, which can then be tested empirically, although not necessarily quantitatively (Bhaskar, 1978). Thus, conceptualisation must come before empirical investigation, for as Ackroyd (2004, p.143) states "…without concepts even perception is problematic". What is important for the critical realist, however, is the need to acknowledge that the initial theory may be either supported, modified or rejected in order to explain experiences more sufficiently (Fletcher, 2016). The way in which the critical realist approach influenced the research strategy is discussed further below.

5.2.3. *Durkheimian Realism and Social Phenomenon*

Before looking more closely at the research strategy adopted in this study, it is worth briefly mentioning the work of Durkheim and its relevance to the current study. Durkheim's methodology is of particular interest, for instance, in the context of this study

which employs GGCT as its main theory. Mary Douglas based her thinking on Durkheim and, therefore, GGCT owes much to him and has therefore been referred to as "neo-Durkheimian" by some writers (Riley, 2005). A GGCT approach is thus, from the outset, a realist one. Durkheim's view was that individuals are shaped by society rather than the other way around (Danermark *et al.,* 2005; Zipin *et al*., 2015) and he regarded individualism as a socially produced phenomenon. According to Mestrovic (1988, p.8) 'Durkheim regarded individualism as a collective representation, a force that would impress itself on human minds regardless of their subjective opinions, as well as the manifestation of the egotistical will'. For Durkheim, a social group that is organised is one that is governed by law, justice and historical context (Beck and Sznaider, 2010). These are collective tenets and the homogeneity that is created is reflected in behaviour, so how individuals in society interact can be traced back to the collective tenets (Archer, 2010).

In his explanation of social realism, Durkheim stated that social facts are observable and should be treated independently because they exist independently (Danermark *et al*., 2005). To this extent, Durkheim is proposing that the research facts are independent of the researcher (Zipin *et al*., 2015). This has strong links with the critical realist ontology which views reality as existing independently of people's thoughts, understandings and beliefs. This viewpoint has been picked up by critics of Durkheim's work who claim that this proposition lacks merit in social research because the researcher must inevitably be part (even if in a small way) of the research process (Varela and Harre, 1996; Danermark *et al.,* 2005). Durkheim, however, stood by his views and stated that the facts can be internal and external to the situation and that it is crucial to understand these facts and how they have developed. In the context of this study, an examination of Durkheim's position suggests that the social facts as they occur in reality must be understood on their own merit and that the researcher should not have a predisposition on what these facts are, but to seek to unearth how they occur. In this study of organisational silence, it was crucial to identify what silence is and how it comes about. In addition, Durkheim maintained that social facts must be observed through the systematic, experiential reality

in which they are expressed, as empirical data which is subjected to analysis. Again, this shows similarities with the critical realist epistemology which views reality as being constructed through people's viewpoints and positions. In this study the focus, therefore, was the views that have been presented by the respondents. Although my background gave me a very good understanding about the social aspects of the place where the respondents work, it was crucial to allow them to give their views and use their information as it was given. The data were analysed assuming that the views of the respondents should be considered to be entirely self-supporting, and the researcher should not add any other information from her own experience. However, a pitfall of this approach is that it often leads to being prescriptive since it views the data as complete (Stone, 2001; Young, 2007).

For Bhaskar (1978), Durkheim could be criticised for reifying the objects of study and was thus not regarded as influential in the development of critical realism. Realists have also drawn attention to the overemphasis in Durkheim's accounts on structural over agency factors (Paoletti, 2004). Nonetheless, the views of Durkheim emphasise the influence of social reality on the way individuals relate and behave. The nature of the reality that is depicted is such that there are dynamic forces that are at work in the organisation and that individuals and groups tend to respond to them. The social phenomenon that characterises the environment where this study was conducted (Saudi Arabian society) can be defined as being conservative, but in the recent past tendencies of structural changes have created a dynamic society; however, institutions are held back by static internal structures. The position of the current research thus considers the views of Durkheim to be important in explaining how the issue of organisational silence persists in the offices of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia.

5.3. The Research Strategy

Social researchers tend to adopt one of four key strategies within their research, which Blaikie defines as follows:

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…the *inductive* strategy produces generalizations from data; the *deductive* strategy tests theories by testing hypotheses derived from them; the *retroductive* strategy proposes causal mechanisms or structures and tries to establish their existence; and the *abductive* strategy generates social scientific accounts from everyday accounts.

(2000, p.10)

This study sought to explore the causes of silence at the offices of the Ministry of Education and thus the research adopted a model of explanatory social science influenced by Bhaskar's critical realism, including the DREIC model (Description, Retroduction, Elimination, Identification, Correction) (see, for instance, Bhaskar, 2017b). Thus, within critical realism, the researcher engages in similar processes to the scientist in the sense that they move "…towards the identification of a structure or a mechanism, which will explain the actual regularity that is observed" (Bhaskar, 2017b: 28). In terms of the type of research strategy which this model best reflects, however, as Danermark *et al.* (2002, p.109) explain, whilst abduction and retroduction play key roles within this approach, "…deductive logic can and should be used in analyses of all scientific argument, regardless of what methodology is behind the results presented". In fact, as Eastwood *et al.* indicate:

Explanatory theory building uses inductive, abductive, retroductive and deduction as the central forms of reasoning moving from description of the concrete, to the abstract, and back to the concrete…In this approach the researcher begins with descriptive and exploratory examination of the phenomena, events and situations intended for study. This is followed by an analytical process that involves identification of components, abduction and retroduction, comparison of theories and

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abstractions.

(2014, p.3)

It is worth mentioning here that Bhaskar (2017b, p.28) himself explains that retroduction is distinctive in the sense that the researcher "…imagines a mechanism or structure, which, if it were true, would explain the event or regularity in question".

The model adopted is explained in the work of Danermark *et al.* (2002), who present six different stages of the explanatory model of critical realism (although note that these stages are flexible and not necessarily carried out in chronological order). The stages are described in detail in Table 5.1.

In the current study, then, Stage One involved determining the event or situation which formed the focus of the study. Having worked in the specific institution on which the study was based – the Ministry of Education – for many years, the issue of silence there was evident and believed to represent a problem requiring examination. Further investigation of the issue within the literature facilitated the realisation that silence is an organisational phenomenon that had gained wide academic interest, but relatively little of it focused on women. The aim of the current study is therefore to explain silence among female employees and managers within educational offices in Saudi Arabia. It was important to find out how silence is produced and works within these offices in order to be able to address such silence and its negative effects on performance and productivity, as well as to negate the impact on the individuals involved.

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Description	An explanatory social science analysis usually starts in the concrete. We describe the often complex and composite event or situation we intend to study. In this we make use of everyday concepts. An important part of this description is the interpretations of the persons involved and their way of describing the current situation. Most events should be described by qualitative as well as by quantitative methods.
Stage 2: Analytical resolution	In this phase we separate or dissolve the composite and the complex by distinguishing the various components, aspects or dimensions. The concept of scientific analysis usually alludes to just this (analysis = a separating or dissolving examination). It is never possible to study anything in all its different components. Therefore we must in practice confine ourselves to studying certain components but not others.
Stage 3: Abduction/theoretical redescription	Here we interpret and redescribe the different components/aspects from hypothetical conceptual frameworks and theories about structure and relations. This stage thus corresponds to what has been described above as abduction and redescription. The original ideas of the objects of study are developed when we place them in new contexts of ideas. Here several different theoretical interpretations and explanations can and should be presented, compared and possibly integrated with one another.
Stage 4: Retroduction	Here the different methodological strategies described above are employed. The purpose is for each one of the different components/aspects we have decided to focus on, to try to find the answers to questions like: What is fundamentally constitutive for the structures and relations(X), highlighted in stage 3? How is X possible? What properties must exist for X to be what X is? What causal mechanisms are related to X? In the concrete research process we have of course in many cases access to already established concepts supplying satisfactory answers to question of this type. In research practice, stages 3 and 4 are closely related.
Stage 5: Comparison between different theories and abstractions	In this stage on elaborates and relative explanatory power of the mechanisms and structures which have been describe by means of abduction and retroduction within the frame of stage 3 and 4. (This stage can also be described as part of stage 4.) In some cases one might conclude that one theory – unlike competitive theories – describes the necessary conditions for what is to be explained, and therefore has greater explanatory power. In other cases the theories are rather complementary, as they focus on partly different but nevertheless necessary conditions.
Stage 6: Concretization and contextualization	Concretization involves examining how different structures and mechanisms manifest themselves in concrete situations. Here one stresses the importance of studying the manner in which mechanisms interact with other mechanisms at different levels, under specific conditions. The aim of these studies is twofold: first, to interpret the meanings of these mechanisms as they come into view in a certain context; second, to contribute to explanations of concrete events and processes. In these explanations it is essential to distinguish between the more structural conditions and the accidental circumstances. This stage of the research process is of particular importance in applied science.

(Danermark *et al.*, 2002, p.109-111)

Table 5.1. Stages of Explanatory Research Based on Critical Realism

From here, the model suggests that the researcher moves from the analytical to the theoretical stages. In the current study, it was important to explore the different types of silence and thought styles which have been most commonly observed within the existing literature. It was deduced from the literature that types of silence commonly include, for instance, four main types; quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial and opportunistic. From the literature, it was possible to determine patterns and explanations for silence, but it was felt that these were not sufficient for effectively explaining and classifying the reasons for different types of silence. There is also an assumption within the literature that silence is static, not dynamic. The need to create or redefine existing theory, which eventually can provide a clear lens for examining the phenomenon and gaining understanding about it, is crucial in the research process (Wilbanks, 2010). It was at this stage that the researcher identified Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT) as a way of explaining silence.

Saunders *et al.* (2009) suggest that researchers should seek to ensure the theory that they build is such that it can provide a general overview of the phenomenon. When a particular research philosophy has been chosen, it should clearly provide a path to identifying the most suitable research approach. This theory establishes specific thought styles, including fatalistic, hierarchical, egalitarian and individualistic, which the researcher believed provided more effective explanation for different types of silence. This type of explanation had been largely overlooked in the literature, despite the fact that the findings of previous studies appeared to indirectly confirm the utility of GGCT as a form of explanation here. It was believed in the current study, then, that using GGCT would help to overcome the insufficiency of findings in previous literature by explaining why silence presents amongst some individuals but also why it does not in others, in certain organisational situations.

The researcher then aimed to test this theory through empirical research (Stages Three and Four). Thus, identification of this theoretical framework was followed by the data generation stages, through the use of qualitative semi-structured interviews with female employees and managers. Within this stage, it was important to address several key questions. What types of silence are evidenced among employees and managers within the same organisational context? How are different types of silence possible in organisational contexts? How do thought styles explain different types of silence amongst both employees and managers? Can thought styles be considered the cause of different types of silence? How do certain thought styles produce certain types of silence? During Stage Five of the model, which involves reflecting on the explanatory power of the theory, the research findings confirmed that GGCT provided a significant and practical tool for explaining types of silence; something which could be applied within future research in the field. It was shown, for instance, that types of silence among managers was different for types of silence among employees, which could be explained through the adoption of different forms of thought styles amongst these two groups. Thus, position (and power) within the organisation impacted on thought styles, which subsequently affected types of silence. In the final stage, where concretization involves examination of the different

ways in which structures and mechanisms are evidenced in concrete situations, the research showed that GGCT provides an important and key explanation for organisational silence, through the existence of thought styles, but that these are undeniably influenced by organisational power and hierarchical structures which impact on relationships between subordinates and managers, as well as wider social and cultural factors, such as religion.

5.4.   The Qualitative Approach

Research methods in general tend to be classified as either quantitative or qualitative, representing two contrasting approaches. There are key differences between qualitative and quantitative research, including: the paradigm from which the researcher works, the central objectives and research questions, the data collection instruments and the data they produce (Blaikie, 2000). Quantitative research is largely considered more structured, objective and less flexible than qualitative research. The instruments tend to use a fixed structure, with little deviation from this, and they involve counting, classifying and measuring, and the use of statistics. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, are more flexible, being designed to understand, describe and interpret. The instruments therefore tend to involve more open styles of questioning, thus providing participants with some element of control in relation to the direction of the discussion or the responses that they provide, and in the level of detail offered. Following from the realist perspective, which questions quantitative researchers' assumptions around causation (Roberts, 2014), the current research adopts a qualitative approach, which is considered particularly suitable for studying social phenomena (silence). This is especially the case as qualitative methods enable the researcher to understand meanings and interpretations that individuals and groups give to their lives, experiences and social relations, through the individuals themselves (Roberts, 2014).

The review of the literature indicated that most organisational silence studies apply a quantitative approach (Liu *et al*., 2012; Nikmaran *et al*., 2012; Panahi *et al*., 2012;

Emanuel, 2013; Samadi *et al*., 2013; Achieng, 2014; Akuzum, 2014; Eriguc *et al*., 2014; Rhee *et al*., 2014; Toker *et al*., 2014; Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015; Jain, 2015; Mengenci, 2015; Nafei, 2016; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016). There were very few qualitative studies on organisational silence (although see Milliken *et al*., 2003; Detert and Trevino, 2010; Yildiz, 2013; Schawppach and Gehring, 2014). The dearth of qualitative research on organisational silence may be because the organisational silence literature has been generated, not by anthropologists and sociologists, but by psychologists, social psychologists and specialists in organisation studies without anthropological training. This may explain why the typical explanation for known forms of organisational silence is quite common-sensical, such as that organisational silence is caused by fear of management and by poor management practices. Explanations of this type, in the researcher's view, barely qualify as explanations. Their faults are easier to see by the number of unanswered questions which they lead to:

- Why do some employees fear their management to the point of silence while other employees in the same organisation do not?
- Alternatively, why do risk appetites vary and how do these impact on silence?
- Why are some managers confident in expressing themselves whereas other fail to do so?
- Why are silences broken, sometimes very explicitly and vocally, by the masses of persons in large gatherings?
- Why do vocal persons revert to silence?
- What causes the shift from silence to voice in organisations?
- Why doesn't organisational history come to a silent end?

Qualitative research therefore aims to provide in-depth explanations, and involves "the systematic collection, organisation, description and interpretation of textual, verbal or visual data" (Hammarberg et al., 2016, p.499), in contrast to quantitative studies utilizing standardised approaches and statistical analysis. There are many different qualitative methods that can be adopted, but some of the more commonly used methods include in-

depth interviews (including semi-structured and unstructured interviews), participant observations, focus group interviews and life histories. Qualitative research is generally considered to represent a generative process in which the researcher plays an active role (Dingwall, 1997), and as such, is sometimes subject to critique surrounding its reliability and validity (Silverman, 2000). For quantitative research, for instance, with numerical data, the ability to replicate the research is regarded as critical. For qualitative researchers, however, it is asserted that different criteria are required here, with the focus being instead upon trustworthiness, consistency, applicability and credibility (Hammarberg et al., 2016).

Qualitative research is therefore an approach to inquiry which seeks to address key research questions through applying methods or procedures to gather or generate data or evidence, but the key to the approach is that it is exploratory and the research problem is addressed through the insights of the population to which it relates. Because of the depth of inquiry, qualitative research generally engages small samples, which has been a point of criticism by quantitative researchers who claim that this undermines the representative nature of the data gathered in relation to the wider population. Nonetheless, for qualitative researchers, the aim is to prioritise the voice of the participants, and to understand and interpret the meanings that individuals attach to their lives, beliefs and experiences (Roberts, 2014). It explores the depth and richness of a phenomenon, providing deeper understanding, addressing the 'why', and the 'how', instead of focusing solely on the 'what'. For many, therefore, it offers a more insightful and holistic approach than that offered by quantitative research (Kamasak *et al.,* 2017).

It was also felt that quantitative methods would be unsuitable for exploring the current topic as providing a measure for quantifying silence may be difficult. Organisational silence is a phenomenon that is found in many organisations, but it is still ambiguous as to whether it is dependent on an individuals' thinking styles or a result of unfortunate management processes. Using GGCT, therefore, it is possible to examine the way organisational silence is taking place and how it is influenced by the location (Detert and

Trevino, 2010). At this stage, organisational silence is best explored as a provisional concept rather than as a variable (Milliken *et al*., 2003), the latter of which would be the case in quantitative research. A goal of a qualitative study, then, can be to identify the meaning that the phenomena have for the subjects. The current study therefore adopts a qualitative approach informed by critical realism which enables the researcher to analyse the experiences, feelings, views, perceptions, beliefs and values of subjects or group of subjects to identify underlying causes and patterns (Bulmer, 2017). Thus, this study begins from a theory which is confirmed and further developed using qualitative data. Generalisation was not the main concern; however, the universal nature of GGCT suggested that the results might be generalisable with due reference to context.

5.5. Methods of Data Generation

One of the most crucial phases in any research project is data collection (Punch and Oancea, 2014). In the domain of organisational silence, qualitative research involves interpreting descriptions and interpreting what participants have to say about their types of organisational silence in themselves and about how their experiences inform it. Supervisors and their managers navigate a large organisational system including education offices in the primary, secondary and higher education systems and participate in many forms of communication, such as group meetings, one to one conversations and formal reports. These encounters could encourage organisational silence or reduce organisational silence dynamically over time. In this study, the researcher employed semi-structured, open-ended interviewing with the aim of eliciting the relationship between experiences and reasoning.

5.5.1. Interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviews, as used in the current study, were selected for their more natural, conversational style, which is flexible and open to prompting or probing of specific issues (Mason, 2002). The data produced in qualitative interviews are often unstructured, reflect the researcher's interpretation and can take many forms, including

notes, quotations and drawings. Interviewing lends itself to acquiring respondents' knowledge of experiences and opinions (Matthews and Ross, 2010) and remains probably the most common method of data collection in qualitative research (Milliken *et al*., 2003; Saunders *et al*., 2009; Salajegheh *et al*., 2015). Interviews can be of different types; structured, semi-structured or unstructured, conducted with individuals or groups (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Matthews and Ross, 2010; Garon, 2012; Punch and Oancea, 2014). In the current study, it was suspected that standardised questionnaire surveys would be insensitive to variations in respondents' reasonings, especially since GGCT suggests that individuals could have more than one reason for silence and some of their reasonings could be highly contradictory. This would call for sympathetic improvised interviewing (Saunders *et al*., 2009), using the fact that the four thought styles specified by GGCT and their interactions are well understood by anthropologists prior to field observations. Thus, it was important to not simply rely on respondents' spontaneous descriptions of how their world is constructed.

Individual interviews can be conducted either in person, face-to-face (Yildiz, 2013; Schwappach and Gehring, 2014; Manley *et al*., 2016) or at a distance by telephone or Internet using online tools such as Skype or FaceTime (Matthews and Ross, 2010). In the current study, the researcher used face-to-face semi-structured interviews with individual participants as reported in earlier studies on organisational silence (Milliken *et al*., 2003; Detert and Trevino, 2010; Yildiz, 2013; Schwappach and Gehring, 2014; Ullström *et al*., 2014; Salajegheh *et al*., 2015; Manley *et al*., 2016). Such interviews provided opportunities to ask not only a set of predetermined questions but also to explore responses much further through supplementary questions which arise whilst interviewing the research participant(s) (Brewerton and Millward, 2001, p. 70).

The interview guide therefore included a list of questions, with prompts, addressing issues such as: perceptions of silence; details on recent interactions and conversations with managers and colleagues; frequency of open conversations; factors which prevent the sharing of opinions; the extent of silence and how they deal with conflict; and concerns

or fears related to their employment in the organisation. The topics addressed in the interview questions were influenced by earlier studies, notably by Knoll and van Dick (2013a), Milliken *et al.* (2003), Morrison and Milliken (2003) and Dyne *et al.* (2003). The questions relating specifically to issues of fear were inspired by studies such as Serafini *et al.* (2015), Kish-Gephart *et al.* (2009) and Milliken *et al.* (2003), which explore the role of fear in silence, and the reasoning behind such fear. The questions that were formulated to determine the types of reasoning used in GGCT were shaped by the work of Wouters and Maesschalck (2012), which explained the characteristics of different thought styles in detail. Familiarity with organisational silence types already identified, and with GGCT, meant that all the interviews were conducted fluently without awkward pauses.

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the Institute of Education themselves – the participants' workplace – the majority of which were carried out in private rooms. Three interviews initially began in more public office space and then were transferred to more private rooms during the interviews at the participants' request. The duration of the interviews was anticipated to be 30-60 minutes but in practice they ranged between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. One interview (the longest) took 2 hours which was because the researcher had to repeat several interview questions and take hand-written notes since the interviewee did not consent to audio recording of the interview. The typical interview times were consistent with other organisational silence research at 30 to 90 minutes, reported by Detert and Trevino (2010) but significantly longer than the interview times of 25 to 45 minutes reported by Milliken et al. (2003) and 21 minutes to 58 minutes by Schwappach and Gehring (2014). Audio recording of interviews has been reported by earlier researchers in the domain of organisational silence (Schwappach and Gehring, 2014). In the present study, the researcher used an audio-recorder for recording 28 interviews and four interviews were recorded by taking handwritten notes during the interviews.

Interviewers must respect interviewees' confidentiality, establishing trust between interviewer and interviewee, especially when the research topic involves collecting highly sensitive experiences and information (Brinkmann, 2013). Sensitivity, trust and confidentiality are paramount when one interviewee is known to another such as in a manager-subordinate relationship. All the interviewees were very cooperative throughout, seemingly intrigued by the topic and demonstrating enthusiasm to contribute. In some cases, some interviewees stayed after office hours to enable me to conduct their interviews, something that I found to be very important as this commitment enabled me to gather my data within the schedule set for my fieldwork and enabled the interviewees to explain themselves in detail (Matthews and Ross, 2010, p. 226).

Nevertheless, interview data is time consuming both for arranging meetings and for transcription and analysis (Berg, 2004). There is some danger of losing control of the topic of discussion and a risk of collecting peripheral information not relevant to the research topic (Brewerton and Millward, 2001, p. 70). In the current study's case, control passed between me and the interviewee in a way to obtain naturalistic answers. Only in one or two cases was it a challenge to judge where to take the interview next. These cases were to involve some quick-thinking around responses containing highly opposed statements which seemed to indicate that the interviewee thought of herself as very open and communicative, but also reported her organisational silences and her reasons for them. That is, even open communication exists alongside profound silences. These apparent, though invariably reasonable, contradictions had to be explored very carefully. However, the literature reports that face-to-face semi-structured interviews are preferred over the structured and telephonic interviews in the domain of organisational silence because face-to-face interviews ensure confidentiality and develop trust between the interviewee and interviewer (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 27), allow for discussion, help in getting in-depth relevant information, discover detailed views and reduce researcher-led bias (Milliken et al., 2003; Panahi et al., 2012; Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015; Hoyeda and Seyedpoor, 2015). This key advantage of semi-structured interviews, its flexibility, was decisive for us.

Informed by organisational silence types already identified in the literature and knowledge of dynamics as made available by GGCT, the researcher prepared a set of interview questions (Appendix I), one for the leaders (managers) and the other for subordinates (supervisors). A seven-stage process was followed (Figure 5.4).
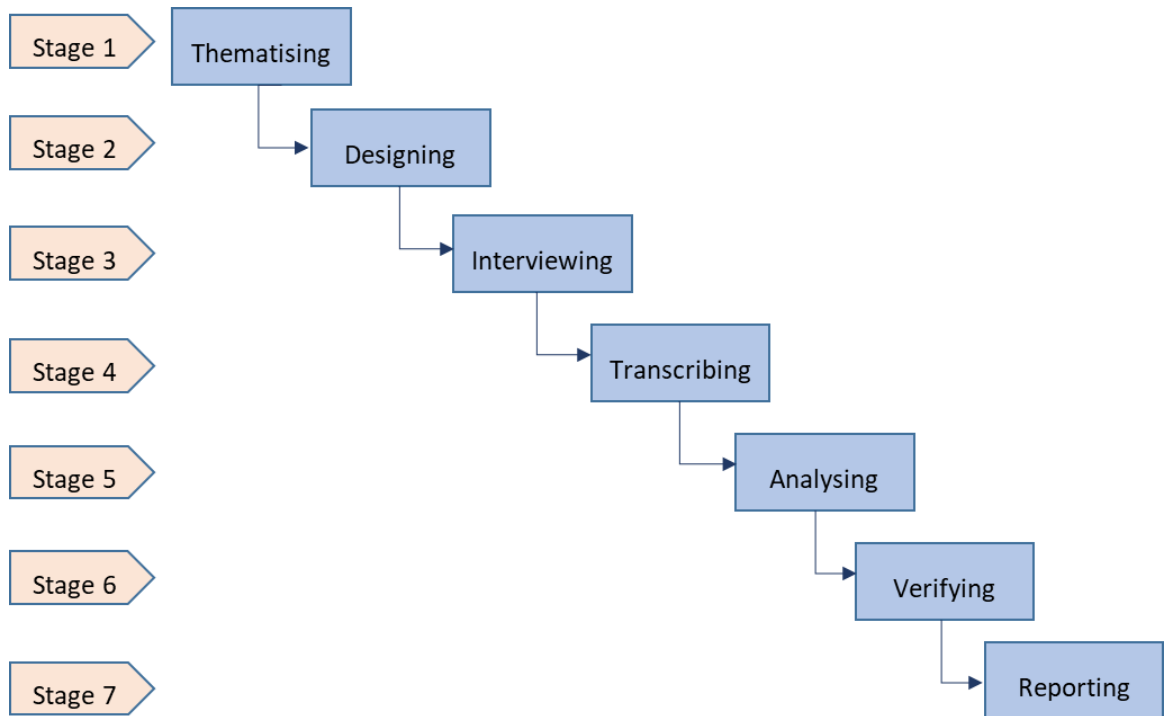
Developed by Researcher based on Kvale and Brinkmann (2015, p.128-129).

Figure 5.2. Seven Stages of Interview Research Source

Stage 1- Thematising: This stage comprises investigation and conceptualisation of the topic studied (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015), principally a review of published literature on the types and causes of silence in organisations (Chapter 3).

Stage 2- Designing: In this stage involves evaluating all the seven stages involved in the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015), treated as imagined outcomes to imagined outcomes. The cross sectional semi-structured interview design emerged as the best of several possible approaches and the postal structured survey as the worst.

Stage 3- Interviewing: An interview protocol was developed on the basis of the known literature (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). In our case, organisational silence types and thought styles needed to be operationalised in language respondents would understand easily.

Stage 4- Transcribing: This stage comprises transcription of what interviewees had said ready for analysis (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). Earlier studies on organisational silence also reported transcribing verbatim the interview data (Schwappach and Gehring, 2014; Ullström et al., 2014). At this stage, the researcher transcribed verbatim interview data from 28 research participants and reconstructed those for which there were only contemporaneous notes (n=32).

Stage 5- Analysing: This stage involves choosing data analysis method(s) appropriate for the type of data collected and the purpose of the study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). Typically, qualitative organisational silence research is analysed by inductive thematic analysis (Schwappach and Gehring, 2014). The researcher chose this with modifications, recruiting a confederate to code each respondent's thought styles independently. A very high level of inter-observer agreement was obtained.

Stage 6- Verifying: Qualitative study does not avoid questions concerning its validity, reliability and generalisability, checking the consistency, trustworthiness or reproducibility of the study findings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). For verification, the researcher reviewed 26 transcriptions against the original recordings. It is important to make sure that what was said, rather than what the transcriber thought was said, is recorded.

Stage 7 - Reporting: This stage involves reporting of the study findings in a clear and comprehensive way while respecting ethical issues in presenting the findings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015). To meet these requirements, the researcher reported the study findings in academic format through research papers at symposia and in this doctoral thesis.

Research Population and Sampling

The sample is drawn from an educational institution, and specifically from female staff and leaders. Because of this, the official state norms of Saudi Arabia will provide some of the workplace context which is likely to be mainly hierarchical (adapted from Berg, 2004; Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2014).

5.5.2. Research Population

Earlier researchers on organisational silence drew on different research population types and sample sizes. For example, employees (n=89) of a multinational corporation (Detert and Trevino, 2010), employees (n=10) of a supply company in the automobile industry (Yildiz, 2013), elementary school teachers (Akuzum, 2014), workers in five services sector companies (Mengenci, 2015), university employees (academic and non-academic) (Nikmaran et al., 2012; Panahi et al., 2012), employees at university hospitals (Nafei, 2016; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016), call centre employees (Achieng, 2014), employees of heavy-industry companies (Rhee et al., 2014), nurses (Eriguc et al., 2014; Toker et al., 2014), bank employees (Samadi et al., 2013), employees working in private, public and multinational organisations (Jain, 2015), employees of high tech industries (Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015), employees (n=40) (Milliken et al., 2003), students both undergraduates (Emanuel, 2013) and post-graduates (Piderit and Ashford, 2003) and managers and employees of a mobile communication company (Liu et al., 2009).

The population for the current study was drawn from female education supervisors and their managers working in institute of education offices for the elementary, middle and high schools for girls. The participants were selected from six out of 15 education offices located in and outside of Riyadh; the capital city of Saudi Arabia (Table 5.1). It was not practically possible to collect data from all fifteen offices because of the limited time and financial resources available to the researcher. The following exclusion and inclusion criteria were used for selecting the offices for the recruitment of the research participants for empirical data collection.

5.5.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria used for selection included:

All education offices should be located within Riyadh city with one education office from each area (i.e. East, West, North, South and Central) of Riyadh city

The education office with the largest number (≥ 100) of supervisors

Stratification of offices based on the ratio of the number of reporting employees to one leader calculated for each office and then selection of the offices with a higher ratio of employees to leaders. This stratification of sampling allowed the researcher to shortlist 7 out of 15 offices in Riyadh with the highest follower to leader ratio. However, one office, although located in the south of Riyadh city with a large number of supervisors, was excluded because the researcher could not find a suitable contact despite repeated attempts. Another office here called the 'S2' also located in South Riyadh was selected instead (Table 5.2).

The mutual convenience for the researcher and respondents.

The exclusion criteria were:

- All education offices located outside the Riyadh city
- The offices with a small number (≤ 100) of supervisors
- Inconvenience to the researcher to contact and visit the offices for data collection

All offices and interviewees' names have been omitted for reasons of confidentiality because organisational silence is a sensitive subject around which confidentiality is paramount. No silent subject wishes their silences to be known!

No.	Office name	Location in Riyadh	Office selected	Supervisors		Total
				Administration	**Education**	
1	S1	South	No	20	91	**111**
2	E1	East	No	16	38	**54**
3	S2	South	No	8	83	**91**
4	E2	East	Yes	34	115	**149**
5	S2	South	Yes	34	66	**100**
6	N1	North	Yes	44	138	**182**
7	W1	West	Yes	46	75	**121**
8	E3	East	Yes	21	97	**118**
9	C	Centre	Yes	47	95	**142**
10	O1	Outside	No	0	2	**2**
11	O2	Outside	No	9	6	**15**
12	O3	Outside	No	2	7	**9**
13	O4	Outside	No	2	9	**11**
14	O5	Outside	No	5	15	**20**
15	O6	Outside	No	6	17	**23**
	Total			**294**	**854**	**1148**

Source: Ministry of Education (2016) Government of Saudi Arabia

Table 5.2. Education Offices with Supervisors in and around Riyadh

5.5.4. Sampling Techniques

It is not always possible for a whole population to be given an equal chance to participate in a study. Sampling is intended to represent the population, so the aim is to represent a population with the least margin of error (Saunders et al., 2009). Sampling can be divided into two major categories: probability (representative) sampling, which requires very good access to all respondents, and non-probability (judgemental) sampling such as

convenience sampling, that is used when there is restricted access to respondents, of which *snowball sampling* that is used when respondents refer the researcher to other respondents, is one example. When the total population is not known, it is difficult to make statistical inferences about the population under investigation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The size of sampling frame is governed by characteristics of data, margin of error to be tolerated in the study, types of analysis required and possible number of cases before which data replication starts (Saunders et al., 2009; Berg, 2004).

In qualitative studies, researchers more commonly use non-probability sampling for which a number of sub-sets of sampling such as quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection and convenience sampling are available (Punch and Oancea, 2014, p. 211). Non-probability sampling is used, based on the researcher's best judgement, prior experience, type of study, and the purpose of the work (Punch and Oancea, 2014). Even when using non-probability sampling in qualitative research, it is important to maximise the representativeness of the study findings and this can be done through purposive sampling such as quota sampling (Krupnikov and Levine, 2014). Earlier studies of organisational silence tend to use purposive sampling for the recruitment of research participants (Schwappach and Gehring, 2014).

Because all four thought styles and their many hybrids are culturally available to interviewees, GGCT researchers do not assume that, say, only persons in high office will be animated by only hierarchical reasoning, nor that rank-and-file employees with similar statuses in the same office under the same manager will, say, only use egalitarian-enclave reasoning. In other words, it cannot be known beforehand how thought styles will be distributed within a sampling frame. But the researcher must be alert to every possible form of reasoning that might be reported in any interview at any level and in any office. The possibility that offices of a similar size and identical function will demonstrate different thought style dynamics should not be ruled out. For this reason, it was important to visit as many offices as our resources permitted.

In the present study, the researcher devised and applied the formula of 'the ratio of one leader per total number of reporting followers (employees)' to categorise the education offices sample into one stratum. This ratio was calculated for each office and then the offices with a higher ratio of employees to manager were selected. This stratification of office sampling allowed the researcher to select 6 out of 15 education offices in Riyadh with highest leader to follower ratio. Thereafter, using convenience sampling (Krupnikov and Levine, 2014), one leader was selected (supervising a number of education supervisors) and four of her subordinate education supervisors based on their availability and at their convenience within each of six selected education offices. This method was based on participant selection in the study of Detert and Trevino (2010). It also helped the researcher in saving the time and expense of gathering the data (Punch and Oancea, 2014). The recruitment of one leader and four (subordinate) supervisors from each participating education office was important for increasing the reliability and representativeness.

One of the properties of the GGCT typology has a bearing on the question of representativeness. Expressed most simply, thought styles are derived according to how strong or weak social regulation is and how strong or weak social solidarity is. On this initial basis, high solidarity and high regulation foster hierarchical thinking and weak solidarity with high regulation foster fatalism – and so on around the typology. However, GGCT also posits that one thought style animates others. In other words, hierarchy may animate egalitarian, individualistic or fatalistic reasoning in ways that are difficult to forecast. This second property of the GGCT typology is what brings about its dynamism. While Saudi culture is at first glance hierarchical, it might be expected that many secondary cultural reactions, precipitated by the animation which hierarchy provokes in other thought styles. With this understanding of cultural dynamics, it was important that no guesses were made as to what forms of reasoning would appear at the interview stage, but to draw a sample that would enable diverse reasoning to be found, if it exists. It is to be emphasised that, for example, hierarchy can animate individualistic-competitive thinking and the opportunistic silence type associated with it – even in a so-called

conservative society. In fact, diverse silences were found. In summary, the researcher used non-probability sampling. To be precise, the researcher used the purposive sampling for selecting the education offices (cases) and having selected the participating offices, the researcher then used convenience sampling for selecting the research participants within each office for interview.

5.5.5. *Sample Size*

The researcher undertook a review of the literature on organisational silence and found that different sample sizes had been used. In quantitative studies, usually questionnaire surveys, the sample sizes were large, as expected (Liu et al., 2009; Nikmaran et al., 2012; Panahi et al., 2012; Jain, 2015; Samadi et al., 2013; Akuzum, 2014; Eriguc et al., 2014; Rhee et al., 2014; Toker et al., 2014; Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015; Mengenci, 2015; Nafei, 2016; Parcham and Ghasemizad, 2016). The sample sizes in quantitative studies on organisational silence reviewed by the researcher ranged between 137 participants (Eriguc et al., 2014) and 744 participants (Dedahanov and Rhee., 2015). Conversely, the sample sizes were smaller in qualitative studies ranging between ten participants (Yildiz, 2013), 21 participants (Ullström et al., 2014; Manley et al., 2016), 32 participants (Schwappach and Gehring, 2014), 40 participants (Milliken et al., 2003) and 89 participants (Detert and Trevino, 2010). In the present study, the sample 32 of participants were interviewed in the field on the basis that this number and their distribution across different offices would meet our research aims.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval by an authorised body is imperative before undertaking any research study involving human participants (World Medical Association, 2014). The present study was submitted for ethics approval to the Research Ethics Committee at the Brunel Business School, Brunel University London, which confirmed approval by letter (Appendix II). Thereafter, the researcher contacted the Saudi Cultural Bureau at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in London for a letter supporting the

undertaking within education offices in Riyadh. The Saudi Cultural Bureau asked the Ministry of Education for an approval letter (Appendix III), then the researcher contacted the Director of Training and Development (female) for the Riyadh Region in the Institute of Education for permission to collect data in education offices in Riyadh. The researcher presented the letter from Brunel University (Appendix II) and the support letter from the Saudi Cultural Bureau London (Appendix III) to the Director and apprised her of the nature, aim and objectives of the study and requested permission to contact managers and their subordinates.

Different education offices were contacted, the study was explained to the managers and times and dates for visiting potential participants were arranged. The researcher then visited each of the selected education offices at the scheduled time and date and met with the potential participants during which the researcher informed them about the objectives of the research study, the rights of the research participants, the entirely voluntary nature of participation, including the right to withdraw at any time, of there being no obligation to answer any or all interview questions and guaranteeing anonymity, confidentiality, security of data storage and anonymised dissemination. During these meetings, the researcher asked them whether they were interested in taking part. To the participants who showed willingness to participate, the researcher gave copies of research participants' sheet (Appendix IV) and consent form (Appendix V), which were in Arabic. After obtaining signed and dated written consent from the potential participants, the researcher arranged interviews at a time and date convenient to each participant. At this point, the researcher also asked participants whether they would mind if the interview were audio recorded. Audio recording of interviews was agreed by 26 participants while four participants refused and asked for hand-written notes to be taken instead, which was agreed.

At this stage, the researcher endeavoured to store, transcribe and analyse data in a way that is acceptable and in accordance with the ethical approval obtained. All data collected were stored, transcribed, analysed and disseminated anonymously. It is crucial to

anonymise all data items so that they cannot be identifiable with a particular person. Clark (2006) stated that through anonymization, the researcher is able to remove bias, inspire confidence and ensure that the study is focused on its intended purpose, having no harmful intent.

5.7. Data Transcription and Analysis

5.7.1. Translation of the Responses

Since the research was conducted from a UK university it was necessary to translate the questions and subsequently to translate the responses (from English to Arabic and then from Arabic to English). Van Nes et al. (2010) indicated that when translating it is crucial to ensure that the meaning is not lost in the translation, as this can compromise the research. There was need to consider all data items carefully and ensure that translation was done in such a way that someone who read it in English and another who read it in Arabic would report the same meaning to the researcher. Nevertheless, one of challenges during translation was in the translation of some Arabic proverbs. Although it was a difficult process translating all the proverbs from Arabic to English, two in particular were exceptionally difficult and perhaps practically impossible. In these cases, the translation was not attempted but just the meaning given.

5.7.2. Coding Process

In terms of coding, first, the researcher made a translation from Arabic to English, all 30 responses were translated to allow simultaneous coding and interpretation. Temple and Young (2004) stress the importance of remaining unbiased and objective throughout the process. In GGCT terms this means occupying the hermit position at the centre of the GGCT typology. They identified the accurate translation as crucial to the prevention of bias. The process of translation was long and arduous in order to attain accuracy in either language. In this research, it was crucial to ensure that what was said in Arabic, was translated faithfully into English. Once the translation was complete, the

responses were organised for analysis into two main categories: managers and employees. This enabled analysing the different responses according to the interviewee's status.

The starting point for code creation was the types of silence and thought styles found in each utterance. The researcher determined these after translation, because it was now becoming easier with conceptual familiarity. It was vital to consider the main silences and reasoning displayed in each interview (silence type and cultural bias). It should be noted that there are instances when the respondents gave long sentences or repeated the same point in different ways, which called for overall classification. It was important to allow as many subthemes as possible under each of the main types of silence and thought style, because this was in line with the need for objectivity and as a way of identifying gaps in existing literature. The pilot interviews were omitted from analysis as they fell outside our sampling frame.

The method of analysis that was adopted was thematic analysis. The process of thematic analysis in this case may be summarised as involving the need to:

- Identify the forms of silence from existing literature
- Develop categories of the types of silence based on the information that has been gathered from the literature
- Create themes corresponding to the types of silence that have been identified (these form the main themes under these types)
- Explain these reasons for silence which relate to the descriptions of the themes
- Create interpretations and insights for these themes

(Schwappach and Gehring, 2014)

A starting point for the analysis was determined based of the existing types of silence that had rigor, reliability, validity and generalisability, as have been presented in the literature review (Chapter 3): Prosocial, Quiescent, Acquiescent and opportunistic (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The researcher, however, was not bound to limit the scope of analysis to

these types, but to allow for the introduction of other types (if any), on the basis of contextual issues that could be specific to the institution, or for the country as a whole.

The use of NVivo was employed at this stage in order to support the storage and sorting of data, and the identification of themes and sub-themes. For example, sub-themes identified under the broader theme of quiescent silence included fear of personal consequences (and sub-sub themes such as punishment; blame or information shared being used against individuals; the potential impact on image or perceived capability; and embarrassment), fear of social consequences (and sub-sub themes such as the fear of conversation being conveyed to others and this subsequently related to fear of lack of acceptance or exclusion by others; fear of damaging relationships; and fear of unexpected reaction from others) and fear of organisational or workplace consequences (and sub-sub themes including fear of exaggerating the problem or fear of the negative impact on the practices of the place of work). After using NVivo for this part of the analysis process, the researcher was able to return to the data to manually search for patterns and explanations. Thus, the analysis process involved a combination of analysis software and manual analysis.

5.7.3. Data Analysis

This study involved qualitative interview data collected from a convenience sample of education officers (N=32) which included education supervisors (n=26) and their managers (n=6) within the sampling frame described earlier.

Qualitative analysis comprises describing the data linkages with concepts and classifying findings to enable new and existing relationships to be found (Dey, 2003 as cited in Berg 2004). The recorded interviews were transcribed in a format suitable for the content analysis technique of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2014) as is usual in organisational research (Ullström et al., 2014). The content analysis of textual data, according to Flick (1998), comprises three steps: *(a) Summarising the content analysis,*

grouping similar textual material to eliminate less relevant data, *(b) Explicating the content analysis,* so as to minimise ambiguity, and *(c) Structuring the content analysis* to identify emerging patterns. For content analysis, coding is as important as for quantitative data.

In qualitative research, the coding involves assigning names, labels or tags to a piece of text, either a group of words or a large extract, that conveys a discrete piece of meaning or discrete issue (Punch and Oancea, 2014). There are three types of coding i.e. open coding, axial coding and selective coding[2] (Strauss and Tobin, 1998 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2014). In the present study, the researcher used mixed coding, which involved the use of literature driven coding (mainly based on the conceptual framework extracted and synthesised from the literature review) and then data driven coding for any utterances not covered in the conceptual framework.

Content analysis is an important method for analysing qualitative interview data but the disadvantage is that it does not identify associations and casual relationships between variables/themes (Berg, 2004). Qualitative content analysis mainly consists of understanding the language, discovering any regularities in the data and deriving the meaning of text or action and reflection (Gilbert et al., 2014). Content analysis allows researcher(s) to analyse the data systematically which can lead to interpretation and induction of theoretical concepts (Saunders et al., 2009). Qualitative data analysis using content analysis was used here.

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[2] Open coding involves applying codes that are derived from the text (emergent codes). Axial coding involves the categorising the sub-categories to make them more precise. Selective coding involves making categorisation around one central concept.

5.8.   Reliability, Validity and Generalisation of the Data

5.8.1. Reliability

The degree with which the research process can be replicated defines the reliability of the research. Spencer et al. (2004) states that reliability is the 'the reassurance that another researcher investigating the same issue or working with the same data set would derive the same findings. In studies that are quantitatively hinged, consistency remains the key element in defining reliability. The researcher should ensure that there is consistency, although some degree of variability may be considered. According to Silverman (2009), there are five key elements that can support reliability, including; refutational analysis, constant data comparison, comprehensive use of data, use inclusion for the cases that are deviant and lastly, tabulating relevant data or information.

To ensure reliability, one can observe multiple participants in the same events or contexts and compare the resultant observations. Use of observations and interviews is less intrusive as compared to the laboratory experiment involving human subjects (Saunders et al., 2009). The less intrusive methods applied in this study, result in more life-like insights and bias is limited to the collection and analysis. Interviewees were offered complete confidentiality and anonymity and the correct interview protocol was followed faithfully for all interviews. The sample was drawn from the same ministry institutions and limited the context of the questions. The researcher gave clarification when sought. The same questions were repeated or rephrased if necessary.

5.8.2. Validity

Validity concerns the appropriateness of the tools and processes adopted. The researcher must ask whether these were appropriate to the study's subject matter. The right stage to state testing validity is at the point of defining and describing the epistemological and ontological positions of the particular researcher (Waterman, 2013). Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend a variety of techniques to ensure the validity of the inferences made from qualitative data such as observations or interviews. These techniques include

developing a sampling plan so that unusual and difficult access events are observed; confirming the representativeness of observations with existing secondary records; applying data and methodological triangulation to compare results or findings with other forms of data analyse, for example, looking for extreme observations and disconfirming ones.

5.8.3. *Generalisability*

Generalisation refers to the degree to which the findings of a particular study can be claimed to apply more widely (Hyde, 2000). There is the view that since many of the qualitative studies focus on one element, there is usually no expectation of generalisability; however, it is possible that the organisational silence and thought styles which inform them can be generalised. Generalisation can be representational, analytical and empirical. In this study, the issue of organisational silence that was being examined in one part of the ministry of education in Saudi Arabia has some generalisability to the whole Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Perhaps more importantly the linkages between each organisational silence type and the reasonings which respondents offered have generalisability well beyond Saudi Arabia.

5.9.   Reflexivity and Research Limitations

After constructing the research questions and gaining ethical approval, the researcher visited the Cultural Bureau of Saudi Arabia in London in order to obtain the necessary documents to be able to collect data for the study in Saudi Arabia. This letter explained that the researcher was a PhD student at Brunel University and was needed to demonstrate that the data would be gathered for educational purposes. Following this, the Manager for Public Relations for the Educational Offices for Female Public Schools in the Ministry of Education was contacted. She provided a supporting letter explaining the research and the researcher's situation, which could be shown to the Managers in the Educational Offices to assist in gaining access to potential participants.

Six Educational Offices were selected, which were located in different parts of Riyadh, including two from the North (being the largest area), and one each from the South, the East and the West, as well as one central office. It was felt that the data would be richer if there was some diversity in the sample, in relation to the cultures and lifestyles of the individuals involved according to the different regions of Riyadh. Representatives within the Department for Public Relations within each office then accompanied the researcher to the different subject departments to ask employees and supervisors if anyone would be willing to participate in the study. Interested participants then supplied the researcher with their phone numbers and discussed potential times and dates for the interview with the researcher and the representative. Whilst comparison of regional differences was the initial intention within the study, then, after comparing the findings from several different offices, it was apparent that there were few distinctions to be made. Thus, the research focused solely on comparison between employees and leaders, rather than additionally reflecting on potential regional differences here.

In terms of the sample size, while the researcher had planned to include a larger sample, the issues encountered during access to participants limited the numbers of people who could be involved in the research. One such difficulty, for instance, was the time of year in which the data collection was taking place. This was the busiest period in the year for the Offices, particularly given that employees would be regularly travelling from the main office to visit schools during this time. This meant that the different departments were not able to spare many employees for up to two hours, which they were informed the interviews might take, and so this limited the number of participants within each department. Nonetheless, despite this, many participants did come forward and give up their time for the researcher. In addition, even when participants themselves could not take part due to their workload, some put forward other colleagues who may be interested in participating. The researcher requested an interview with one manager, for instance, who declined because of her work, but stated that she would be happy for the vice manager to spare the time instead.

Some participants also recommended other potential participants after talking with the researcher. One participant, for example, who was particularly impressed by the confidential nature of the interviews, as it allowed her to share a lot of her experiences, also contacted another potential participant at the end of the interview. She explained to her colleague the research topic and how important and interesting it was, and the interview was arranged and conducted immediately with this additional participant. Whilst the desired sample size at the beginning of the study was not achieved, therefore, the final sample proved extremely valuable, sharing important insights, and it was felt that data saturation was actually achieved with the 32 participants.

The researcher encountered several challenges related to the length of the interviews. As mentioned above, for instance, some participants explained that they could not spare the two hours that the interviews may take, given the time of year. In addition, the long interview could have impacted on concentration or levels of engagement in the interview. One participant, for instance, seemed to struggle with the length of the interview and after one hour, she asked if the interview could end and continue the next day. When the researcher was getting up to leave, she stated that she had changed her mind, and she would continue with the interview the same day to save the researcher having to return to the offices the next day. While it could be argued that the quality of the data may have been compromised here, after the participant had a drink and a brief rest, she seemed to be fully engaged and interested in the interview again. The length of the interview may therefore have proved problematic in the current research, however, participants proved particularly accommodating, which therefore reduced problems being encountered here.

When the interviews were taking place, some participants demonstrated a strong interest in the topic and were keen to share their thoughts and experiences. On one occasion, for instance, a participant agreed to take part in the interview and initially stated that she was happy to conduct the interview with her colleague present, despite the researcher recommending that the interviews were conducted in a private room. Several questions into the interview the participant stated that maybe it would be less distracting for the

colleagues if the interview moved to a private room. Once in the room, she explained that she found the topic extremely interesting and wanted to share insights with me that she did not feel comfortable expressing in the company of others.

It was interesting to note that several participants were not willing to share any thoughts and experiences relating to their current manager. Whilst they were keen to share experiences about previous managers, when the researcher tried to link these accounts to their more recent experiences, participants seemed less willing to discuss these explicitly. It was evident, however, through reactions to the question in the form of facial expressions, rather than voicing their thoughts, that there were issues they may have wanted to share but did not feel that they could. Despite the researcher's assurances of confidentiality, it was clear that these participants were concerned that they may be heard in some way. This potentially impacted on the quality of the findings here, although the insights shared relating to previous experiences were important, and the majority of participants (29) did give some indication of more recent experiences.

Some participants were initially suspicious of the intentions of the research, and several expressed the concern that the study had been commissioned by the Institute of Education due to the nature of the topic. They felt that the employees were being assessed in some way through the questions asked. The researcher reassured these participants, explaining the research aims, as well as the researcher's background, and showing them the letters which authenticated the researcher's educational institution.

5.9.1. *Limitations of this Research*

In the course of engaging in the research process, and especially in this section, the following could be described as the key limitations of the methodology adopted:

- The main bias was the use of Saudi women in my study. If this study is to provide a holistic view of the concept of organisational silence in the institutions of Saudi Arabia and within its Ministry of Education, male respondents would have been a valuable inclusion.

- I had planned and would have preferred to have conducted semi-structured interviews along with participant observations and focus groups. By using these additional techniques, the dynamics of meetings would have been observed but without hearing silences nor their private reasonings. For political reasons there was no possibility of engaging in observation. This single usage of a technique prevented me from comparing what was said in open sessions with what was being withheld privately. There are private silences without public utterances.

5.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter has indicated the path taken by the researcher in the process of developing and executing this research. It has provided a stepwise view of the process of this research, highlighting the key stages. The discussion has focused on similar methodologies employed in organisational silence research while explaining the rationale at every stage and the limitations of this methodology have been identified, and what the circumstances in Saudi Arabia were

CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS

6.1. Chapter Introduction

In this discussion, evidence from the analysis of the data is linked to the organisational silence and GGCT literatures. The plan for analysis of the interview data is to (1) listen for the types of silence which interviewees are reporting and to compare those of both managers and subordinates, (2) to pay close attention to the reasoning they give for types of silence and thus to identify thought styles, and (3) to classify that reasoning using GGCT. In this way, it will be tested if it is possible to synthesise GGCT with the organisational silence literature in a way that is both critical and constructive.

In this section evidence in the data is presented for the four main types of silence: quiescent, prosocial, acquiescent and opportunistic.

6.2. Types of Silence in the Sample

The employees who were interviewed presented different dispositions to silence. In the interview data there was evidence of quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial and opportunistic silences. In addition, there were two further types of silence: respectful and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. It is most striking that in a fairly homogeneous sample no fewer than seven silence types were discovered.

In this section, it is shown that both employees and managers practice all seven forms of silence, but it is important to note that the dominant forms of silence are different between employees and managers. It will be shown that for employees, the dominant types of silence are prosocial and quiescent, whereas for managers, the dominant types of silence are respectful and empathetic. There are exceptions, however, where managers were found also to practice silence types most associated with employees when in subservient positions to their own managers. Here it is evident that power and hierarchy play

important roles in the relationship between types of silence and thought styles which are created among employees and managers.

6.2.1. *Role of Quiescent Silence*

Quiescent silence was shown to be the dominant type of silence practiced by employees with colleagues and managers. Many organisational silence researchers attribute employees' sense of anger, cynicism and fear of speaking up about issues that are important to them to poor management; thus, if management were better, communication would be improved. This is the basis of quiescent silence. Pinder and Harlos (2001) state that when there is a conscious consensus to not say anything about what is taking place, quiescent silence is created. This form of silence involves withholding information for clear reasons. According to Van Dyne et al. (2003), and later Shore et al. (2012), quiescent silence occurs when the information that is held is of material importance to the organisation. Pinder and Harlos (2001), however, who refer to this type of silence as *fearful silence*, argue that it may not necessarily involve withholding valuable information, but is characterised by insecurity originating in organisational processes.

In the current research, all the 26 employees interviewed gave examples of times that they had practiced quiescent silence in some form. It was important to determine whether the employees who gave examples of quiescent silence were simply drawing on single experiences or whether the practice of this type of silence was a common occurrence for them within their work environment. Only five of the respondents gave a single example of practicing this type of silence whereas nineteen gave four or more examples, six gave eight or more examples, and one respondent gave fifteen examples of using this type of silence. Such figures seem to indicate that this type of silence is used frequently by employees. It is also interesting to note that this type of silence was more pronounced in particular offices. All respondents in Office C, for instance, gave eight examples or more of using this type of silence. In contrast, in Office E, three respondents gave only one example, with the remaining respondent giving four examples of using this type of silence. All other offices had a range figures for quiescent silence. Such findings require

further investigation to examine the specific organisational settings that may affect silence in this way.

The instances of quiescent silence among the leaders was not as pronounced as among the employees, however, five of the six managers did provide examples, but these related to their experiences with their own superiors, rather than with subordinates. Thus, the fear around this type of silence seemed to relate to hierarchical relationships and power. Looking further at this type of silence, it was important to identify the reasons behind employees and managers using quiescent silence, and to explore any commonalities and differences here. In the previous literature, this form of silence has been attributed to employees protecting themselves from punishment (Milliken *et al*., 2003; Bisel and Arterburn, 2012; Altinkurt, 2014), exclusion or sanctions (Kiewitz *et al*., 2016), being labelled a trouble-maker or whistle-blower (Brinsfield, 2013; Akinci et al., 2014; Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017), damaging relationships with others (Kiewitz *et al*., 2016), loss of job (Guo *et al*., 2018) or failing to get a promotion (Azukum, 2014; Guo *et al*., 2018).

In the current research, there was some confirmation of such justifications, but it has been possible to build on existing classifications here slightly. For the current study, the key reasons offered for this type of silence have been distinguished into three key categories. First, respondents discussed silence being related to fear of personal consequences, including punishment; blame or information shared being used against them; the potential impact on image or perceived capability; and embarrassment. Second, respondents explained silence being the result of fear of social consequences, such as the fear of conversation being conveyed to others and this subsequently related to fear of lack of acceptance or exclusion by others; fear of damaging relationships; and fear of unexpected reaction from others. Finally, respondents discussed silence as resulting from fear of organisational or workplace consequences. These referred to fear of exaggerating the problem or fear of the negative impact on the practices of the place of work.

Many of the respondents explained their silence in the workplace as relating to fear of consequences which might affect them individually. This included fear of punishment; fear of blame, or that information they imparted whilst speaking could be used against them; fear of a negative impact on their image and perceived capabilities; and finally, fear of embarrassment.

6.2.1.1. Punishment

Literature on quiescent silence (Milliken *et al.*, 2003; Bisel and Arterburn, 2012; Altinkurt, 2014) has indicated that fear of punishment might be one of the causes of silence in the educational offices in Saudi Arabia. Whilst many of the respondents gave clear indication of the specific negative consequence they feared, some respondents remained silent for fear of punishment, but they were not sure exactly what punishment this might be. As respondent A2 explained:

> *I think my position as an Islamic awareness supervisor has a certain amount of sensitivity because we must stick to literal aspects determined by higher administration. The risk is in the fact that if one breaks any way it would lead to severe punishment and accountability.*

This idea supports the findings of Morrison and Milliken (2000) who suggest that employees may be silent through fear of something that will happen to them, without really being sure of what that might be. It is in general a fear of 'rocking the boat'. The comments given by another respondent appeared to suggest that silence was fuelled by fear of punishment from God:

> *Before answering the question directly, before answering this question, I will just say that there is an Islamic statement that says silence is worship, but there are only few who actually practise it. Yet this does not mean that speaking is bad but there is an Arabic*

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> *proverb 'A word sometimes sounds like it tells the speaker: please*
> *leave me', I do believe that some words may lead a person to*
> *enter heaven while others may take their speaker to Hell*
> (Respondent B3).

Such an example has not been touched on in the previous literature in relation to Islam, and indeed the current study found many examples of where religion played an important role in organisational silence, as will be discussed further below.

In relation to managers, the fear that what could have been said might be taken out of context and used against them, caused some managers to remain silent. As, Leader D stated:

> *I am forced to be silent, he will either take an opposite action*
> *against me, or simply will not take my opinion into consideration.*

This manager therefore maintained silence, anticipating both adversarial reactions and wasted effort. She has two clear reasonings for her silence and refers to a male figure when estimating the chances of anything she says being taken seriously, accepted and making a difference. This suggests also acquiescent silence in combination with quiescent silence. Leaders may not fear negative feedback (Lu and Xie 2013) and while some do, others tend not to. This perhaps indicates that, again, reasoning cannot be forecast accurately according to someone's position of power. Leader D is very circumspect and a lot more pessimistic about her powers of persuasion.

6.2.1.2.   *Fear of Being Blamed/ Information Being Used Against Them*

For several of the respondents, there concerns were about fear of consequences related to the fear of being blamed for negative actions or outcomes, or the information or opinions they shared being used against them in some way. As one respondent in Office D explained:

> *... I might say something that will give the others a chance to use what I say against me. I think if I reveal that, it will have consequences* (Respondent D4).

Although as she explained further, it became clear that this was not related to interactions with colleagues, but rather with the teachers she was monitoring:

> *To be honest, with my colleagues I am more open... But I am more reticent with teachers. The only openness part with them is regarding the specialization and feedback regarding their weakness in the classes.*

Fear of information being used against individuals within the workplace was particularly evident in the responses of respondents from Office C, where there was the highest level of instances of silence compared to other offices, and these appeared to be mostly related to fear. As respondent C1 stated:

> *My office manager is a firm person and she would have found a point against me to put me under blame.*

This feeling about the need to remain silent was further emphasised when she explained:

> *...it is a hard mission to force oneself to be silent sometimes, but after some time I feel happy that I did not give others the chance to prove anything against me.*

This sense that speaking out may lead to something being used against the employee was a common response among all other respondents in Office C. As respondent C2 stated:

> *I am concerned that some stands may be held against me in the future when the circumstances of the job change…From my point of view, openness in conversations at work stays limited.*

> *I am more reticent when I am afraid that what I say will be conveyed to others or held against me.*

Similarly, respondent C4 explained that:

> *…others may misunderstand me and use the situation against me and criticise my behaviour. They may take the situation as a chance to criticise my personal characteristics.*

Finally, respondent C3 shared a similar experience, but related this to the role of the behaviour of the manager, or the sense that this type of such culture was dominant in this office:

> *I will give an example of a previous vice manager who was an autocrat. She was waiting for others to make mistakes and everyone was reticent in expressing their opinions out of fear of her.*

It is interesting to note, then, that all four respondents from Office C mentioned the fear of information being used against them, and therefore chose to remain silent. This may indicate that the work environment in this particular office is conducive to silence, although further research would be necessary here to confirm this point. It appeared that this may relate to the behaviour of managers, as suggested by respondent C3, but also evident in the claims of respondent C4:

> *I used to be more talkative and free in the past, moving from talking to silence, but with experience I learned that I need to put limits to my talking. I have been through situations when I did not agree on specific points with my managers but I learned not to talk.*

The important impact that management personnel can play on silence was further emphasised by respondent D1:

> *I respond to the direct feedback with transparency and discusses my point of view, this applies to the current direct manager but with the previous manager who was tough and did not allow supervisors to discuss their views and was tough so I would stay silent although I had point I wanted to discuss.*

This was also confirmed by another respondent in the same office. Respondent D4 stated:

> *We have really good opportunities from our recent manager to express our ideas and opinions, however we didn't have that with the previous manager who really doesn't even care about whatever we said until it reached the stage where we know that nobody will listen to us... I stopped expressing my opinions with the previous manager.*

It is important to remain aware, however, that the respondents here may have felt more comfortable discussing a previous manager negatively, and therefore it is not necessarily be the case that their current management is unproblematic. Thus, it would appear that management has a clear impact on organisational silence, and the comments of respondent E1 also seemed to confirm this, whilst also highlighting the differences between different types of managers:

> *The person that gives me the most space for speaking and expressing myself is the office manager. Even if you were discussing wrong ideas, she would listen to you to the last, then she'd discuss the ideas with you. On the other hand, the direct manager does not give one a chance for any space or discussion, "You have to do what I told you" and that's it.*

Furthermore, respondent E2 stated that:

>*I think we are given space for expression to a percentage of 20% by the former direct manager. The direct manger is willing to give space to express the opinions based on her relations with them if she has good relations with you, she will give you space, if not, she won't give you much space. She only used to allow those who are close to her to express their ideas, whereas she did not allow those with which she had problems to express themselves.*

Fear of negative consequences also plays a role among leaders in relation to silence, but first, it is not as frequent as for employees, and second, it does not relate to their interactions with employees, it tends to be associated with their interactions with their managers. As Leaders D and E stated:

>*I experience uncomfortable silence only with my manager, I am forced to be silent, she will either take an opposite action against me, or simply will not take my opinion into consideration* (Leader D).

>*I have experienced uncomfortable silence 'in the presence of a decision-maker in the ministry, respect of knowledge and ages when you are in front of higher leaders. I think we are forced to be silent because of their position and cannot express our opinions transparently about specific issues. This is very uncomfortable because it is obligatory; its obligatory silence* (Leader E).

Thus, hierarchy of relationships is important here, which supports previous studies underlining the role of power in quiescent silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Blackman

and Sadler-Smith, 2009; Morrison and Rothman, 2009). The data have shown, then, that this type of silence has high frequency amongst employees in particular, and within some offices there is an even higher level of fear, which appeared to be particularly applicable to the behaviour of management. It was evident, for instance, that Office C has a high level of practicing silence due to fear of negative consequences, such as information imparted being used against them. This could be contrasted to Office E, which had a relatively low level of this type of silence, compared to the other offices.

6.2.1.3. Fear of the Negative Impact on Image and Perceived Capabilities

Several respondents explained their silence as relating to the fear of the potentially negative impact that speaking might have on people's perceptions of them or their capabilities at work. This shows some similarity with findings in the literature which suggest that employees may practice silence to avoid being regarded as a troublemaker (Brinsfield, 2013; Akinci et al. 2014; Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017), although the respondents in the current study appeared to be more broadly concerned about not presenting a negative image to those around them, or appearing incapable of performing their responsibilities, rather than being labelled a troublemaker. For some employees, for instance, it was explained that silence resulted from the need to not be negatively regarded by others, or to not have a negative image within the workplace:

> *I am reticent with issues I faces with my teachers. I don't talk about them to my colleagues at the office. I am afraid of being misunderstood and get a negative image* (Respondent C4).

> *I have certain thoughts that I can't express in front of people so they won't judge me* (Respondent F1).

In terms of appearing capable, however, this was especially evident in terms of relationships with managers, where employees were keen to be regarded as able to cope

with the workload. Thus, their silence resulted from an attempt not to contradict this. As respondent A3 stated:

> *…with my colleagues at the office, we do have some open conversations about the load and pressure of the work, but when the direct manager is present, we do not talk about it at all. For example, a lot of administrative work is given to us as supervisors whereas it is supposed to be given to administrative employees. But when we are in front of the direct manager, we are silent, first of all because we do not want to argue with her and secondly because we do not want her to think that we don't accept the work.*

Respondent D5 also provided a similar justification, explaining that she was silent:

> *…when I was assigned to be the responsible assessment specialist in addition to my other duties, I agreed to be the coordinator of planning and improvement as well as the head of my department because I did not know how involved this work would be. It added extra burden on me but I did not talk about it in the beginning. I was unable to tell the administrative staff that I could not take the job, I wanted to prove that I am trustworthy. They gave me trust so, I had to prove that I am trustworthy.*

For respondent C1, silence also resulted from the desire not to be thought of as being incapable or unable to carry out her responsibilities:

> *The example for a situation where I was the most reticent was when a group of teachers at a school requested a substitute teacher to lessen the load on them. I was unable to provide this substitute as I do not have the authority to do so, hence I was accused by the teachers because I didn't solve the problem.*

> *So my office manager was angry with my direct manager as she*
> *held her responsible for the mistake, yet I preferred to be silent*
> *so as not to complicate the situation more.*

The desire to be regarded as capable within the workplace was further explained by Respondent C, who explained that her silence related to the fear of the negative impact that speaking might have on her job or career. As she claimed:

> *I know that if I was proved wrong, the manager would have sent*
> *me an official warning, and this would have affected my career.*

This particular explanation for this type of silence was only discussed by the employees, and no managers discussed such justification.

6.2.1.4. Embarrassment

Finally, in relation to the personal consequences highlighted, one respondent explained her silence as relating to the fear of embarrassment:

> *I think I practice uncomfortable silence more than comfortable*
> *silence. I practice that at meetings. ...When you see that some*
> *people use your ideas and present them at the meeting and you*
> *remain silent however you know that they used your ideas, really*
> *it's not comfortable* (Respondent D4).

This particular fear was only mentioned by one respondent, but it is interesting to note that in this case, rather than negative consequences as such, the fear is that their speaking will be well-received and her ideas used within the workplace. In such a case, she feels that she would be embarrassed by such recognition, therefore resulting in her silence.

6.2.1.5. Fear of Social Consequences

For many of the respondents, their fear of consequences seemed to be both personal in nature, and social. Thus, they feared the social consequences of speaking, and the impact that this may have on them. Several respondents, for instance, explained that they feared their conversation being conveyed to others, and therefore preferred to remain silent. This was particularly the case for employees from Office A:

> *In terms of comfortable silence, I experience it when at the office employees talk about others' accomplishments and ask "why did they succeed whereas we didn't?". I stay silent and feel comfortable about it, because the conversations will be conveyed to others later, the person being highly honoured may be discouraged. We are all colleagues* (Respondent A3).

> *Really I was afraid one day someone will use what I have said if I express my opinion about my colleagues. That will have advantages and disadvantages but the disadvantages are greater* (Respondent A5).

> *To be honest there is a kind of conveying the conversations between offices, this is fact. Once we were talking about the questions of exams and we took the decision to stop a certain school from writing the questions, we were surprised that the school already knows this decision though it was supposed to be confidential. The committee has only three members, so really I was wondering who conveyed this to the school. I was suspicious of one of my colleagues and I confronted her...she admitted that and said 'I should tell them', I told her that this is one of the office secrets, she told me 'I don't care', they should know about everything* (Respondent B4).

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> *I was advised by others not to be open in talking in front of others by more than one person and about 10 times since I started I was warned that people may repeat the conversations to other offices, or someone will convey the conversation to others* (Respondent E4).

The sense that their contributions or statements may be shared with, or conveyed to, others, seemed to relate strongly to three key potentially negative outcomes; fear of lack of acceptance or exclusion by others; fear of damaging relationships with others; or fear of unexpected reactions from others.

6.2.1.6. Fear of Lack of Acceptance or Exclusion by Others

For several of the respondents, remaining silent related to the fear that they would not be accepted by others, or that their opinions and contributions may serve to exclude them, thus supporting Kiewitz *et al.'s* (2016) claims that silence can result from fear of exclusion or sanctions. This was particularly the case when the employees felt that their opinions would be different to the majority. As respondent C1 claimed:

> *If I suspect that I would be misunderstood or that my ideas may not be acceptable, then I prefer not to express them.*

This was later confirmed in another statement by the same respondent, where she explained that:

> *I can't express my opinion on certain issues such as specific plans when most of the other members agree on a point.*

For respondents E2, F1 and F3, silence resulted from the feeling that their input would not be acceptable to others, or that their thinking was different to others:

I am mainly silent at the office, because of the difference in thinking I face with my colleagues (Respondent E2).

I consider myself a talkative person when the other person is accepting and understanding what I am saying. I am silent if the other person won't accept what I am saying (Respondent F1).

I am more open outside work because at work they believe my thoughts are socially unacceptable (Respondent F3).

It was also explained that silence could relate to fear of exclusion by managers, as highlighted by respondent A2:

Ironically, I had several different managers, however they all share the same school of thought; their perspective is 'whoever agrees will be well appreciated, whoever disagrees will be excluded'.

For three of the respondents, specific justification for feared lack of acceptance was also given, with two citing gender differences related to religion and the other describing fear surrounding cultural differences. Respondent A3 stated, for example:

In our society, some people are open minded, others are still so closed minded and others are in the middle. The topics that I want to discuss are women's rights especially when an open-minded woman is being accused or any other woman who calls for her rights. For example, in topics like hijab, women driving, these topics I really like to talk about. I stay silent because many of my colleagues are still very conservative and are also older than me, so I stay silent whereas I really want to speak from within.

Similarly, respondent C1 explained that:

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> *When I find cultural and intellectual differences between me and*
> *them, they prefer not to talk specifically about differences in*
> *openness such as costumes and ways of dressing such as the*
> *Hijab. I could emphasise that I can't express my opinion on*
> *certain issues such as specific plans when most of the other*
> *members agree on a point.*

It was clear from this respondent that the silence she practiced here was uncomfortable for her and conflicted with how she really wanted to be. The fear thus came from the feeling of being different from her other colleagues, and this was similar in the case of Respondent A1:

> *As I belong to [west of Saudi Culture] Hejaz culture and I am*
> *working in [middle of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh] Najd Culture, I*
> *have difficulty in dealing with them openly as they are*
> *conservative and judgmental. ... In my original area Jeddah, I am*
> *open minded and I could talk about anything freely.*

As she explained, then, her silence resulted from perceived cultural differences. Related to this lack of acceptance or exclusion was the feeling among some respondents that silence was better than speaking up, the latter of which might negatively affect relationships.

6.2.1.7.   Fear of Damaging Relationships

The desire to prevent damaging relationships with others, or to not lose others, is a measure of the strength and weakness of social bonds in the organisation, and has been previously noted in the literature as an explanation for silence (Ashford *et al.,* 1998; Morrison and Milliken, 2000; Lu and Xie, 2013; Kiewitz *et al.*, 2016). While similar to maintaining good relationships, in relation to pro-social silence, preventing damaging relationships is distinct in that the motivation here is different. The latter is related to the

fear of losing a friend or good relationship with others in the workplace, which is different to when someone is remaining silent to maintain a relationship. When discussing the motivations behind particular examples of silence put forward by respondents, sixteen of the 26 employees explained that they were concerned about speaking up in case they damaged or lost good relationships with others. This was especially the case in Office A where four out of five respondents practiced silence for fear of damaging relationships. As respondent A2 exclaimed:

> *I prefer silence in case of any conflicts between me and my colleagues. Accordingly, expressing my opinions openly may lead to losing relationships.*

In a similar example, respondent A1 claimed that she tended to be silent so as not to damage relationships at work. This was important to her, for as she explained:

> *Really, I do care about my relationships with my colleagues because if I have any problem, that impacts on my work, impacts my being comfortable at work.*

There was also some suggestion from two respondents that silence could relate to specific topics, such as where they felt they were not able to share particular information with work colleagues because of the negative impact that it may have on their relationships:

> *As soon as I started working at the office I told the others that I intend to pursue my PhD degree. This gave a bad impression about me and I was thought to be not interested in my work. I shouldn't have told them because they didn't know me well at the time* (Respondent D3).

> *I prefer to be reticent about my personal life at work. I am also reticent about my future plans and ambitions. I prefer not to talk about those topics because people do not understand my thoughts*

and they even tend to be negative whereas I see myself as different to them. I feel that they have limited ambitions so I am more positive and ambitious (Respondent E2).

Whilst most of the responses in terms of relationships related to colleagues, some respondents also discussed their fear of negatively impacting the relationship with their manager:

I am anxious about the new direct manager because I think she is not as experienced as the previous one. She is not able to see things from a different side (Respondent E4).

If I faced criticism from my direct manager, I would keep inquiring about the reasons, but I would feel really bad if I felt that she did not understand my view, because I like to have good relationships in my work environment and if I felt that she is not satisfied I am willing to change, it is possible (Respondent F4).

This has been previously shown in the literature, where Guo et al. (2018) suggest that such silence often arises when employees are subjected to an authoritarian leader. Furthermore, another respondent expressed that whilst in the past she had been more talkative, she had found silence more recently to be the best option for her, both in the workplace, and also at home. Respondent D2 stated:

I learnt to be silent from my husband because I realized that once I express what I feel, then the arguing will start as well I found silence is the best solution at home and at work ... in the past I was talkative but I learnt to be silent lately.

In terms of managers' own experiences, four out of the six explained that they felt it was important to maintain good relationships with employees, but none of them described their use of silence being motivated by the need to prevent damaging relationships here.

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6.2.1.8.   Fear of Unexpected Reactions from Others

Finally, in terms of fear related to social consequences, two respondents expressed that silence within the workplace related to the fear of unknown or unexpected reactions from others. As respondent C2 explained:

> *The number of people with who I think I can talk openly is only one. Whereas with others I have concerns because I do not think I know the others very well, sometimes people react in an unexpected way that you may not like.*

Similarly, respondent E3 felt that:

> *I am silent when I talk with someone who has endless conversations, or controversial conversations, or when I realise that this person who I talk to won't change her mind.*

It appeared, then, that employees could feel constrained by social settings. But this raises a question about why strong social settings prompt expression. The collective can induce silence (Grandey, 2003) to protect its sense of cohesion but cohesion can also be served by collective expression and agreed subject matter – silent dissenters can also be vocal supporters. Thus, voices move between a vocal egalitarian / enclave position and a silent fatalistic position, even moment to moment. Nor are these altering thought styles irrational. They make (different) sense. Personality based explanations or simplistic rational choice theory, which much organisational silence research is based upon, struggles to account for such apparent and sensible contradictions.

Thus, fear of social consequences provided an important justification for organisational silence. It was also clear, however, that fear - and therefore silence - could relate to the perceived negative impact that might result on the organisation or workplace.

6.2.1.9. Fear of Consequences for the Organisation

Most of the previous literature on quiescent silence draws attention to silence resulting from fear of consequences which are predominantly personal or social in nature (Milliken *et al*., 2003; Bisel and Arterburn, 2012; Altinkurt, 2014; Akuzum, 2014; Kiewitz *et al*., 2016; Guo *et al*., 2018). In the current research, however, several respondents explained their silence as relating to the need to prevent exaggerating or exacerbating the problem or the sense that remaining silent was the preferred option in order to prevent any negative impacts on the practices at the place of work. In terms of the need to avoid exaggerating the problem, three respondents gave examples of silence relating to fear:

> *I am a supervisor so I should deliver my work through speaking so if the talk will bring problems, so I prefer to be silent to avoid worsening the problems* (Respondent A5).

> *When I feel that people are just fighting, I remain silent because think that if I talk, I will make the situation be worse. If I feel that the circumstance is suitable and people will listen to me, I express my opinion freely* (Respondent A1).

> *I think that there are many things at work that shouldn't be told but unfortunately mostly I tell. But sometimes, when I face a tough principal of any school who is so tough and extremely angry and argues about a teacher or rule, I really control myself and say nothing because if I argue with her, this bad situation won't stop. In addition, I might be mistaken. So, I don't regret my silence because I am sure that if I talked, I wouldn't get a good result* (Respondent B2).

Whilst existing literature has touched on silence in relation to the interests of the organisation, this has tended to be categorised as prosocial silence, where employees

decide not to speak out as they believe the silence is for the benefit of the organisation (Deniz *et al.*, 2013; Rhee *et al.*, 2014). It is important to note, however, that the motivation here is distinct from that identified in the current research, where it was the fear of the consequences that motivated silence. Respondent A2 also highlighted how she feared that speaking up might have a negative impact on the practices of the place of work, as she had witnessed this occurring previously within her office. The notion that something negative might happen is in the minds of respondents. The responses thus arrive at quiescent silence and therefore the effect is the same but there is more than one reason at work in the respondents' minds.

6.2.1.10.   Negative Previous Experiences of Using Voice

Some fear has history. This is what Lindebaum and Gabriel (2016) called *observed or perceived transgression against self*. Silence is kept because the past indicates what might happen again in the future. Respondent B2 stated:

> *Really, I was embarrassed because I felt that all the supervisors looked at me badly therefore, I wished I had kept silent. ... Yes, I am thinking about the conversations which happened at work when I came back home because I regret what I say, mostly.*

Some emotional conditioning is seen here (Coan and Allen, 2004) and the respondent has had no pleasant surprises to persuade her otherwise. Similarly, respondent C1 stated that:

> *In the past I expressed my ideas and opinions lots which really so isolated me in the past. I used to criticise everything, say everything easily. But I changed and even most people around me at work have noticed that and told me 'you changed'. I think I took a lesson from my experience to be more silent to avoid problems or being insulted. But, once a colleague said, 'really I love it'. She said its better regretting silence than regretting talk.*

The respondent therefore suggested that not only was she happier in herself being silent, but that she had received support from others for her silence. This may indicate that silence is considered a desirable trait within this particular workplace. It also appears that with silence has come more politeness or positivity, as she is no longer criticising others. Twelve out of the 26 employees gave at least one example of their use of silence relating to a previous negative experience of using voice. Only one manager, however, mentioned silence as a result of previous negative experiences. As she stated:

> *One must always be reticent because you might say a word which might be remembered by others and then you regret saying it because it was misinterpreted. There has been a situation related to a complaint about a teacher, 'I was on the side of the teacher but now I am against her'. This sentence affected other's positions and my colleague told me that she wishes I hadn't said this even though the teacher was found to be in the wrong* (Leader F).

Coan and Allen (2004) would point to her 'negative emotions' that have provoked avoidance and fear that the past might repeat itself. Baumeister et al. (2007), however, state that there is an anticipated emotion which often arises from the 'past', and which thus influences the present. Such a past does not necessarily have to have come from this work setting, and as such it is a learnt behaviour by the person keeping silent. This goes on to raise an important question about the assumption, that silence in the organisation is caused only by activities that take place in the organisation (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Van Dyne et al., 2003; Morrison and Milliken, 2000), and about the assumption that silence will be protective. It is because there are four distinct forms of reasoning, and four types of strategy associated with them, it is most unlikely that any solution (silent or vocal) will prevail. There is no equilibrium position in cultural systems and all strategies succeed and fail as contexts shift. Respondent C1 finds that she cannot do right, either for herself or for others. Only on balance does she accept that it is better to be damned for not saying

something than for saying something. But she finds that in practice she is damned if she does and damned if she doesn't.

6.2.2. *Role of Acquiescent Silence*

Acquiescent silence is classed as silence that is as a result of resignation. The person who remains silent has made it clear in their own mind that silence is the only solution because, nothing would change as a result of speaking. Pinder and Harlos (2001) state that this type of silence passes for consent, but it may conceal private negative thoughts (see also Lu and Xie, 2013). Acquiescent silence arises from pessimism as to whether the situation will ever change and that there is no point in seeking to change it (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; van Dyne, 2003; Cakici, 2008; Harbalioğlu and Gültekin, 2014; Dedahanov and Rhee, 2015; Riantoputra *et al.*, 2016). This form of reasoning was heard in several interviews. Of the 26 employees interviewed, for instance, sixteen gave examples of times that they had practiced acquiescent silence.

As with the other types of silence discussed above, it was important to determine whether the sixteen employees who gave examples of acquiescent silence were simply drawing on single experiences or whether the practice of acquiescent silence was a common occurrence for them within the work environment. It appeared that of the sixteen employees who discussed this type of silence six claimed that they had practiced it three or more times. In terms of the managers, it was evident that acquiescent silence was less dominant than amongst the employees. Of the six managers interviewed, for example, three were able to give examples of times when they had practiced this type of silence. Looking further at acquiescent silence, the main motivations offered in the literature tend to refer to the feeling that opinions will not make a difference (Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017), or having no desire to make a difference in the organisation (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011), or may relate to a sense of exasperation among employees that has been in existence for some time (Burman, 2011). The current study found similar justifications, which could be classified into two main factors; silence is necessary as no one will listen or nothing will change.

6.2.2.1.   No One will Listen

One of the main justifications provided for this type of silence within the organisation was the belief that even if the employee did speak, no one would listen to their contribution. The notion that whatever the respondent will say will not be taken seriously sits within the definition of resignation that has been used to describe this type of silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). Of the 26 employees in the current study, seven explained their use of this type of silence as relating to this belief that no one would listen to them. As respondent A1 stated:

> *I would only express my opinions to people whom I trust and who would care and listen. When I feel that people are just fighting, I remain silent.*

Furthermore, respondent C2 claimed that:

> *…despite the fact that you may be saying the right thing, sometimes no one will listen to you or you might face unsatisfying conversations.*

This latter quotation seems to support the claims of Morrison (2014) that this type of silence may result from individuals having made suggestions in the past that have been ignored. The highest frequency of this type of explanation was found in Office A, with two of the respondents providing two or more examples of this type of silence. The other five respondents gave only one example each. Of these, three of the responses talked about their experiences in relation to managers. Respondent B4 explained, for example, that:

> *I did not try to influence the decisions of my direct manager. I tried once but she did not listen to me when I wanted to change an evaluation of a supervisor.*

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Respondent A1 also stated:

> *Recently, for 5 years there have been no open conversations between me and my leader. I cannot discuss any subject with her, because she is not a good listener and she doesn't like anyone who has a different opinion to her.*

Similarly, respondent D4 explained how this type of silence resulted from their relationship with a previous manager, but how things had now changed:

> *We have really good opportunities from our recent manager to express our ideas and opinions however we didn't have that with the previous manager…we know that nobody will listen to us...I stopped expressing my opinion with previous manager.*

In contrast to the employees' responses, not only was this justification for silence not provided by managers to explain their own silence, but the comments of some managers who believed themselves to be good listeners - and stated so in the interviews - seemed to conflict with the comments of employees. This was particularly the case for Office A. Leader A stated, for example, that:

> *I prefer to be a listener and then I think of speaking, I listen to all the sides and dimensions of a conversation and then I may provide my opinion, advice or a decision or anything else. So, I agree with the saying but not always, when I speak, my words should be in the right place.*

This response contrasted, then, with those of her employees who perceived her to be a poor listener. Leader C similarly felt that they were a good listener to their employees:

> *When my employees come and talk to me I listen to them very well, so even though they may not get what they wanted from me*

> *in the first place, they are satisfied because I listened to them till the end...I understand that employees mostly need someone to listen to them rather than solve their problems, many of them come to me after submitting their papers already but they only need to rant.*

Nonetheless, the responses of managers and employees did not always conflict, for as noted above, respondent D4 felt that their new manager listened well. This seemed to fit with the claims of Leader D who stated that she listened to both her own leaders and her employees. With the latter, she stated that she listened in particular when cases of accountability required her investigation. As she stated:

> *I do that because I do believe that you should listen to this person before taking the step of accountability. There are many leaders who tend to use accountability immediately which I think is a wrong strategy.*

Thus, there was some evidence of contradictory views relating to managers and their employees. Further research would be beneficial here to clarify the potential impact on silence amongst employees.

6.2.2.2.   Nothing will Change

Another explanation given by the respondents - and the most common for this type of silence - was the notion that they remained silent as they felt that speaking up was pointless as they believed that nothing would change even if they did speak. Thus, it was suggested that even if they were listened to, it would have little effect. This sense that one's contribution is not valued or implemented has been previously noted in the literature (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Yildiz, 2013; Altinkurt, 2014). In the current research, there was some confirmation of this, with thirteen of the 26 employees providing a least one

example of when they had practiced this type of silence. Of the thirteen respondents, seven gave more than one example. As respondent F1 stated:

Silence is preferable when talking would be pointless and wouldn't lead anywhere.

Similarly, respondent A1 explained:

I never express my opinion about it because I know that my voice wouldn't reach and nobody will take my opinion seriously so, whatever I say, nothing will change.

And for respondent F3:

...my principle of silence is practised only when I am in a conversation with certain people with whom talking is useless.

It is worth noting that Offices C and F had the highest frequency of this type of silence. Indeed, in Office F, three of the four employees gave two or more examples of this, and in Office C, all employees interviewed gave at least one example. For several respondents, this type of silence was directly related to their managers. As respondent F3 stated:

I am reticent with my direct manager, because I don't not think that she accepts everything and does not provide reasons for her rejection of thoughts.

The explanation for this type of silence did not always explicitly relate to managers specifically but could be associated with the sense that an individual employees' opinion was in contrast with the rest of the department. As respondent F4 explained:

I see myself silent at work when some decisions are made and everyone agrees but I don't. I may tell them my opinion but when

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everyone disagrees with me, it is useless to keep talking especially
when I do not have the authority to change this decision.

This type of silence also did not always seem to relate to the fact that interviewees felt that their views would be disregarded by others, but could more specifically, they did not feel that their own contribution would be valuable given their own skills and knowledge, and thus would not be sufficient to make a change. As respondent C2 stated:

I prefer to stay silent for any conversations that are not related to
my work or not useful to it. I wouldn't take part in any general
conversation that is not related to my work. I can quote an Arabic
proverb that means whenever one interferes in issues not related
to him, one will face no satisfying results.

Among several of the respondents, it was clear that this justification for silence also caused some conflict for them personally. As respondent A1 explained:

I never express my opinion about it because I know that my voice
wouldn't reach and nobody will take my opinion seriously, so
whatever I say...nothing will change. In addition, if I just say
something to support the administration, I know how people will
judge me and look at me, they will think that I am just a follower.
If I disagree with the announcements clearly, I will regret it
because they might exclude me from things which are important
to me.

Respondent E1, who claimed that it was worthless trying to convince others similarly suggested that:

We would finish our school visits and avoid going back to the
department or the office…We didn't do this out of fear but we
didn't see a point in speaking and were afraid it would be

pointless but at the same time we felt really bad because we were

silent.

In a similar belief to the idea that nothing will change, one respondent described a situation in which she felt that her work had not been appreciated as her own, and while she was concerned about this, she felt it was pointless speaking up as nothing would be done about it if she did. Respondent E4:

> *I worked individually on a job and did it with excellence, then I*
> *received appreciation from the ministry. The direct manager put*
> *the certificate under the name of the whole department without*
> *even mentioning anything about my efforts. I felt very angry but*
> *did not argue with anyone. I stayed silent because I knew I was*
> *the one who had made the effort, even the time of evaluation*
> *is passed so no need for argument.*

Here it seemed, then, that respondents feel it is futile to speak because there will be no outcome from doing so. The respondents' reasonable fatalistic assessment is that the existing situation cannot be changed. Van Dyne et al. (2003) argue that this silence has been caused by the organisation but without explaining why organisations think the way they do (Douglas, 1986).

For the managers, three gave examples of practicing silence because they felt that nothing would change if they spoke up. Leader B gave the example of her dealings with a particularly angry employee, where she felt that speaking up would not improve the situation and, thus, she remained silent. For Leader E, she explained that she is silent when under pressure at work, as she believes that speaking up will not change the situation. Thus, the managers' use of this type of silence seemed to contrast with the employees' in the sense that, for the majority of employees, the feeling that nothing would change related to lack of power within the organisation, whereas for the managers, this

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type of silence was a necessary way to move forward in a certain situation, a way of ensuring that time or effort was not wasted.

6.2.3. *Role of Prosocial Silence*

In addition to quiescent silence, prosocial silence was one of the most dominant types of silence amongst the employees. This type of silence stems from the desire to not hurt someone else (Milliken and Morrison, 2003). Research has distinguished withheld speech and withheld text, denoting that information may be kept from others by not speaking or not writing. Thus, prosocial silence is the withholding of vital information that when divulged, would cause harm to others (and as such protects proprietary knowledge that loses its power if divulged) (Tan, 2014; Tavakoli et al., 2016). In the cases of prosocial silence evidenced in the current research, interviewees deployed reasoning, which included a concern for others on the basis that they are equals. Also typical of this type of egalitarian reasoning is that prosocial silence is not fearful of negative outputs that might come from speaking (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Grid-Group theorists would recognise prosocial silence as egalitarian reasoning. Egalitarian reasoning demonstrates a moderate to high 'risk appetite', significantly higher than fatalistic reasoning. These authors define prosocial silence as 'the withholding of work-related ideas, information, or opinions with the goal of benefiting other people or the organisation – based on altruism or cooperative motives' (Van Dyne et al., 2003: 1368). This type of silence was evident among the employees in the current research. One employee, for example, stated that:

> *Whatever I heard from them I wouldn't tell anyone about it. I am trying to resolve the problem in a way that makes all the parts be satisfied without revealing any secrets and without hurting anyone.*

Those who practice this form of silence tend to show care for others in the organisation and do not hesitate to withhold information which may be harmful or negative to others.

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As mentioned above, prosocial silence was one of the most dominant types of silence practiced by employees in the current research with colleagues and managers. Of the 26 employees interviewed, for instance, eighteen gave examples of times that they had personally practiced prosocial silence. It was important to determine whether the employees who gave examples of prosocial silence were simply drawing on single experiences or whether the practice of prosocial silence appeared to be a common occurrence for them within the work environment. Of the eighteen employees who discussed this type of silence, five respondents drew on more than one example, with two respondents mentioning six or more examples. It could be argued, then, that nearly one fifth of the respondents may have regularly practiced prosocial silence. In terms of the managers, it was evident that prosocial silence was used by two of the six managers interviewed, which represents one third of the sample, although only on one occasion by one of these respondents.

Looking further at this type of silence, it was important to identify the reasons behind employees and managers using prosocial silence, and to explore any commonalities and differences here. The reasons offered by the organisational silence literature for engaging in prosocial silence are manifold but cluttered and unrelated including a general altruistic personality and a high motive for affiliation interest in maintaining social capital (Adler and Kwon, 2002) and protecting social identity (Ashforth and Mael, 1989, cited in Knoll and Van Dick, 2013a). As presented, these amount to disparate unrelated causes which is unsatisfactory. From the findings in the current study, it was possible to group the responses into several key explanations. These included: avoiding causing discomfort to others, protecting others' reputations and maintaining good relationships. It appears, then, that the primary motive for prosocial silence is to protect others, thus silence will be preserved by ensuring that what is known about others is not said, and this takes several different forms. These reasons are largely applicable to the responses of the employees, with only two managers providing explanation for prosocial silence. The findings are discussed below.

6.2.3.1.　　　*Avoiding Causing Discomfort to Others*

Several employees had decided that it was best to keep silent not just to avoid causing discomfort to others but also in order not to *appear* to cause discomfort to others. Discomfort could also relate to harming, offending, upsetting and embarrassing other people (Dedahanov, 2015), here coupled with not wanting to cause embarrassment to oneself. The withholding of information that is deemed to potentially cause embarrassment to others and to the self suggests social cohesion among the workers mixed with consciousness of their own situation. Inner feeling or emotion contributes to defining the experiences of others, conveyed by the empathic need to protect others' work and social status (Zhou, Valiente and Eisenberg, 2003). This dynamic is consistent with the usual view common in the organisational silence literature that organisational silence exists where workers are at odds with the management (Milliken and Lam, 2009), though again, the organisational silence literature offers little or no explanation as to why employees should experience, say, highly directive management as a bad thing – reasoning that they assume that the employees are incapable of demonstrating responsibility and autonomy – or as a good thing – reasoning that this is a good place to work because it is made clear to me exactly what I should do.

Of the 26 employees interviewed, nine gave examples of times at which they had practiced this type of silence. Three of these respondents gave several examples of the use of this type of silence, perhaps suggesting that this may be a regular form of silence practiced by them. Respondent C1, for example, stated:

> *If the speech may lead to any harm to the speaker or the addressee*
> *then it is better to stop it……what I am concerned about [is that]*
> *I don't hurt or insult anyone even though they did that [to others]*
> *but I don't like to do that to others [myself].*

Respondent A4 discussed a situation in which she interacts with managers about other employees:

> *I am the director of some employees and one of my main duties is to do an initial evaluation of them, later on the evaluation will be made by my manager. While I and the manager discuss their evaluations with the employee, I would always keep aspects of their evaluation to myself. I do that because I believe if I shared my opinion, my manager will be immediately influenced by me.*

This same respondent continued with how she attempts to develop the skills and behaviour of her workforce in a sensitive way in order to avoid causing harm or discomfort:

> *I am the head of department and part of my responsibilities is to modify or adjust the behaviours of my employees. I see that some of them have high level of sensitivity to criticism, some of them are extremely sensitive to direct monitoring, so I found my-self compelled to avoid telling them the points directly. I am trying to deliver my idea by using an example or present the situation and explain how much this situation is not acceptable and so I think the employee will notice, so she will understand that I meant it is about her but she realises that I don't want to hurt her. Sometimes I present the situation or tell them a story which happened in an anonymous school and ask them to give me their opinions about it.*

She explained that it was important that the manager was not negatively influenced by her. Therefore, she tries to not always tell the manager everything, if it is negative, as she does not want to give any undesirable impressions which may affect the employee's future. She therefore conceals most of the negative issues but shares the more positive factors about the employee with the manager.

Respondent B1 also gave an example of practicing this type of silence, where a supervisor, who had been associated with many problems and disagreements in another department, was moved to the interviewees' department. Respondent B1 explained that many of her colleagues felt sorry for the interviewee having to take on this supervisor as they believed it would lead to the department becoming 'hell'. The interviewee stated that she considered going to her manager and demanding the move of this supervisor away from her department, but she stopped herself and tried to accept her as one of the supervisors working in her department. After a few months, this supervisor asked to leave the interviewee's department, and so the interviewee felt that her silence, which had not caused discomfort to others, was also comfortable for her, because she had not said anything against the supervisor, yet she had achieved the same result.

Many of the other respondents shared examples of their use of this type of silence. Respondent A5, for example, explained that a teacher had come to her and told her about the programme they had created and how good it was:

> *However, I heard that from some teachers they didn't like this training which had been produced by this teacher…*

But the interviewee did not express this opinion in front of this particular teacher, deciding instead to remain silent, for as she stated:

> *…because I don't want to embarrass her or let others underestimate her.*

It is worth mentioning that whilst many of the respondents only gave one example of this type of silence, this does not mean that this has only been practiced on one occasion.

6.2.3.2. Protecting Others' Reputations

Preserving the respect of other persons emerged strongly as a reason for prosocial silence amongst the employees. Ten of the 26 respondents gave at least one example of their use

of this type of silence. Five of these gave more than one example. Previous literature indicates that prosocial silence mainly occurs in one of two ways; for the protection or advantage for other workers, or for the benefit of the organisation (Laeeque and Bakhtawari, 2014; Jahangir and Abdullah, 2017). In the current research, however, the respondents discussed such protection of reputation in relation to their colleagues, but more frequently in relation to the teachers and principals who they monitor. None of the respondents mentioned using this form of silence in relation to their managers or the organisation in general.

The respondents stressed the importance of preserving the reputation of their colleagues by helping them when colleagues were in trouble (for example, if an aspect of their work was being questioned), or through ensuring that negative comments were not made about their colleagues which may be detrimental to their reputation. As respondent C3 stated:

> *The open conversations I have with my manager and my colleagues are only related to work… also conversations related to my colleagues personally, I am more reticent and would not express my opinions loudly, because I believe it is immoral to say any bad comments about my colleagues.*

As mentioned, the majority of examples provided by respondents about this type of silence related to the protection of the reputations of the people they work with or regulate and monitor. As respondent A3 explained:

> *Examples are the mistakes made by teachers I supervise. I never discuss these mistakes, whether scientific or anything else, and if for any reason I discuss them so that others learn from them, I never mention the name of the teacher who made it…I prefer not to speak about the investigation committee that was in the school for the principal and I don't discuss such issues because they affect reputation, and because in the office there are many*

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> *relations and this reputation will be spread around. Silence is in everyone's favour in this case.*

Similarly, respondent D1 stated that:

> *If I know any problems regarding the teachers or principals, I would say that in our meeting without mention[ing] the names of those people who have the problems.*

Here the need to protect others' reputation is clear from the decision to preserve their anonymity. This type of silence was also practiced by respondent E4, who explained further that:

> *I am reticent about some issues and situations at work for example about the teacher who teach their own daughters, and who might try to change the grade of their own daughters as their students. I prefer not to mention specific names or titles so as to keep the reputation of the teachers in the issue from being stigmatised. If I decided to talk about issues like this openly, there will be no advantages at all, but the disadvantage will be that any supervisor who will take my place after me will know the teachers who tried to breach the ethics.*

Reputation of the self is also implicit in the protection of others, a feature missing from the discussion of prosocial silence in the literature, where protection of reputation relates simply to risk to other people (Liang *et al.*, 2012). In the current research, one respondent suggested, for instance, that by protecting the reputation of others, it could subsequently lead to protection of her own reputation. Thus, there was some kind of reciprocal motivation in her practicing this type of silence. As respondent D3 explained:

And then my reputation? I do care about people's love for me
more than just following my orders as something they should do.
I do believe that's if people like you, they will accept you easily.

That organisational silence may arise from mutual love and self-love at the same time is demonstrated here as a reasonable outcome of egalitarian care and an element of fatalistic self-protection. Thus, it would seem that such silence is justified on the basis that if disloyal statements are made by colleagues about one another. This observation makes clear sense when placed in the GGCT typology of thought styles, which will be explained further below, though it is not discussed in the organisational silence literature. There is a delineation seen here, which is quite different from that suggested by Van Dyne *et al.* (2003), as the protection of work-related reputation or of the organisation (Brinsfield *et al.*, 2009). What is seen here (by respondent D3) relates to the protection of others due to the nature work, and it is something assumed about the relationship between workers and managers. Reputation, for either employees or managers, emerges as something that is very important within the organisation. Thus a link is made between reputation and respect from others. People are looking for respect, not love, within the workplace.

In terms of this type of silence as practiced by managers, according to Pinder and Halos (2001), managers may not want to speak negatively about their subordinates for fear of negative feedback or in order not to harm the atmosphere at work. These explanations did not emerge in the responses of the managers in the current study. Only one of the six managers demonstrated prosocial silence in relation to protecting reputations. The need to withhold information with the aim of protecting others was not evidenced among the other leaders interviewed. Leader F, however, discussed one example in which she had stayed silent following a mistake made by an employee:

I preferred to stay silent and calm her down, I stayed at ease and
did not blame this employee and kept praying that the papers be
found until they finally found the document sent by mistake to

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another unit, so I was happy that I stayed silent and did not cause more stress in the situation. These things happen in any institution.

Leader F continued:

If for example there was a complaint from a teacher on a supervisor, I record that and start a sort of investigation, then I meet her in person and tell her what she is supposed to do. There is openness in those individual [private] meetings and I would talk openly but I am careful so as not to hurt her or to have a negative stand against her.

It is worth noting that Leader F was new to the position of manager, having moved up from a subordinate position only months previously. As such, it may be that she still feels and expresses the behaviours more commonly associated by subordinates. The rarity of this form of silence amongst managers may be because the relationship between the managers and subordinates is hierarchical, such that the level of engagement between them is primarily official not sentimental. Morrison and Milliken (2000) indicate that managers tend to know their employees more personally and may be duty-bound to help fix problems that arise in the organisation. However, sentimental and unsentimental senses of duty both argue against silence. Leader D stated, for example, that:

It is in my hand to take action and solve the problem.

By virtue of their position, managers have less interactions with subordinates than subordinates have with each other and tend to work through subordinates' direct managers. Leader D added:

I delegate the direct managers to provide feedback on the supervisors.

Managers, then, tend to give and receive information through direct managers and thus have no reason to keep silent. Managers speak via third parties and subordinates usually do not hear their direct speech. Prosocial silence was also supported by commitments to ensure that no one is disadvantaged by the knowledge that one has about them. The question of fairness tends to be associated closely in the interviewees' minds with the issue of protection of reputation, especially when the balance of power rests on one person; the supervisor.

Respondent C3 stated that they:

> *...prefer not to convey a negative image about any school.*

Respondent D4 went further to suggest that:

> *I am thinking about trust, I don't want to break the trust between*
> *me and others.*

These respondents showed fairness in two ways, one looking at the idea of not showing negativity towards attachment to a school, while the other looks at the need to maintain existing trust through neutrality towards what she knows. The idea of fairness has been explored in the literature when it emanates from managers at a time when there is a critical decision to be made, so that information is not passed on which would prejudice the process or someone (Pinder and Halos, 2001). Notice that different notions of fairness are being invoked, mostly that it is unfair to expose an individual or institution to the risk of ridicule, but also that it would be unfair to subvert due process. The former is egalitarian social justice that does not humiliate, while the commitment to silence so as not to compromise a process is an attachment to procedural justice. These forms of justice spring from different thought styles. One inference is that prosocial silence is not exclusively egalitarian. Such silence relates to the protection of the reputation of the self and others, as reputation and honour are valued and practiced in the Middle East, and especially in Saudi Arabia (Novin and Oyserman, 2016). Reputation is extremely important in such

cultures and affect not just the individual but their families too. This contrasts with Western cultures.

Amongst the respondents in the current research, it also appeared that there were times when silence could be regarded as a means of helping others when working in group situations. This has been previously noted in the existing literature (for instance, Leadbeater and Thompson, 2012). Respondent D3 said:

> *I can express my thought freely when there is common interest between me and the addressee. As for work, I am very open in expressing new suggestions and thinking of ways to apply them, even if they were not registered under my name, which has happened many times, I do care about leaving a print or mark behind me and being useful to others.*

This respondent explained that she regularly sacrificed individual recognition for her work and suggestions, when working in a group situation. Here, her silence was to allow her colleagues to receive praise for her own input, even where such colleagues did not contribute to these situations. This shows the respondent's preparedness to support others in the organisation even if she is personally unrecognised. The respondent seems to be informing us of a wider cultural practice in the organisation, where showcasing what one is doing is deemed important but not overwhelmingly so. She makes suggestions even if they are not registered in her name. Her silences are judged by her to be justified when her thoughts are assumed not to be useful to others. Her silence is self-generated, and her utterances tolerate the lack of recognition she may receive, though she feels she ought to be credited for her suggestions.

6.2.3.3.   Maintaining Good Relationships

The need to maintain good relationships also appeared to be a key reason for keeping silent amongst the employees in the current study. Of the 26 employees, seven reported

keeping silent for this reason, with two respondents giving more than one example to provide evidence of this. The maintenance of good relationships could relate to relationships with colleagues and other employees, or to relationships with managers. As one informant stated with regard to the latter:

> *At my work I prefer to be silent with managers because I experience that … always that wouldn't be good for you if you dissent from the opinion of your manager* (Respondent B1).

For this respondent, then, silence in such cases ensured that they appeared to be in agreement with the opinions of the managers, which they felt was necessary within their employment.

In terms of keeping silent to maintain relationships with colleagues, respondent D2 explained that:

> *I found that silence is better… when I face a disagreement with my colleagues about understanding and discussion of specific regulations, I don't tell the person what I think and prefer to be reticent with my opinion because I don't want to cause tension or uncomfortable feelings among colleagues. I don't want the people who I may be criticising to argue with me, which will lead to unnecessary trouble with them. Hence, I prefer to be reticent.*

By not speaking up, the respondent is keen to not negatively affect the current relationship, on the assumption that speaking up would make the situation worse for others and for themselves.

It was also shown that silence for the maintenance of relationships related not just to relationships between themselves and others, but also to the maintenance of relationships between different individuals or groups. As respondent C3 stated:

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> *I receive many questions from teachers related to their performance evaluation, expressing their dissatisfaction with their results. Here I face a conflict because I do not want to tell them that the evaluation was given by their principals so that I keep good relationships between teachers and their principals.*

This seemed to be supported by the claims of respondent D4, who explained that:

> *I do not express my thoughts in front of anyone. Sometimes you meet a teacher who shouldn't know something. I am so careful with teachers so wouldn't shock her about how her principal looks at her or if she complains against her principal and I feel that her principal did wrong, or failed to take the right decision, I wouldn't express that in front of the teacher because I am thinking that this is her principal, her leader so it's not easy to ruin the image of her principal...And I should take the other side into account. So, I wouldn't judge just from one side...I wouldn't reveal my real opinion, only tell her we will see...give me time ... I will contact you later and so on. After that I will talk to the person who is responsible to get the whole picture about the problem...I am thinking about trust, I don't want to break the trust between me and others.*

This example also seems to illustrate that the employee is keen not only to preserve the relationship between the teacher and their principal, but also to maintain relationships between herself and others, through ensuring that trust is sustained. Amongst the employees in the current research, then, silence which resulted from the desire to uphold existing relationships could relate to their own relationships with managers or colleagues, but also to the maintenance of relationships between others. In contrast, amongst the managers, no examples emerged to suggest that silence was used for this reason.

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6.2.4. Role of Opportunistic Silence

This form of silence relates to the desire to achieve some form of personal benefit (Knoll and Van Dick, 2013a), where information is withheld that could be of advantage to others. This form of silence has also been referred to as 'deviant silence' (Brinsfield, 2013), as its purpose is to retain or withhold information which may prove beneficial for others to the advantage of the silent actor. Brinsfield's use of 'deviant' to describe this kind of silence is considered inaccurate in the current study as it suggests it is about mis-behaviour, but it is not always so simply about mis-behaving, rather it is the withholding of information for the purpose of self-benefit. In an academic institution where the need to prove one's self and find favour with the management is important, it would be expected that most respondents would admit to this form of silence. Surprisingly, this was not the case. Very much in a minority, respondent E2 claimed:

> *I prefer to be reticent about my personal life at work. I am also reticent about my future plans and ambitions…I prefer not to talk about those topics, so people do not realize my thoughts and they even tend to be negative whereas I see myself as different from them. I feel that they have limited ambitions, so I am more positive and ambitious.*

Here the respondent conceals her own ambitions not with the intention of not wanting to harm others, but for competitive self-advancement. This form of silence provides new avenues and thus it is quite different from the expectations of Knoll and Van Dick (2013a). The opinions expressed by respondent E2 could be considered to be individualistic (Marris *et al.*, 1998) because ambition overshadows the need for disclosure. If one is highly competitive and individualistic, respondent E2's position is as rational as any other way of thinking.

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6.2.5. Additional Forms of Silence

In addition to these four types of silence which emerged in the current research and which supported previous studies on silence, the current study identified two further types of silence amongst the respondents: respectful silence, and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance.

6.2.5.1.   Respectful Silence

One form of silence not reported in the existing literature but found in the data from the current study was respectful silence. This type of silence was practiced by eleven of the 26 employees, four of whom gave more than one example of using respectful silence. Five of the six managers also appeared to use respectful silence. Here, respondents were silent in a show of respect for others; perhaps in expressing a wish to hear what others had to say, which was more prominent than the need to express their own views, or in showing respect for others' need to share their views. It can be distinguished from prosocial silence, as the motivation is different; resulting from respect rather than the need to protect or help others. Furthermore, it is distinct from acquiescent silence with regards to 'nothing will change' in the sense that it is not about silence as a form of surrender but rather silence as a form of showing respect for others. Respondent B3, for example, explained that she remained silent during interactions with colleagues where alternative viewpoints were being expressed. She stated that:

> *I don't argue with others and respect that everyone has their*
> *points of view. I do not try to persuade them out of their views.*

Thus, within this form of silence, silence may be practiced in order to allow others to speak, when individuals are able to empathise with others and thus to give them the opportunity to be heard. As respondents A4, A5 and B3 explained:

> *I think I am not a silent person, yet I would call myself a listener.*
> *For example, if one of my employees was having a hard day at*

work, I would be a listener and an absorber and give her chance to rant all her emotions (Respondent A4).

I have listened to her; really, she was ranting. I gave the teacher a full chance and enough time to say all that she wanted to say (Respondent A5).

I would stay silent in these cases even though it is clear that this attitude is a bit abrasive. I consider it as a type of ranting by the attacking colleagues, so I give them space to do that (Respondent B3).

Similarly, Leader C said:

I experience comfortable silence - when others talk to me with ranting. I prefer not to talk, just give her a chance to say what she wants.

In these instances, it appears that the respondents wish to allow individuals to share their frustrations, opinions and thoughts. This seemed to be confirmed in the comments of Leader C who added:

I give her space to express whatever they want. I may give very short responses or stay silent most of the time. I don't have experience in uncomfortable silence. I have experience in comfortable talk. When my employees come to talk to me, I listen to them very carefully.

She demonstrates care by diffusing the situation. She knows she can 'listen to them very carefully' when it comes to talk and can tolerate ranting. Her mentality is contextually based and flows from a position of hierarchy and self-recognition of her expertise in accepting other people's bad feelings.

This type of silence appeared to be especially evident in relation to age, work position and work experience. This was indicated by several of the respondents:

> *I am silent with a teacher who does not accept the monitoring. She is old, so I prefer to be silent* (Respondent D3).

> *I think that I would deal with my manager in a respectful way, but I would still be reticent because this person used to be my manager* (Respondent C2).

> *When I had to supervise other supervisors who are older, have higher degrees or more experienced than me, I preferred to be silent with them* (Respondent C3).

Respondent A4 suggested that she adopted a less talkative approach in her dealings with those she supervises. She was aware that some of her employees were extremely sensitive to direct monitoring or criticism, and so she felt this was the best approach in this situation. She therefore claimed that she did not wish to be too directive, hoping that followers would notice her examples without her having to state everything in full. Leading by example is an interesting case of silent leadership. The supervisor shows concern for others by recognising that they need to be able to come to their own conclusions to develop. This could be linked to an egalitarian bias, where the respondent wants others to gain knowledge and work well to the advantage of themselves to begin with and then to the organisation as a whole. It is an interesting form of transformative yet quiet leadership. Furthermore, as Leader E stated:

> *I have experienced uncomfortable silence. In the presence of a decision-maker in the ministry. When you are in front of higher leaders I think we are forced to be silent and cannot express our opinions transparently about specific issues.*

In this case, it can be seen that the respondent is showing respect due to the position of their superior, in other words, the hierarchical standing of the decision maker is dictating the need for respect. Respondent A4's downward respect for their subordinates' need for growth is distinguishable from the upwards respect shown by manager E towards the decision maker's position. While Respondent E4 is Egalitarian in her respectful silence, Manager E is Hierarchical in her respectful silence. This vital distinction needs to be recognised: there are two types of respectful silence, at least.

6.2.5.2.   Silence for the Purpose of Feigning Ignorance

There was some indicative evidence of another form of silence, in which the employee or leader appeared to be silent in order to feign ignorance or give the impression that they had not noticed something. This was shown by two respondents from the current research: one employee and one leader. For respondent A4, for example, she explained that she is silent at times because:

> *I believe if I shared my opinion, my manager will be immediately*
> *influenced by me.*

In such a situation, the respondent explained that she felt that the manager acting on her opinion could have a negative effect on others, and so the respondent felt it best to pretend that she did not have an opinion to share on the matter. Similarly, for Leader D, silence was used to prevent a negative impact on her subordinates in particular situations. As she explained:

> *There's an Arabic proverb that says: 'Ignoring is half the*
> *wisdom'. Some people when they feel that you know their*
> *mistakes and weaknesses they get a negative energy and take*
> *steps backwards in their work so, I don't want them to get this*
> *result. Because they just commit simple mistakes, I ignore that to*
> *give them a chance to fix their mistakes. I do not talk when I can*

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> *observe or I am told about mistakes certain employees are*
> *committing, but I prefer not to tell them that I know either because*
> *this will help them fix their mistakes, or because they have always*
> *had excellent results for their work which allow them a space to*
> *make a mistake.*

There is some suggestion, then, of an additional form of silence here, but given its small-scale nature, it would benefit from further investigation in order to clarify and develop understanding here.

6.2.6. *Types of Silence: Key Insights from the Current Study*

The data from the current research appears to confirm the findings previously indicated in the literature surrounding the different types of silence within the organisational setting. What the current research has shown, however, is that there are other potential forms of silence which have not been addressed in the literature; namely, respectful silence and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. Even though the data has shown that there are many types of silence, it seems that some types of silence remain especially dominant within different groups. It was shown, for example, that quiescent silence is the most dominant form of silence amongst employees. Furthermore, it appeared that whereas employees tend to adopt prosocial silence, most managers do not. Employees enjoy lateral relationships, enabling mutual defence (Dundon *et al*., 2004) by withholding information (Jahanzeb *et al*., 2018). Managers see little reason for withholding information, and see their work, in part, as correcting mistakes. Prosocial silence, then, is unevenly distributed in the organisation. Further research could investigate such distinctions. We cannot deny that fear plays a crucial role in silence amongst employees.

Whilst on occasion leaders have shown that they practice silence, the frequency of silence expressed by leaders is far less than employees. In addition, when silence is expressed, it tends to be during interaction with their own managers, rather than their subordinates. Position in the organisational hierarchy itself could, then, determine the level of silence.

The data showed that Leader F demonstrated silence more than the other Leaders, but this perhaps relates to her very recent promotion to her position from one of employee. In contrast, one employee demonstrated very little silence in comparison to other employees. Her previous position had been one of a manager and so it might be suggested that again, position - and perhaps power - has a strong influence on silence.

Previous literature has examined silence in relation to cultural differences (see, for instance, Hofstede, 1980). This has tended to focus on national distinctions, but what has been implied from the findings of the current research is that there may also be important regional differences within the *same* countries. Two of the respondents from Office A mentioned that because they belonged to different regions and cultures, they could be more silent with their colleagues because of fear of difference. These seemed to come from being the minority within a work environment. As respondent A1 explained:

> *As I belong to [west of Saudi Culture] Hejaz culture and I am working in [middle of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh] Najd Culture, I have difficulty in dealing with them openly as they are conservative and judgmental…in my original area Jeddah, I am open minded and I could talk about anything freely. I left my area 13 years ago. In Riyadh, I learnt to be more reticent to avoid misunderstanding from others…really, it's not easy for me.*

Whilst all of the data from the offices showed that employees display more fear than managers which leads to silence, it was also shown that certain offices had a greater level of fear than other offices. This was especially evident in relation to Office C, with many respondents expressing the need to remain silent in order to avoid others using anything against them. Furthermore, for many of the employees, there was some suggestion of preference to talk about their experiences with previous managers, rather than their current manager.

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The current research also indicated that religion can play an important role in individual decisions surrounding organisational silence. This was especially evident in relation to Office F. As Respondent F4 stated:

> *I feel that I cannot express my ideas to my office manager…because we are in a very conservative society, this office manager speaks from a viewpoint that is more religious…In this office, no matter how much we grew or worked, they still believe the lady who wears gloves to cover her hands is a more righteous and serene person, hence closer to God and is more clean and trustworthy.*

Further research is necessary to explore this, to see in particular how Islamic values might influence individuals to be silent.

Whilst it is evident that there are many different types of silence, which has been shown through both the literature and the data from the current study, it is also important to acknowledge the temporary nature of silence. It is often regarded as a static state, but the current research indicates that it may also be temporary. This was supported by examples from fourteen of the employees. As respondent D3 stated:

> *I look at silence as gold only in some situations, it depends, such as when one is talking to an angry person, it is better to stay silent and observe his anger instead of talk and reinforce his anger until this person calms down. Then I could monitor him or ask him questions. Otherwise one must not stay silent if you have to defend someone's rights.*

Furthermore, respondent B2 explained that:

> *…to which extent I express my thought depends on the type of person in front of me. In my opinion, there are types of people*

who push you to be open and there are types of people who push
you to be reticent.

The data, then, provided evidence that silence is not static. Most of the employees emphasised that they would be silent with certain people, but this could also depend on the context or situation too. Where employees had a good level of trust with individuals, silence was not always felt necessary, but where trust did not exist, silence was more likely to be practiced.

6.3. Types of Thought Style in the Sample

Following Mary Douglas, there are four main types of biases: Fatalistic (luck, hopelessness and self-preservation), Egalitarian (quest for equality and fairness), Individualistic (competition) and Hierarchical (adherence to rules and regulations) (Douglas and Wildavasky, 1982). Thompson et al. (1990) later added another form of bias known as the Hermit. In this analysis, focus has been placed on the original biases given by Douglas (Douglas and Widavasky, 1982) because the 'hermit', as proposed by Thompson et al. (1990), has not offered new insights into cultural biases. The four forms of biases have been highly researched.

6.3.1 Pure Thought Styles

Among the 26 employees in the sample, it was evident that the most common form of cultural bias was Fatalistic, followed by Egalitarian, then Individualistic and lastly Hierarchical reasoning. The managers are a symbol of power and authority especially in a society that is characterised by a high power-distance culture (Al-Twaijri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996). They can influence things with ease, within the confines of rules or as a 'law unto themselves' in a more despotic fashion, and as such they expect to be given that recognition (Bjerke and Al-Meer, 1993). The managers who were interviewed also demonstrated recognisable cultural biases that were highlighted in the introductory part of this section. Being that they were managers, it was expected that they would

demonstrate forms of bias different from those demonstrated by employees. It was found that hierarchical and individualistic forms of bias were prevalent among the managers.

6.3.1.1.   Fatalistic Bias

This form of bias, identified by Mary Douglas, tends to accept that there are many things beyond our control (Evans, 2008), with a sense of exasperation, tolerance of unfairness and a preference for a quiet life. A Fatalistic individual will *appear* unconcerned with some issues. The Fatalistic tendency is often viewed as a selfish tendency, as it is 'low group', that may prevent team working and deny it information that it may be needed and a Fatalistic employee may be in the organisation physically but absent mentally (Evans, 2008). If this form of bias is preponderant, it may indicate an organisation that cares little for its workforce (Jeliazkova, 2014). For example, respondent A1 explained:

> *In real life situations, for example, at work I would rather be silent than be talkative. Actually, when you express your ideas openly you will find some who will negatively judge what you are saying.*

Furthermore, respondent C3 stated:

> *When I see mistakes in it, I believe that no one at all regrets silence in situations, whereas we regret talking so many times about uncomfortable silence. I am not talking about or asking for personal rights, for example, the first was when I was studying for my Master's degree and asked for time off in order to study but my manager refused. I did not ask any further or fight for my right.*

These two respondents settled on the view that their situations were hopeless, and that action was pointless. This was further supported by respondent A1, who discussed one specific example:

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The conversation about how women should cover their faces as its forbidden to reveal the face. Actually, I am trying to avoid expressing my opinion about these issues because I know that they are extremes on both sides who are for covering faces or against it. People from the Najd culture look upon me as liberated. On the other hand, people from Hejaz look at me as a conservative woman. At work actually, I am trying to avoid expressing my opinions about the polices; for example, there are 6 managers you have to get past to talk to the minister.

In addition, respondent D4 said:

We have really good opportunities from our recent manager to express our ideas and opinions, however we didn't have that with the previous manager who really doesn't care about whatever we said until it reached the stage that we knew that nobody would listen to us. I stopped expressing my opinion to the previous manager.

This is an example of what was once not up for discussion, that no one should challenge, but which should be accepted as it is. A sense of despair is seen but the change which the new manager brings about shows how dynamic a person's disposition can be. Thought styles are not personality types which would be more fixed than D4's thinking has been. She shifted from the Fatalistic silence to expressivity with the change of manager. Fatalistic bias, when examined against the other three forms of biases tends to be viewed negatively (Loyens, 2013a), it is seen as a sense of indifference that is inherent in an individual, but in actual sense it might involve a straightforward momentary reaction to context having little to do with the nature of an individual. Respondent C4 stated:

I will give examples of ideas I can express freely, mostly general such as fashion, novels or cultural readings. In terms of work, I

> *don't think I can talk freely with anyone ... When I had to*
> *supervise other supervisors who are older, have higher degrees*
> *or more experienced than me, I preferred to be silent with them*
> *because I did not think they will accept any instructions from me.*
> *.... I see the risk to my career in the possibility they might demote*
> *me from a supervisor back to being a teacher.*

For the managers this form of bias is depicted by leadership when the environment neither suits the task nor is ready for improvement. The Fatalistic thought style makes obvious sense to people experiencing forces that are beyond their control (Prabhu, 2005). A sense of risk-averse hopelessness may dictate the way a respondent may react. For example, Manager A reported that:

> *I may be silent when I am not interested. Some of my colleagues*
> *retired and when some of them are mentioned, people remember*
> *their positive contribution. However, when others are mentioned,*
> *people curse them and pray God not to forgive them.*

In this case the respondent treats the unfortunate actions of others as her fate that should be left to God to deal with. The sense of resignation is evident, and she can do nothing but curse. A good example of constraint was given by Manager C who claimed:

> *The number of people I can talk with freely and comfortably are*
> *my assistants, three of my employees.*

In a rational-bureaucratic organisation, managers are formally responsible for ensuring that processes are implemented as expected. However, managers exercised different thought styles depending on how they viewed their organisations, their values and the way they wished to relate to their staff. While the managers are expected to be champions of their organisations, this could be done in quite different ways. Some of the managers are concerned to champion their relationships with their staff to the point that they may

be willing to act in ways that could be disadvantageous to their organisations. Some of these managers are more concerned to champion themselves and see this as also for the general good.

6.3.1.2. Egalitarian Style

This was the second most common form of bias. Care for each other and a sense of support for each other was widespread. According to Loyens (2013a), Egalitarian bias tends to be lateral, between individuals who are in the same level and in the same work unit. It is expected that employees will protect colleagues, a bias accentuated by confrontations between employees and managers, or by inter-team rivalry. Concern for each other is paramount (Maesschalck, 2004), team spirit prevails, and employees hope to achieve without hurting each other. Nevertheless, it is also dynamic, and the presence of a manager may prompt a collective silence that is both Egalitarian and Fatalistic. Thus, A3 stated:

> *With my colleagues at the office we do have some open*
> *conversations about the load and pressure of the work, but when*
> *the direct manager is present, we do not talk about it at all.*

In this case, the feeling of 'us' against 'them' persists, but the survival of 'us' takes momentary precedence. Employees feel they are on one side while the management is on the other. Van Dyne (2003) states that this is a typical of many organisations. Employees choose not to help the management, but to protect themselves, in recognition of the manager's power. As respondent D5 claimed:

> *We are given chances to be open, but we do not make use of this*
> *space.*

This case might be thought straightforwardly Fatalistic except that opportunities are recognised and 'we' (not I) choose not to make use of them. As respondent A4 stated:

> *For example, if one of my employees was having a hard day at*
> *work, I would be a listener and an absorber and give her a chance*
> *to rant all her emotions.*

Here patient, silent support for the worker is egalitarian in that it shows respect for another which also preserves team spirit and produces a feeling that the team should not be broken.

In the cases given above, egalitarianism is exhibited through the need to protect and the need to help but note that even leaders are concerned about their staff. This is not simple Egalitarianism (a) because it can flip into Fatalism and (b) flip into somewhat hierarchical condescension. Respondent A4 explained that:

> *Last week we had meetings about the evaluation of performance,*
> *with my team and our manager. I kept back some points regarding*
> *my subordinates. I preferred to keep it silent because they might*
> *have had a bad impression about my subordinates, then these*
> *impressions wouldn't be changed easily however much these*
> *people might change themselves in reality.*

There is also a suggestion in these responses that equality is preferred for self-interest, as well as in the interests of others (Waldron, 2002). Preservation of the status quo, rather than total transformation for the benefit of all suggests that this is somewhat less than full-blown Egalitarianism. Most of the respondents who exhibited this form of cultural bias were leaders, in tacit collusion with their team members, hiding performance information which should have been used for correction purposes, especially as judged Hierarchically since a Hierarchical thinker would want to see these deviations corrected or punished.

Among the managers, Egalitarian reasoning did not apply to lateral relationships with people of the same rank, but with an empathetic understanding that enables their

subordinates to feel valued and respected (Mamadouh, 1999). The desire to create and maintain tight bonds tend may reduce commitment to the rules (Boschetti et al., 2012). However, that High Group (high solidarity) is easily consistent with both High Grid (strict regulations) and Low Grid (weak regulations). The Egalitarian thought style was however not pronounced in the interviews with managers. Probably because in a high power-distance culture, positions are important and the need to keep one's position and to make it be known to others, remains paramount (though this varies across the regions of Saudi Arabia). As Manager A stated:

> *I have always been a very good person and I have always had excellent relationships with others, being a teacher, a supervisor or a vice manager, to the extent that others sometimes fought over who would carry my laptop bag……. I give my employees endless opportunities to express their ideas. Even when I am at home, I receive their calls and listen to whatever they have to say.*

The respondent is engaging in self-praise, shows what she does to show concern for others, but it is mainly about what she wants us to know about her 'goodness'. Manager D said:

> *…and taking the majority's opinion and giving up my opinion to get the best way to deal with it.*

Manager D shows concern for others, by showing how her own opinion can be discarded for the opinion of other people if it makes better sense. This is as indicated by Boschetti et al. (2012) where the preservation of strong groups may call for some sacrifice of the individual's own ambition for others.

6.3.1.1 Individualistic Style

The Individualistic bias prioritises concern for self, for one's own efforts and 'space', with little concern for others (Melton, 2003). The individual is assumed to be ambitious,

wanting to pursue their own benefit. Once they have chosen what to do, they remain with it and may turn a 'blind' eye to what is taking place around them except to deal with competition. According to Jeliazkova (2014), individualistic bias seeks neutrality in the sense of not siding with anyone and a preference for standing alone. For respondent A5:

> *I have a recurring conversation with myself for example, did I achieve my ambition? Did I get my goals? Did I get my dreams in reality? Do I positively influence the teachers when I monitor them? What about the good comments which I received from the teachers? Do they make good comments as a courtesy? Or do I deserve what they said? Shall I be successful with my plans?*

Furthermore, respondent E3 stated:

> *The recurring conversations are related to the nature of my work. for example, if I reply to this teacher or not. Because my work needs always follow from me, for example what happened for this issue or that issue. All my conversation is regarding what I could do to improve my work or what could I do to develop the work? I intend to express my thoughts freely…the simplest example was when I changed my work to working in the teachers' affairs department so, I observed there is a big problem regarding the commitment to work. Teachers become alienated from the work, and feel that the mangers are against them, the regulations are against them, the administration is against them as well. So, I feel strongly there is the necessity for change in these attitudes and change in the environment of work to be better for teachers.*

This last fragment has an Egalitarian sound to it, however the quest for self comes to override all other activities. She works hard because she wants to prove herself, and her ambition and productivity tend to be seen in an individual. Her locus of control is within

her. This form of bias might benefit an organisation especially a salesforce, by making and exceeding her targets, earning the most through performance related pay.

F4 extended her individualistic reasoning into the Egalitarian quadrant:

> *On a family level, to raise my boy excellently (I only have one boy) and provide him with enough opportunities. On a professional level, I feel that I have the potential and willingness to do more, but it is circumstances and differences in vision which hinder this potential.*

She indicated that she focuses on what she can do well while being herself in what she is doing, and not as others expect of her. The respondent (F4) also noted that:

> *I feel that I always ask myself where I will find opportunities for training and how to fulfil my goals.*

This denotes a feeling of self 'first' in a work context with 'my boy' first at home – with the aim of making him competitive in life too.

For the managers the quest for achievement through tireless effort to prove their worth at work (Mamadouh, 1999) is classically Individualistic. However, this might mean either being very good to their subordinates or being very harsh with them. Manager F1 stated:

> *My reoccurring conversations are related to improving myself and the work, how to be more cooperative and a facilitator. This is part of my personality; I am cooperative, flexible and easy going. I keep reminding myself that I must be this way. I prefer to express myself without limits, in any situation that requires expressing, especially related to work. I have no problems in expressing myself whatsoever. ...I always relive situations. I transfer situations from work to home not as complaints but just*

> *to talk about them in general. I keep thinking of situations but not*
>
> *for a long time.*

Here, the respondent depicts herself as she thinks of herself. This *could* be aimed at portraying a positive image of self. Flexibility, cooperation and facilitation could be viewed positively in Saudi Arabia, and maybe these are qualities that are not common among people. It is not certain if this is her true nature or an attempt at presenting herself in an advantageous light.

6.3.1.2 Hierarchical Style

The Hierarchical thought style, or bias, is more concerned with the observance and preservation of the rules and regulations within an organisation. According to Tansey and Rayner (2008), the Hierarchical preference is for clear rules and their engagement with others will remain within rule-defined boundaries. The hierarchists might be of benefit to the organisation because they will focus on what is supposed to be done at all the times – though this assumes that the rules are well drafted and fit for purpose. Respondent A4 stated:

> *I discussed that with her. No one is perfect at work and everyone*
> *has the right to improve herself if she is willing to do that. So, we*
> *should give them the chance to have training. She told me that*
> *this is my nature. I told her it's not about our nature it's about the*
> *rules.*

The respondent's emphasis is on the importance of rules and obedience. She adds that 'natures' (personalities) can be tamed by rules, expert training, and willingness to improve so as to reduce imperfections to the minimum possible. Yet there is a hint here of fatalistic acceptance that people cannot be perfected entirely.

In the statement below, what is evidenced is that fact that adherence to rules shows the view with which authority is regarded. Rules create comfort for some but fear for others. As respondent E2 explained:

> *I think risk is in breaking the rules, problems with teachers sometimes lead to risks. I don't feel I face threats, actually I feel that I took the right decisions wisely. However, I do not feel that I am under any risk, even if any teachers object to their performance evaluation results given by me, sometimes I have faced teachers who told me that you were unfair with me.*

In addition, respondent E3 showed support for following official regulations:

> *I did much efforts to declare this right for teachers so, I contacted the higher manager and asked him to write a letter showing that clearly the teacher has right for days holiday if she does extra work.*

Furthermore, respondent B1discussed her adherence to the rules in relation to health and safety:

> *I feel that I have strong sense of safety. I have the ability to deal with problems in a different way in comparison to other supervisors. For example, once I couldn't visit the school therefore one of my colleagues went instead. The person who went to school raised a report that a student is using drugs at school. An investigation was made and I was one of the committee. In the investigation, it was revealed that the thing that the girl was using was basically flour and that was the student's way in getting attention from teachers. I was so angry and*

> *blamed my colleague for raising such a report without being sure*
> *of the problem.*

Some employees felt that it was not easy to say something to their managers if they felt that it would upset them, or felt that it was better to be reticent with others, to avoid *causing problems.*

> *Most of the time I don't interfere. I don't try to change my*
> *manager's mind of views unless in a very indirect way, first*
> *because of my personality and again, because she is older and*
> *more experienced.*

Here the need to respect authority, which comes in the form of respecting rules and also in respecting those who occupy higher positions, tends to be paramount. This acknowledges the fact that those in authority have greater power (Al-Twaijri and Al-Muhaiza, 1996). The respondents therefore appeared to demonstrate their understanding and respect for rules and for position. Moderate fear (risk aversion) is a reasonable consequence of this way of thinking, but obedience to enlightened rules also brings composure.

Managers are charged with responsibility for rules and regulations and as such it was expected that this bias would be seen. As Manager E explained:

> *As you know the regulations are very clear and the law*
> *guarantees every individual's rights, but the problem is in*
> *implementing these regulations. For example, at the time of*
> *registration every year, parents come in great numbers and cause*
> *chaos in the office because they think that they can register their*
> *children by force and we have to bring security people to organise*
> *them. It is everyone's right to register their children at school and*
> *they do not have to act the way they do, but different backgrounds*

> *lead to different human behaviours. So, your awareness and background will produce either civilised behaviour or uncivilised behaviour.*

Here leader E supports the rules but has reservations about them. There are instances where the unexpected happens, at which point the rules are deemed to slow the work. This belief was supported by Manager C, who stated that:

> *I always argue with the vice head of schools about some procedures which I thought were unnecessary bureaucracy and shouldn't be followed. I think that we could ignore these procedures and do the work faster and get the same results.*

This willingness to bend rules in the interest of speed and efficiency demonstrates the Individualistic thought style.

6.4. Employees: Thought Styles and Silence Types

6.4.1. Fatalistic and Acquiescent

With a sense of resignation and acceptance of what is taking place, some employees expressed a desire to remain silent as a matter of self-preservation or protection (Aydin et al., 2016) but not all did. They remain silent not because they are comfortable with silence but because they estimate that nothing will change, including their work conditions and context. The belief that there could be no improvement, that no one is listening and even if they did, it would make no difference drives many employees to accept what is before them without challenge (Kapiszewski, 2017). Respondent B1 said:

> *I experience uncomfortable silence when I keep silent and don't complain about not having a secretary.*

Note that even here she reasons that according to her position she is entitled to a secretary. Should her sense of Hierarchical position grow, then she might speak eventually.

Another respondent C1 said:

> *I don't like to fight with him. I prefer to leave everything and be*
> *in peace.*

Because peace is her aim, her silence seems less likely to be ended, unless her colleagues'' thinking alters around her. These respondents resort to silence because this is the most reasonable option under the circumstances. They are clearly not happy nor comfortable, and it would be expected of them to speak out if their reading of context were to change, but they have adopted silence for the present. There was also the sense that the respondents were unwilling to engage with others. Respondent C4 said:

> *I think I am more comfortable with this way and I feel that I am*
> *safer when dealing with difficult personalities.*

Resignation and hopelessness prevail but only if the respondents' level and form of engagement remains as it is. As they see it, the work environment may be unpleasant, the processes unfavourable, and they wish not to cause problems. Yet the respondent's job may be threatened and their private inclination for self-preservation could transform into shared disquiet and collective campaigning, particularly if they begin to sense the extent to which their private thoughts are very similar to the private thoughts of others. It may come as a sudden revelation along the lines of, "That's what I was thinking as well. You think the same way as I do! Can we do something?" Where jobs are scarce and those lucky to have such jobs lack security of tenure, it could be that respondents are somehow reticent as is an expectation of the society in which they live (Kapiszewski, 2017). But equally, those who show job insecurity might also, just as reasonably, take whatever action they can to defend their employment collectively through, for example, a professional association. Precariousness often, but not necessarily, results in lasting silence. Influences of the society are overshadowing individual relationships to the point where some behaviour are acquired by individuals.

6.4.2. Quiescent and Acquiescent Silences: Two Faces of Fatalism

The question arises then, as to whether hybrid thought-styles create hybrid silences, and whether each specific thought-style can give rise to more than one type of silence.

The silence that is as a result of fear of the unknown was found to be more common among the staff members. It can be seen that they are in a work environment that is within a complex government system, where orders come from different areas, and where the expectation is to adhere to these yet where instructions may be unclear or slightly inconsistent due to government complexity. Since the respondents are government workers or employees, they operate under a system that is set by the government and must deal with different situations (Kapiszewski, 2017). The sense of exasperation is thus evident. Respondent A5 said:

> *I could claim that am talkative more than silent, but I confess that I am silent for many situations and many reasons ... if I found myself facing something I am not interested in, it's not important, or is for the judgement of others, I prefer to be silent. If I found that my colleagues were talking about something I think it's not proper to talk about, and I can't prevent them from talking, I actually pretend that I am so busy about something else, so I can't be involved in this conversation.*

In this silence, the respondent is not seeking to get involved in what colleagues are engaged in. The respondent notes that it is not proper to talk about certain subjects, yet there is no way she can prevent others from talking about them. C3 said:

> *The things I think I cannot talk about at all to anyone include the fact that I regret becoming a supervisor.*

Inner thoughts and feelings are not to be spoken. The respondent fears that revealing their thoughts could have fearful consequences. If she leaves her position as a supervisor, it

may not be understood in any other way other than that the person was demoted due to incompetence. This failure may be seen from the prism of the person's family and not only by herself as an individual (Arslan *et al.*, 2017). So, she endures her appointment as a supervisor because resigning the post would send messages that would be misunderstood. Her silence and inaction demonstrates Acquiescent silence. Respondent F1 said:

> *They think if a woman drives she would go to a bar or a night club. It's really strange thinking so I can't express my opinion regarding it. I think even discussing this issue is wasting time. There are a few positive aspects yet, if I expressed these ideas loudly, I would face more negativity.*

These three respondents have exhibited these combinations of silence and cultural biases that range from the personal to the work place. Their disposition is similar in different settings. She fears the unknown more than the known. It is worth noting that although these respondents have worked for many years, they are having difficulty doing the right thing both at work and at home. This is unsurprising to GGCT theorists who recognise that perfect solutions, that are all agreed on, cannot be found.

6.4.3. Egalitarian and Prosocial Silences

Egalitarianism seeks justice and support others. Egalitarian silence is aimed at providing such protection (Yildiz, 2013). Guinote et al. (2015) claims that Prosocial behaviour and egalitarianism points to social status. It featured particularly among the rank-and-file staff interviewed, employees who deem themselves to be on one side and the organisation to be on the other, due to power disparities (Stockdale, 1996; Yildiz, 2013). The need to protect their side is crucial. A3 said:

> *Example are the mistakes committed by teachers I supervise. I never discuss these mistakes, whether scientific or anything else,*

and if for any reason I discussed them so that others learn from them, I never mention the name of the teacher who did it.

C3 said:

Prefer not to convey a negative image about any school.

The need to protect through silence does not stop at the protection of individuals but also of institutions. In a regionalised country like Saudi Arabia the need to ensure that one's community is protected remains vital, and similar reasoning could be present in the above cases. While it may be expected that employees will protect themselves against managers, in the last case, a unit head is protecting her subordinates through silent, unspoken solidarity.

6.4.4. Individualistic and Quiescent Silence

The need to mind one's own business as a way of avoiding trouble was also seen among the employees. The likelihood of negative consequences from speaking out may be high and painful (Mengenci, 2015), especially if prestige is at risk. The best option is to keep silent. Respondent E2 said:

They objected because they thought I have better evaluations. I was silent because I felt that there was no respect. They were screaming so much and used false evidence and the direct manger lied. I felt I was over participating in the situation.

E2's dilemma was considerable. She needed to survive the jealousy and dishonesty of others and chose to withdraw into silence. She feared that anything she might say might prolong the screaming and that there was nothing she could do to reduce their prejudices against her. She cannot influence the situation and sought to disengage. She sought no support from others; she acquiesced.

6.4.5. Hierarchical and Respectful Silence

Here silence is maintained preserving authority and this could be seen with respondents engaging with those of a higher rank. A4 said:

> *For example, I received a call from a principle who told me that this supervisor has a problem it's difficult to deal with her. I am dealing with this problem provisionally without revealing any information about this call - just dealing with the problem and trying to resolve it.*

The respondent has shown respect for the principle and does her work out of a sense of respect for the authority of the principal. A5 said:

> *I get feedback from my manager. I respect my manger and take feedback openly but sometimes I feel that I should be reticent because I don't want to anger her. For example, one day there was a supervisor who always underestimated others then when she advised us to deal with her and advised this supervisor to change her way of dealing with others I was reticent to tell the truth. I didn't want to say loudly that we know this supervisor better than you, but I couldn't do it because I didn't want to upset her.*

The respondent shows a need for respecting authority by keeping silent. This could also be linked to fear because the respondent talks about anger. In government institutions the fact that she, a woman, has a job is considered a favour. It was noted earlier that although reforms are taking place in Saudi Arabia, most control is vested in religious and government heads, most of whom are men. The gap between workers and their managers is still significant and many respondents' comments appeared to suggest that they sought not to negatively affect the employee-manager relationship. Therefore, even when

dissatisfied with their manager, employees could not report their manager. While these silences are chiefly respectful, they also have other motivations behind them.

For the managers…

Silence can come from confidence and experience. Manager A said:

> *I have experienced comfortable silence sometimes; for example, when I receive people at the office who are angry and may have become rude, I become inspired by God to stay silent.*

The respondent shows restraint. She has learned that the need to speak is not necessary. Silence allows others to calm down. She finds divine inspiration for silence: the word of God, the most mighty among voices. The respondent stresses the importance of religion in her work situation and how inspiration is important in her work. Religion is non-negotiable (Alrashidi and Phan, 2015). While religion is seen to be crucial in this context, it is also clear that the management may keep calm due to the experience of having to deal with similar issues over many years. This form of silence was found to be a self-image of a management that is in control, one that is able to handle pressure at all times and hence able to deliver inspiration to others, even those who were troubled and angry.

6.4.6. *Individualistic and Opportunistic Silence*

In this combination, the respondent identifies her own interest as the driving force for silence. The respondent seeks to gain by keeping silent, denying others the opportunity to know what the respondent knows (Cathcart et al., 2013). She pictures an environment where competition is rife and everyone else also seeks to find a way of benefiting themselves in one way or another wherever possible. F1 said:

> *I have experienced uncomfortable silence because I lost some of my rights about uncomfortable silence For example when they*

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> *hand some committees to me where I must take them and the load of work becomes unbearable then I have realised that I have an unbelievable load whereas others have very little load ,so they are more comfortable than you and you know in our society people actually avoid putting a load on people who refuse to do the work whereas putting much burden on people who accept the work. Actually, in the organisation the administration use this expression, "You know this lady won't refuse so give her as much as you can", whereas this other lady actually refuses or resents the work so avoid her.*

The respondent has realised too late that she could have said 'no'. to being given a heavy workload, that she should have said 'no'. Others say 'no' and most importantly, she knows that when they do, their workload is reduced to their benefit.

6.4.7. Hierarchical and Quiescent Silence

Here an assessment of the context leads to silence due to the fear of the consequences, mainly loss of job in a society where such a loss could be deemed as failure in life.

Respondent E1 said:

> *My relationship with the direct manager is very formal and conservative. It is not comfortable at all. I am never easy in talking to her or expressing my thoughts.*

Formality prevails. The manager is understood as one who focuses on what has to be done according to rules and regulations while the respondent finds this a difficult work environment. Her work relationship is felt to be uneasy. According to Knoll and van Dick (2013a), employees remain silence as the safest option. The respondent had not felt free to speak for a number of years. Despite her unease at hierarchy, she is even more uneasy about the consequences of speaking-out.

6.5.   Combinations of Employees' Thought Styles

The combination of biases involves examining the instances where it was evident that the respondents demonstrated two or more forms of cultural biases. Whereas it might have been expected that the respondents would demonstrate one form of bias, there could be instances when the statements by the respondents demonstrated more than one form of bias. It is necessary to identify these combinations of reasoning, and the silences they give rise to.

In an analysis of focus groups, Atkinson (2016) discovered that, as well as being found in their pure form, the thought styles combine with each other, sometimes opposing and sometimes supporting each other. In the interviews with both staff and managers there was a similar combination of thought styles.

Individuals often think in more than one way, and in more than one combination of thought styles at any one time or at different times (Atkinson, 2016). These combinations included here indicate that individuals may express two thought styles with almost equal emphasis, whereas in a combination of three thought styles, two of the styles may be pronounced while the other may be more subtle.

6.5.1.1.   Fatalistic and Egalitarian Biases

This 'clumsy' combination combines two thought styles, a sense of fate with a sense of concern for others (Ney and Verweij, 2015). In this combination, the individuals are seen to accept their situation and be resigned to it yet at the same time, to seek to remain part of a team. There is comfort in being 'one of the team' and especially when the alternative is not conducive due to the sense of 'unfairness' that is occasioned by a capricious environment. It would be expected that this hybrid is more pronounced among the employees, who view themselves as being on one side of the organisation while their managers are on the other. This seemed to be the case for respondent A1 who stated that:

I am open-minded and I could talk about anything freely. I left my area 13 years ago. In Riyadh, I learnt to be more reticent to avoid misunderstanding by others…really, it's not easy for me … I am trying to let them change their minds about that. Everyone should understand others, don't expect perfection.

The respondent thus seeks a situation where people can improve together; where no one is left behind in what they are doing, though she accepts that perfection is not humanly attainable. Furthermore, respondent A5 said:

I am silent about anything which might provoke problems between colleagues.

The respondent reasons that it is important to remain on good terms with colleagues because the alternative would be worse.

6.5.1.2. Individualistic and Hierarchical Biases

This combination of biases pursues both a concern for self and at the same time adherence to the rules, regulations and ranks within an organisation. This form of bias was demonstrated by the majority of the employees interviewed. The respondents described their individual ambitions, while also showing their wish to be associated with those who adhere to the expectations of the organisation. As respondent D3 explained:

I don't entertain some ideas. I feel that I need to be reticent. Actually, I don't have this feeling even in my personal life. But I talk about my ideas to people who have the ability to deal with it but I wouldn't present it in front of someone where I know he or she can't do anything about it.

D5 said:

I have multiple duties so I think I am a special case. I don't have time for in-depth conversation about my personal life, or my aspirations, or what I have accomplished at work and what I have not. I keep thinking 'I did this, I need to finish that…'. Even in my dreams I think of work.

These two examples demonstrate self-concern and a sense of entitlement with the quest to fulfil particular ambitions.

6.5.1.3. Individualistic and Fatalistic Biases

The need to fulfil personal goals yet, at the same time, be cognisant of the challenges that the context is posing, tend to elicit a certain kind of reaction from an individual (Vaughan, 2002). B2 said:

But sometimes it's not in my experience, sometimes others get me wrong when I was speaking up with them. But sometimes I found that speaking up is beneficial … to which extent I express my thoughts depending on the type of person in front of me. … In addition, there was a risk that I might be mistaken. I didn't regret my silence because I believe that if I talked, I wouldn't have got a good result.

The respondent is showing herself and her knowledge as something that others should learn from but also despairs at how her views are taken the wrong way by others. Another respondent E1 said:

This was a topic that is so hard to discuss, even though my husband is a good guy but he depends on me more than I depend on him, not because he is a bad guy but because of life circumstances and the degree. I have also wished to get married to someone whose thoughts and ideas are like mine. My husband

> *is usually silent, I am a person who likes to express herself and*
> *what I think.*

These two examples show respondents' mixed sense of preference and exasperation. The respondents recognise their deeply held desires and at the same time, the limitations upon them. They appear to be in a position that cannot be resolved. This complicates their situation and clarifies for them the uneasy relationship between their ideals and the imperative of surviving contradictions which nevertheless make sense while reinforcing the need to keep emphasising what they would rather see take place.

6.5.1.4.   Individualistic and Egalitarian Biases

In this hybrid form of bias, the respondents are aware of what they wish for themselves, but they are also have a sense that their personal achievements are best served by showing concern for others and by acting together, working together with others as a unit. This hybrid form of bias was not so pronounced in a context where one's own achievements are individual affairs (Sahovic, 2007). However, by using concern for others as a way of achieving private aims, this hybrid is transitory rather than long-lasting. C3 said:

> *I am more reticent and would not express my opinions loudly,*
> *because I believe it is immoral to say any bad comments about*
> *my colleagues.*

But, note here how social regulation (as to what is moral) weighs on her mind, suggesting momentary Hierarchical reasoning too. E1 said:

> *Where is our place in the Ministry? If a group like us retires, this*
> *will be a great loss to the Ministry and the ones who will replace*
> *us will be newcomers, with new blood. They won't have lived*
> *what we have. We have experienced a variety of offices and we*
> *have different experiences. In every office you work at, your*

experience is refined, so newcomers will not have gone through
what we did.

Again, while the first reading of her reasoning is that it is Individualistic (her unique biography) and Fatalistic (other people cannot experience her particular life) there is also a suggestion that her generation should be recognised collectively for their combined contribution as a cohort. This suggests Egalitarian reasoning too.

C3 shows desire to protect her group and her own sense of values, while E1 shows the relevance of her own group and herself to the organisation. These self-accreditations describe the value the individual places on themselves. They also recognise a more public image of their persona as an imposed or self-authorised constraint.

6.5.1.5.   Egalitarian and Hierarchical Biases

This combination of thought styles demonstrates a desire to preserve what is in place, within acceptable workplace limits, defined by codes of conduct prevailing in the organisation. A4 said:

> *I try to resolve the problem inside the department instead of*
> *spreading the negative impressions about my subordinates to*
> *others. But maybe if I tell them about negative points regarding*
> *my subordinates, it might have a positive side because they might*
> *help to resolve the problems or by giving suggestions to deal with*
> *these problems.*

D3 said:

> *It is, on the other hand, providing honest evaluation and helping*
> *them to be better.*

The respondents are showing concerns for others, for their own position and for the need to ensure that work processes go on as expected. They are in a position to look at their work roles and at the same time look at those of others keeping both in perspective. To these respondents looking after the others is part of fulfilling the expectations of their own roles at work. This concern for others may be considered to be crucial for the future of the organisation (Edge and Remus, 1984). Note then the disposition towards time characteristic of Egalitarian and Hierarchical thinking: things will turn out well in the long-run if enough time is allowed.

6.5.1.6. Fatalistic and Hierarchical Biases

This hybrid form of bias articulates the need to adhere to rules and regulations as the only option available (Peters and Slovic, 1996). Employees use hybrid thinking because in their minds they have no alternative. Their best bet is to follow orders and remain part of the organisation. D2 said:

> *I do not receive feedback from the office at all, neither from the direct manager nor the vice manager. I only receive it from the education manager at the Ministry, because according to the hierarchy, she is an employee of the Ministry office of adult education on that level of Riyadh.*

The respondent reports a sense of being somewhat lost and not knowing what to do. She does not have the convictions of Individualistic thinking but will take direction from wherever it is available. Her thinking is reasonable in the context as she finds it, though she yearns for tighter supervision so that she can be sure of what is expected from her.

6.5.1.7. Hierarchical, Individualistic and Egalitarian Biases

In this combination an individual's articulates self-direction, adherence to rules, concern for work relationships and for others. D5 said:

I am a head of department so, I am a totally transparent person and I express my thoughts easily. For example, some of the heads of department avoid discussing the performance evaluation with their employees or refuse to discuss any issues regarding the evaluation. But I am different. I discuss everything with the supervisors, their performance evaluation, and tell them directly that they have this weakness and this point will count against them and so on and so on. I feel that this way is comfortable for me and for her.

The respondent is showing a complex reasoning: concern for others at work and for the good of everyone. The way the respondent talks, for instance, 'I am different' conveys a sense of pride and convictions describing her own position as being one that is better than others. She corrects others, knowing better than others know. Such a hybrid thought style is seen in someone who enjoys a leadership position and is confident.

6.5.1.8. Fatalistic, Hierarchical and Individualistic Biases

This hybrid thought style respects rules as a matter of fact, treating adherence as the only option. But her adherence acts as a motivation for self-evaluation and stimulates her need to achieve even better performance. This thought style combination was only found in office D. D3 said:

I am more talkative when it comes to work, especially with effective principals whereas I tend to be silent with some types of characters who are not easy to talk to, such as old or intolerant teachers.

6.5.1.9.   *Fatalistic, Egalitarian and Individualistic Biases*

This hybrid thought style appears when an individual shows concern, works within an environment that is quite constrained and challenging, but has to prove their worth at work for their own sense of fulfilment.

> *And I should take the other side into account. So, I wouldn't judge*
> *just from one side. I wouldn't reveal my real opinion.*

Hers is a very succinct synthesis of quite different forms of thinking.

6.6.   Managers: Thought Styles and Silence Types

Managers are charged with running their organisations by guiding others to do what is expected (Sturdy *et al.*, 2016). Among the managers, two forms of combination were predominant (F/Q and F/AQ); however, the H/R combination was also seen.

6.6.1.1.   *Fatalistic and Quiescent*

These managers had jobs to keep and seek to ensure that they do what is necessary to sustain their jobs. There is also the question of reputation. Manager C said:

> *There are topics I always avoid because I think I am not fully*
> *equipped to discuss them, such as politics. If I do so, I will sound*
> *silly.*

She fears being shunned by others. Manager C added:

> *If I decided not to be reticent about my opinion, the disadvantage*
> *will be that others will consider me the 'devil's advocate'.*

The prestige of being a manager should be enough to ensure acceptance by followers. The fear of the consequence is forcing the individual to keep silent. Acceptability is a sign that one is good. Admitting lack of knowledge might harm managers in the eyes of those

who they are managing (Al-Ghamdi and Rhodes, 2015). She views herself as someone who should be emulated and consulted and be knowledgeable in as many things as possible. When a manager fears to confess to not knowing something they feel this would place them at risk.

6.6.1.2. Fatalistic and Acquiescent Silence

Some managers had given up on some things. Managers working with a large number of subordinates confessed to being overwhelmed by the number of cases that they deal with. According to Mannion and Davis (2015), work overload or difficult targets, coupled with the management of people who are not very cooperative or who do not share the same vision is sufficient reason for despair. She keeps quiet when she should speak out. Manager E said:

> *I tend to be silent when there is work pressure.*

Managers are answerable to government officials. She wishes to show that things are under control, when they are not.

6.7. Combinations of Managers' Thought Styles

Among the managers, the pattern of thought styles was quite different and just a few combinations were recorded.

6.7.1. Individualist and Hierarchical Biases

A manager's context is an expectation (from above and below) that they run the organisation in accordance with rules and regulations and do so with some individual flair. Leader D said:

> *Sometimes I ask this question of my employees. I try to find an answer to those questions by asking my employees. So, I should look at their opinions and make a synthesis between my opinion and their opinions. When I meet the administration, I provide suggestions. Most people around me know that I provide suggestions and I convince them about it.*

Arguably, her receptiveness to employee suggestions introduces the Egalitarian as well as Hierarchical and Individualistic suggestion making.

Another respondent leader E said:

> *There has been an open conversation about retirement. Is it a good, vague or a positive or frightening stage? We also talked about work challenges which we have faced, and we talked transparently.*

6.7.2. Individualistic and Fatalistic Biases

Managers showed this tendency as a way of demonstrating the self-importance of their position but also as a way of mitigating their own difficulties and constraints at work. People find self-justification in matters that the leaders do not wish to admit responsibility for.

Leader C said:

> *Ideas I can talk about openly are only things I am sure of. I don't like to talk about things I am ignorant of or not fully experienced with. I follow this well- known Arabic saying, 'Whoever says 'I don't know' has fully answered.*

Here the Fatalistic voice prevails unless the respondent feels confident in their own judgement.

6.7.3. Individualistic, Egalitarian and Fatalistic Biases

Respondent F said:

> *How to be more cooperative and a facilitator? This is part of my personality, I am cooperative, flexible and easy going.*

She accepts that her own nature cannot be changed and that by nature she is flexible, cooperative and a facilitator. Here Fatalistic acceptance of one's character as something one can do nothing to alter is allied most interestingly with very different thought styles.

6.7.4. Egalitarian and Hierarchical Biases

It was possible to articulate a sense of concern for others, their collective welfare and, at the same time, adherence to rules. This could be done for popularity by those wanting no issues at work or those learning a new role. Respondent C said:

> *This openness characterises my conversations most of the time actually telling them that this the limit of my authority. For example, a time when I had a meeting with a group of them to tell them very clearly that they have not done their job as they should. I told them this leads to other inefficiencies at work.*

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6.7.5. *Hierarchical, Individualistic and Egalitarian Biases*

This combination has been given showing the concern for work and others, as a means of self-achievement or of own performance. Leader E said:

> *I explained to her that clearly by using the official papers the procedure that must be taken before deserving such a right made things clearer and she was convinced and satisfied. I told her we would stay with her even if the time is not right.*

Some firmness at work is entailed in the exercise of authority. Willingness to exercise firmness can be read as fatalistic in that it makes sense to see it as imperative for a manager's survival, not to lose their 'grip' on subordinates. However, it is clear that some leaders or managers are more concerned about the welfare of their staff and accept suggestions that lie outside the rule book. It should be noted that in a society that shows class inequality and in which individual achievement has to be conspicuous to others, leaders who feel that they deserve their position seek to convey their worth and determination not to be dislodged. The fear that their subordinates may take over could be driving them to be more hierarchical and fatalistic, often hinging their case using religious doctrines, while showing that they are good managers who can work with others, they remain concerned about the views others hold about them. The leaders thus demonstrated varied combinations of biases and interpreted contexts with a noticeable amount of variation.

These distinct variations, especially in hybrid form show how misleading and uninformative it would be to explain Leaders' actions as being the outcome of Saudi culture. Employees and managers alike demonstrated different, contrasting, conflicting and yet, of course, equally reasonable reasoning in a way that was thoughtful and responsive to their (differing) readings of contexts. Similar reasonings could be found within education ministries in any advanced or developing country. While the reader might not share the reasonings shown case-by-case, they will recognise and understand

the logics the respondents were deploying. The intelligibility of one person in the eyes of another is, of course, made possible by culture (thought-styles) which outweighs the tendency for culture to reduce the capacity for mutual intelligibility.

6.7.6. *Summary and Comment on Thought Styles*

The literature on voice has shown that voice comes with a combination of thought styles, but with silence, in the current study, the data has shown the silence comes with pure thought styles, not a combination of thought styles.

There have been discussions about types of cultural biases and types of silence, but the majority of these discussions have been disparate. If the organisational silence literature has any commonalty, it is that it treats each actor individually as a utility maximiser without unpicking variations in reasoning. When a certain kind of silence is exercised it could be due to specific cultural biases (thought-styles) and hybrid thought styles which can be identified from the GGCT typology quite clearly. In GGCT the claim that what a person believes is a result of cultural conditioning (Maleki and Hendriks, 2015) is only partly true.

On the contrary, the respondents were diverse in their reasonings despite working in the same organisation facing similar constraints in the same country. The specific diversity of the respondents' reasoning presents a major challenge (a) to the proposition that individuals are conditioned by their national culture and (b) to the proposition that they are utility-maximising atoms seeking private advantage, and what they consider to be a benefit varies significantly and precisely in accordance with the GGCT typology. Moreover, there are no reasons that do not fit the typology. These respondents are recognisable as cultural actors; but they are not overwhelmingly simply Saudi in their thinking.

CHAPTER 7 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Introduction and Testing of Propositions

This study begins from the notion that GGCT might be a tool for a better understanding of the workplace silence phenomenon. From this followed the propositions listed in Chapter 4.

Proposition 1. It is proposed that there are more types of silence than currently reported in the literature.

This proposition suggests that GGCT enables a holistic view of the phenomenon which is superior to the previous positivist studies which are piecemeal in their approach. The four types of silence described in the literature were found. However out of the analysis, a fifth and sixth type of silence emerged, not acknowledged in the literature which remains silent on these two types of silences: *respectful silence* and *empathetic-listening silence*. Managerial respondents typically explained their use of these silences using Hierarchical reasoning. It will also become clear from this analysis that silence types are not distributed evenly. Among subordinates, there is a range of silence types (*Quiescent, Acquiescent* and *Prosocial*) created by different forms of reasoning (thought-styles). However, among managers, *respectful* and *empathetic listening* predominate. That is to say, the forms of reasoning employed in producing or upholding silence shows patterning which may be explained by social position (organisational status) that is by variations in authority.

Proposition 2. The framework proposes that specific thought styles produce particular type(s) of silence.

This proposition suggests that GGCT is able to encompass the previous research and explain it as well as go beyond it. In this study it was found that each of the types of

silence mentioned in the literature could be mapped into the GGCT schema. Thus, it was also proposed:

Proposition 2.1: *The fatalistic thought style produces quiescent and acquiescent types of silence.*

Proposition 2.2: *The hierarchical thought style produces respectful type of silence.*

Proposition 2.3: *The individualistic thought style produces opportunistic type of silence.*

Proposition 2.4: *The egalitarian thought style produces prosocial type of silence.*

Perhaps the strongest claim made by this study is that silence is produced out of reasoning processes. Most interestingly, where it favoured voice (ie *talking*), respondents' reasoning was much more often polyrational compared with the reasoning that informed silence. Voice made use of more than one thought style and usually many. However, the reasoning employed to arrive at *silence* was more typically limited to any *one* of the four thought-styles. Respondents were single minded in their silences but have multiple reasons for talking. This finding was unexpected though again interesting, demonstrating the value of empirical research.

Perhaps the polyrationality of voice and the elegant (single-voice) tendency in silences arises because voice makes clear one actor's reasoning to another, while silences conceal their own reasonings. Because thought styles rely for their energy and clarity on their exposure to each other reasoning is provocative. However, if reasoning is hidden behind silence much of that dynamic is lost. Silences do not compete to the same extent that voices do, which means that silences are veiled, and more likely to remain intact. However, silences are exposed to the reasonings of expressed voices, to which silences are a reasonable response. If shouted at hierarchically, it makes good sense to retreat into fatalistic silence or to hold one's breath until silence can be collectivised into more of an egalitarian form of shared defensiveness or waiting for the right moment to speak with one unified voice.

All the respondents were concerned to preserve their reputation using silence. For example, even where a respondent stated that they were aware of a right that was being violated in their case, they often declined to assert that right for fear of being seen by others as selfish, self-absorbed or self-important. A good reputation was understood to rest on being seen to be more concerned for others than for oneself. Meanwhile, respondents were strong in their assertion that those rights existed, that *other people* had those rights and that they should also enjoy those rights.

Not all Saudis are the same. It is evident from our data (and from our lived experience of Saudi Arabia) that respondents from the West and South of the country are more open and talkative about their personal lives than from the Najd area. When encountering more private dispositions, the more open Saudis report that they feel they are being judged as trivial or silly persons and the effect is to make them develop a new silence on personal matters. That is, Saudi culture is as dynamic as any other in its reasonings.

Proposition 3. The framework proposes that GGCT is a parsimonious framework for understanding silence phenomena in context.

Finally, in considering future research in this field, researchers should pay special attention to fresh possibilities suggested by the Grid-Group typology but which were not found among our cases. GGCT suggests four clear prototypes and up to *fifteen* hybrid possibilities (involving two or three thought styles in combination, and complete polyrationality employing all four forms of reasoning together) – polyrational justifications for silence and for talk.

According to GGCT, the four thought styles (and hybrid permutations) are global possibilities. Many of the findings reported here exist in similar form elsewhere in varying degrees of intensity. It is not only Saudis who choose silence: others do so elsewhere for similar reasons. Our analysis of the link between silence and the Grid-Group typology should not be thought of as having only local application in Saudi Arabia. As culture has

no equilibrium point and is always shifting, Saudi Arabian institutions will demonstrate future changes, and no silence lasts for ever.

Consistent with GGCT, it was found that manipulative silence can take three equally reasonable forms, hierarchal, egalitarian and individualistic.

- Manipulative silence can be created in the 'best interests' of preserving the organisations as it stands, for example by not calling its reputation into question.
- Egalitarian manipulative silence might be adapted in the collective interest of everybody in the transformation of that organisation into something altogether new, to the benefit of all others. For example, there may be tacit agreement within a group that their best interests are served by not speaking out. All might confess to 'thinking the same thing at the same time' in a meeting, but all realise – implicitly – that 'this is not the time to say it'. However, egalitarian manipulative silence is only described by one or possibly two of our respondents. In this case egalitarian manipulative silence is about 'choosing the right moment', presumably at some point in the future when the situation will be 'ripe for change'.
- Manipulative silence, with individualistic reasoning, is adopted to advantage the individual concerned in a competitive situation.

The intent may be similar in each case (to manipulate) but the reasoning is strictly different. There are many a reason as to why silence might exist in an organisation, in the institution where this study was conducted, silence was prevalent, but it was necessary to examine the same from two perspectives; the managers and the subordinates.

7.2. Effects of Organisational Hierarchy

One of the most remarkable findings is that silence is produced in different ways by subordinates, compared with managers, each group encompassing conflicting and often paradoxical reasoning. Thus, subordinates reasoned fatalistically that one can never altogether trust colleagues, even of similar status within the hierarchy. (Because of this it

is reasonable to argue that it is better to remain silent rather than to declare one's thoughts to colleagues.) However, subordinates were willing nevertheless to *help* each other by using silence in order to preserve and protect each other's reputations. This was done in mutual recognition that 'reputation is everything' to the survival of each and every Saudi, an argument that shows strongly egalitarian reasoning. Subordinates chose silence about personal matters (such as infidelity), social matters (such as hijab wearing and car driving) as well as silence about performance evaluations, at work especially. Where an employee's performance is problematic, subordinates will do anything to avoid talking about this, including a preference for implicit rather than explicit statements and very indirect, generic criticism. In other words, among subordinates there are fatalistic and egalitarian forms of reasoning – which are indeed diametrically opposed in principle, yet here working *together* in a 'clumsy' or *polyrational* way to preserve silence over a variety of issues. Thus, subordinates had more than one reason for silence.

Among managers the dynamics of silence were very different. Managers reason hierarchically that their position is 'fatherly' – patriarchal – and that from this reasoning it makes sense to practice *respectful silence* (respectful of the other person's age and experience) or *empathetic listening* which conveys to the other person a feeling that their position and any difficulties have been recognised and understood, but nothing more[3]. We might even suggest that there is an element of fatalistic reasoning that enters here: namely that to question the expertise of an experienced employee of some standing, by rejecting their concerns explicitly (rather than simply acknowledging them respectfully or empathetically) might undermine the hierarchical convention to *trust experts*, in a way that is 'not the done thing'. That is, there is potential danger in questioning the position of another expert, even if that person occupies a lower position in the hierarchy. To

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[3] There is a similarity between 'empathetic listening' and the 'containment of anxiety (after Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion).

express doubts about an expert's integrity (say) might even attract doubts about one's own integrity. This could be harmful to hierarchy.

In other words, subordinates use fatalistic and egalitarian reasoning in support of silence, while managers introduce a third thought-style in support of silence. Between them managers and subordinates find many reasons for silence and probably every reason that is available culturally within all cultures. However, Saudis are not exceptional nor peculiar in their thinking. Interestingly, in managers we find a clumsy or polyrational form of reasoning in support of *voice* in the following senses. Managers reason hierarchically that performance evaluation is part of their job so that managers will voice criticisms of performance quite bluntly and without hesitation. At the same time, managers reason individualistically that to keep their position, enhance it and progress to higher positions they need to be vocal and make a competitive show of their achievements; for example, demonstrating that under their command, their own office has out-performed another office. They also express their willingness to leave the organisation if their progression were to be prevented. That is, managerial voice combines hierarchical and individualistic reasoning, that is strictly speaking, thought styles that are also diametrically opposed.

With confidentiality guaranteed, when considering their own position free of concern for what those above them might think, managers tended to use hierarchical and individualistic reasoning. They demonstrated fatalistic and individual reasoning, often in combination. Age may be part of the explanation for adopting particular thought styles in respondents' treatment of others, however as most of the respondents were between forty and fifty-five years of age, this could not be tested.

Managers' and subordinates' accounts showed an apparent inconsistency which is also explained by social position. Subordinates typically reported that feedback was presented to them in general terms without naming names. In other words, in order to criticise an individual, a problem was referred to in very general terms, to spare the accused.

Meanwhile senior managers insisted that whenever they had negative feedback to offer, it was always specific and directed at the named individual they judged to be responsible. What we found however was that senior managers' feedback was always communicated via intermediaries. These middle managers felt some attachment to subordinates and it was they who anonymised the feedback to protect the identity, reputation and feelings of the accused. This practice explained the differences found between senior managers' and subordinates' accounts.

Managers were fearless in their criticism of subordinates; however, when they considered their own position in respect to those above them, they displayed similar degrees of palpable worry and anxiety to those reported at the lowest level. This suggests that hierarchical and fatalistic reasoning are institutionalised and maintained by positive feedback. It will be noted that subordinates sought to spare the feelings of others, treating them as if they were kin or neighbours. Yet when they reached senior positions, managers appeared to have abandoned this constraint and pictured those who had made mistakes in more rational-legal terms as subordinate colleagues.

7.2.1. *Silence among Subordinates*

Researchers have found that the most common form of silence is Quiescent silence. Fear of consequences was found to be the main reason given, accounting for a majority of responses or, more accurately, fear of uncertainty as to the unknown, or what would happen otherwise. Other reasons included fear of losing the respect or affection of others and fear of not being accepted (given in 6 instances). Prior experiences of fear (given in 26 instances) of the consequences of speaking up, and thus the fear that what happened in the past might happen again; fear of exclusion, and lastly, fear of the disadvantage of spreading rumours. All respondents had well-developed reasons for their variants of silence which they expressed clearly to us.

Acquiescent silence arose first around identity and second through acceptance that nothing would change. This study found, however, reasoning that nothing will change

was the primary reason as to why silence existed. Prosocial silence was found; silence to protect others. Respondents gave four main reasons; first, the fear of losing others, second, not wanting to get into trouble, third, not wanting to hurt others and lastly, to protect the reputation of other people. Opportunistic silence was found too, and for the expected reasons.

The most common reason found for remaining silent was fear of the consequences or the sense that nothing would change; two reasons Tamuz (2001), Verhezen (2013) and Pirie (2016) also reported. Ardakani and Mehrabanfar (2015) found that the subordinates fear the imagined reactions of their managers and this is why they may remain silent. Situations might spiral out of control as a result of voicing thoughts. In this study, however, the reasons were more varied though it was obvious that the employers had concerns about the reactions that their supervisors or managers if they spoke out.

Some subordinates interviewed stayed silent because they had previously experienced negative consequences from speaking out. However, because this study was not longitudinal it was not possible to explore the 'spiral of silence' model (Noelle-Neumann, 1991) which spreads over time. However, it was found that Acquiescent silence was more pronounced in certain offices than in others, where the fear of consequences was raised by all subordinates interviewed. This is consistent with the possibility that Quiescent silence had been caused by the management there (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011; Balas-Timar, 2016). The issue of power imbalances and prior experiences of the dangers of speaking up was also found by Ma and Kusakabe (2015) in their study of women in Myanmar, and by Vakola and Bouradas (2005) was also found in our study.

7.2.2. *Silence among Managers*

The leaders interviewed exhibited Acquiescent, Quiescent and Prosocial forms of silence. Among these, Quiescent silence was most common, followed by Prosocial silence and lastly Acquiescent silence. Under Quiescent silence, the main reason was fear of speaking up, followed by fear of consequences, then fear of losing others and the evidence of prior

experience. Most of the managers also feared reaction from subordinates who might become less favourable towards them or could lead to information reaching managers above them (see also Capanzano, 2012).

Under Acquiescent silence, the main reason reported was the sense that nothing would change, while for Prosocial silence, two main reasons were given; not wanting to hurt others and protection of reputation (two instances each). Managers appeared to fear speaking up for reasons found by Bell et al. (2011a; 2011b) which were found to be closely connected to the fear of the consequences of speaking out as also reported by Lu and Xie (2013), Bagheri et al. (2012) and Rhee et al. (2014).

Generally, managers do not fear subordinates, because they have more authority, and tended to have more say. If anything, it is the managers who cause subordinates' silence (Zehir and Erdogan, 2011). However, we found that some silent managers had not been in the job for long and were cautious about what they were saying. Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008) and Bell et al. (2011b) also found new managers wanting to keep a low profile, learning their new position and being considerate towards subordinates.

The question arises as to why some managers induce silence and others not, needs further exploration as identified by Detert and Trevino (2010). The answer may be that this depends on the particular cultural dynamics existing among managers, among employees and between all these actors at a given moment (context), and that there are many permutations of possibility.

7.2.3. Other Types of Silence

Other than the four main types of silence that have been give widely in existing literature, it was found that there were other forms of silence that existed; respectful, manipulative, comfortable and pretence silence.

These three forms of silence that are in addition to the four types of silence that have been discussed widely in the literature indicate that the are many types of silence that can exist

in an organisation. Indeed, as there are fifteen cultural possibilities (the four thought styles plus eleven combinations of two or more of them) then it may be expected that researchers will eventually find fifteen types of silence. There is, however, clear indication about the predominance of the type of silence that can exist in an organisation. It has been seen that all the types of silence have causal factors, some are predominant among lateral levels of management while others are predominant either among the managers or among the subordinate staff members.

7.2.3.1.   Respectful Silence

Respectful silence is kept so as not to hurt another, especially due to age or rank. Our findings confirm Dyne et al. (2003), that respect tended to come with fear and when there is respectful silence towards authority, no alternative may be imagined (Milliken et al., 2003). However, in some instances, managers also reported remaining silent despite possessing authority over subordinates.

7.2.3.2.   Manipulative Silence

This form of silence involves deliberate withholding of information not known by others, for individual ambition even to the detriment of the organisation. This was rare among our respondents.

7.2.3.3.   Comfortable Silence

Here the silent actor is happy to remain silent until the context changes. There is little literature that has discussed scenarios that could be linked with comfortable silence, but according to Beheshtifar et al. (2012), a group of people may decide to remain silent by choice denying the organisation the benefit of information and drawing some satisfaction from doing so. No instance of comfortable silence was found in our data.

7.2.3.4.   *Pretence or Ignoring Silence*

Pretence, or ignoring, silence is aimed at providing space and time for others to deal with a mistake for which they are responsible. In this study, some managers had ignored what was said or what they had seen with the hope that there will be realisation of the mistake and that action would be taken to correct it.

7.3.   Influence of Hierarchical Relationship between Managers and Subordinates on Organisational Silence

As with any organisation, managers are expected to provide direction to the staff and ensure that tasks are carried out according to the rules. We found that the hierarchical relationship between managers and subordinates influences organisational silence in several ways. Many studies have found that silence is practiced predominantly by subordinates (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Detert et al., 2010). Haskins and Freeman (2015) recognised that silence is also practiced by the managers, executives and employees, many times a day. In this study the most common type of silence was Prosocial, which is due to the need to protect other work colleagues (Grant and Wrzesniewski, 2010; Hu and Liden, 2015; Bolino and Grant, 2016) and Quiescent, which is due to fear (Ma and Kusakabe, 2015).

Ma and Kusakabe (2015) found that silence and submission used to avoid trouble with those having greater influence. In this study, submission was not evident, however, submission could be treated as a hidden attribute of fear. We found that many subordinates remained silent because they were afraid of the consequences of voice. It was found that with Quiescent silence subordinates also feared losing others, feared the disadvantages of speaking up, feared exclusion, recalled the fear of past negative experiences and feared damaging their image, and feared being seen as trouble makers. These fears have been found by Whiteside and Barclay (2013) who added fear of sanctions additionally Burden et al. (2016) found fear of exclusion and of having a bad image in the eyes of others. This disposition has been treated as negative psychological

behaviour, engendering cynicism among subordinates caused by mistrust between subordinates and managers (Liu et al., 2009).

Jain et al. (2013) found that in most cases subordinate silence was because of political fear and used silence as a strategic tool serving blame and revenge, similar to defensive routine silence (Argyris, 1977). Subordinates who knew the truth decided not to tell management, possibly acting also out of fear of victimisation. Fearful authority disparities play a part in such cases.

Yet, managers may also choose silence due to the nature of the business, for instance, pressure of business and not wanting to join in the debate within the organisation (Jowett, 2008) which to us hints at fatalistic silence. In our study, managers more typically chose silence to protect their subordinates. More common was respectful silence also intended to protect subordinates, deciding not to confront subordinates thereby protecting them from what could happen otherwise. This form of silence was not specified by the organisational silence literature.

We note that managers may chose silence because they do not want to feel unwanted by subordinates (Haskins and Freeman, 2015), or to preserve an atmosphere where they will gain from the esteem of subordinates. The literature has not recognised respectful silence, for the sake of social acceptability without concern for the loss their organisations may face as a consequence. Note that hierarch means that managers can remain silent only up to a point at which silence is evidently very harmful to the organisation (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005; Priola et al., 2014).

Among the managers, we found that respectful silence was practiced by managers to protect their subordinates and by extension protect their departments from external hostility, valuing group cohesion and an egalitarian sense of collective existence is valued. Managers were found ready to bend the rules for their departments' sake. To some extent, their doing this was also a way of ensuring that its weaknesses were not exposed. We believe that polyrational egalitarian and fatalistic silence had developed. In this

combination of fatalistic and Acquiescent silence, managers felt they had no option but to remain silent and do things on their own. There was also a sense among some managers that they were not able to influence their team members because they were outnumbered by them.

7.4.   Role of Grid-Group Cultural Theory in Explaining Organisational Silence

This study found that GGCT is effective in explaining numerous types of organisational silence. The premise is that social relationships are defined by the four main cultural biases so understanding these biases is important because they establish the reasonableness of organisational silence. It is clear that each of the biases has distinct features that are not difficult to identify in any thinking. An understanding of these features is crucial for understanding any cultural artefact and its attributes, such as an organisation and its silences.

The association of the cultural biases and the types of silence was found to be indirectly linked. A good understanding about this association can be developed through the examination of the different features of the biases.

7.5.   Effect of Country Context on Organisational Silence

The country context can be described politically, socially, economically, technologically, environmentally and legally (Nystrand, 2006) and GGCT recognises that thinking is done in context. A country context that is felt to be beyond change will have some influence on the way people react or behave (Hoadley, 2007) though context lives as much in the minds of individuals and groups as it does in the country as a whole. Contexts have to be read in order to become contexts for those reading them. Saudis recognise that Saudi Arabia is one of the most religious societies in the world, being the 'home' to the Holy City of Mecca with crucial religious symbolism (Alhirz and Sajeev, 2015). Being the most important Haj destination for Muslims world-wide, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is ruled according to strict religious tenets and religion is institutionalised in almost all

aspects of life. Segregation of men and women is commonplace, the observance of religious activities is non-negotiable and attempts to make changes to practices hinged on religious principles is frowned upon. Our research was conducted in an all-female institution because gender segregation is part of the fabric of what Saudi Arabia is.

In countries of the Middle East religion plays a crucial role in determining the way countries are managed and how organisations are run, for example, study of Iran by Samar and Yazdanmehr (2013) found that teachers chose silence as an expectation and not necessarily due to policy within their institutions. In these cases, religious beliefs affect how subordinates relate with each other and with authority but rarely as strongly as in Saudi Arabia.

Peaceful coexistence has been found important to people's thinking. It is expected that a woman will marry on reaching the age of marriage, have children, be committed to her family and remain well-groomed (Alhirz and Sajeev, 2015). Most of the respondents interviewed were married women, who by virtue of their ages had worked for some time and had children. Due to the importance of family name, they also adopted decent dressing, as prescribed by religion. In a society where women were not always allowed to work, the fact that women contributed to honour in a way that acknowledged the importance of religion more indirectly in the form of their sense of pride. Because laws governing work were weak and job loss a risk, those in employment experience anxious respect for their employers.

The government is in a position to enact regulations with little consultation (Johnson and Ridley 2015). Employees feel bound to accept what is presented to them and work along, or risk losing their jobs. Subordinates tend to be anxious about their job status first because they feel the need to be part of the group (Kish-Gephart *et al.*, 2009) and to avoid being punished (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989). There were many instances where the subordinates did not raise issues with their managers because they felt that it could have affected them negatively. The question of the Hijab elicited personal biases but was not

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discussed for fear of being viewed negatively (Dutton *et al.*, 1997). Here there was egalitarian reasoning combined with fatalistic reasoning.

How this context was read allowed two approaches. First, the fact that the respondents had achieved something by gaining employment fostered competitive ambition, and second, the ambition needed veiling. Many respondents reported a sense of achievement, and desire to pursue further studies while fearing being shunned by others for being too proud. Because class is also important respondents kept their pride private while also seeking achievement. These conflicting thoughts contributed to manipulative but also Quiescent silence.

7.6.   Conclusion

It can be concluded that GGCT does indeed throw more light on the organisational silence phenomenon. It also allows scholars and practitioners to see the relationship between the results of previous studies.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1.   Chapter Introduction

This study sought to explore the types of silence in relation to GGCT, as practiced by female employees and managers within educational offices, who are working under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education offices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. As silence is by nature not directly observable, the research relied, to begin with, on the assumption that opinions and information were being withheld. It was hoped that this study might yield important information which would help to understand the relationship between silence and thought styles, which could be used to assist in breaking the circle of silence within organisations.

8.2 Summary of key findings

In Chapter Seven, the findings were discussed in relation to the key propositions for the research. This section therefore highlights the core findings in relation to the contribution made to knowledge and theory.

- **There are more types of silence than existing literature indicates.** The organisational silence literature has highlighted various types of silence, most commonly: Quiescent, Prosocial, Acquiescent and Opportunistic (see, for instance, Morrison and Milliken, 2003; Knoll and van Dick, 2013a). The current study confirmed the existence of these key forms of silence, but went further to suggest that there are other potential forms of silence which have not been previously addressed in the literature. These include respectful silence, which is when the person withholds information as a sign of respect, where age or experience may be considered factors during interaction. Also significant is silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance, which refers to a person pretending not to know about something, through not speaking, in

order to help an individual to correct themselves. This form of silence was particularly exhibited by managers.

- **Different types of silence are unevenly distributed within organisations, and power plays an important role here.** The research findings indicated that quiescent silence, which is associated with fear, for example, was most dominant amongst employees. It was also shown, however, that silence was influenced by power dynamics. Thus, whilst managers did not appear to display the same amount of fear as employees, resulting in quiescent silence, when interacting with subordinates, they did exhibit fear during interaction with their own managers, or those in higher positions than themselves. The research also found that prosocial silence was more common amongst employees than managers, which seemed to relate to the type of relationships held, and the mutual protection of one another within the organisational setting. It appears, then, that position in the organisational hierarchy impacts on level and type of silence.

- **Different levels of silence are evident between different offices within the same organisation.** The research indicated that there were important differences between offices within the organisation, with particular types of silence associated with fear, and the frequency at which they occurred, being greater in some offices. This was not simply related to relationships with managers in all cases, although this was significant, but rather, office-wide relations were influential here.

- **Individual motivations for silence could relate to both religion and to feelings of exclusion resulting from regional differences could influence silence.** In terms of religion, for instance, there was a sense that opinions could not be expressed where religious views were dominant in the work

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environment. There was also some evidence that individuals from different regions within the same country could be silent according to feelings of cultural differences or the sense of being the minority.

- **Silence is not static, and can be temporary in nature.** There were many cases in the current research which showed that individuals were not restricted to a fixed state of being weither silent or talkative. Several respondents explained a shift in their use of silence, according to past experiences, and that this could work both ways; involving increased use of voice or increased us of silence. Context and relationship with individuals could also be important here.

- **Grid-Group Cultural Theory (GGCT) plays a crucial role in explaining types of silence.** The research examined dispositions through GGCT. Each of the four cultural biases was examined through interview data. The quest was to examine if each type of silence reported was associated with particular biases. The findings indicated that this is the case. It was established that all types of silence can be examined within the GGCT framework: the Individualistic bias comes with Opportunistic silence; the Egalitarian bias comes with Prosocial silence and the Fatalistic bias comes with Quiescent and Acquiescent silence. Of the very small number of studies that have attempted to link organisational silence and thought styles, these have failed to link Hierarchical reasoning with any form of silence. The research identified hierarchical silences and several new forms of silence including respectful, and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. A specific association was identified between the hierarchical thought style and both respectful and empathetic silences. Hierarchical reasoning arrived at silence out of respect and empathy with others.

- What the organisational silence literature lacks is recognition of how silences have cultural origins; what 'culture' means and what makes culture dynamic – and with it, voices and silences and more specifically which silence types originate in which thought styles. The current research findings indicate that dispositions cannot be understood as individual characteristics. On the contrary, both vocal expression of particular opinions and reasonable silences are made possible only because everyone is a cultural subject with varying experiences of social regulation and social solidarity (Grid and Group). It is because people are cultural subjects equipped with the different thought styles that they understand contexts differently. The organisational silence literature is mistaken in assuming that the context is the same for all organisational members. It is not. Where fatalist reasoning is acutely sensitive to risk, individual reasoning sees an opportunity, egalitarian reasoning sees a need for system change and hierarchical reasoning a need to tighten up the rules.

- **Every thought style comes with certain types of silence.** Each of the respondents provided reasoning identifiable with particular thought styles. Fatalistic thinking yielded Quiescent silence, Egalitarian thinking yielded Prosocial silence, Individualistic thinking yielded Opportunistic and Acquiescent silence, but Hierarchical thinking was reflected in previously unrecognised types of silence including Respectful and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. It is interesting that these silences are recognisable to ordinary actors, yet these were not recognised by organisational silence researchers. However, GGCT provides a transparent explanation for why they exist.

- **Types of silence come with pure thought styles.** Studies have shown that combinations of thought styles with voice, and the current study confirmed this but showed surprise results that thought styles come as pure with certain

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types of silence, even though there appears to be an element of fatalistic thought style with all other thought styles which produce certain types of silence. Among the thirty-two respondents interviewed all the different thought styles were demonstrated. Each type of silence came with a pure thought style, but it is clear that the fatalistic thought style is one of the elements of each of the other forms of silence. GGCT allowed for this and so did the interview schedule.

8.3 Contribution to knowledge

The key findings presented here indicate two main contributions to knowledge. First, they highlight new and important insights for the field. The current research showed, for instance, that it is possible to identify new types of silence that have been previously overlooked in the literature. At the very early stages of the research, the researcher had not anticipated that GGCT would enable the identification and explanation of silence types not previously known to organisational silence researchers. However, this was a positive outcome of having allowed for all styles of thinking during the interviews. The reasons were heard due to researcher awareness of how thoughts (silent or voiced) are made available to any cultural subject. The value of GGCT within the study was perhaps more significant, however, in the broader theoretical contribution that it made.

This study provides a novel and better way of theorising organisational silence. It encompasses and explains all the previous theory, which amount to little more than different, overlapping systems of categorisation of the phenomenon. Because GGCT is able to cover the whole range of the phenomenon, its application shows the gaps in the

previous theory. The existing literature links three main forms of silence in the organisation to three of the GGCT thought styles which are: Fatalistic with Quiescent or Acquiescent, Egalitarian style has been associated with Prosocial and lastly, Individualistic thought style has been associated with Opportunistic silence (Loyens, 2013a). There have been no studies that have considered all four types of silence with associative thought styles.

The current study has identified that the Hierarchical thought style informed Respectful silence and silence for the purpose of feigning ignorance. It was found that among the managers and subordinates conscientiousness caused them to show a great deal of respect and empathy when dealing with others. It should be noted that respect, empathy and feigning ignorance are distinct from the other forms of silence. Respectful silence, for instance, emerged where individuals were silent during interaction with others where reverence or dignity was a consideration. Within respectful silence, the data tentatively suggested the existence of a form of empathetic silence where individuals were silent as a way of listening to others, not to protect them, or as a mark of fear, but rather as a sign of respect or to help them to feel better. Feigning ignorance, however, is a form of silence which emerges through 'waiting' for someone to identify where they can make corrections. Respect, empathy and feigning ignorance have nothing to do with fear, desperation or even seeking opportunity (quiescence, acquiescence or opportunism). Van Dyne et al. (2003) indicated that respect tends to be associated with fear, but in this study it could not be substantiated. Thus, the current study is innovative in newly identifying these two forms of silence and by associating them with a particular thought style.

This is the first study of the organisational silence phenomenon that shows combinations of thought styles. These combinations have developed gradually in the observed organisation over the years (Mamadouh, 1999; Grendstad, 2000; Halik and Verweij, 2017). Thought style combinations tend to be apparent in individuals (Wildavsky, 2017) and be temporary in changing contexts. More importantly, however, in relation to the current study, is that they tend to be present with voice rather than silence. This is an issue

that was quite puzzling, because there has been an association of thought styles with particular silence. The fact that none of the possible combination were seen to be evident from the field study suggests that there is an issue that is worth further examination and discussion.

8.4 Research limitations

As with all research, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the current study and the impact of these on the findings of the research. The first point of note relates to the limited diversity of the sample, which resulted from practical restrictions placed on the researcher, and subsequently impact on the generalisability of the findings. The research focused on a particular country; Saudi Arabia, and on a particular region; Riyadh. Regional choice was made due to restricted resources, but in order to improve representation as much as possible within this region, and therefore provide more generalisable findings, offices from all areas of Riyadh were selected; North, South, West, East and Central. By focussing on one city, the researcher made an abductive assumption that the study reflects all such offices across Saudi Arabia. It is noted that Najd culture, found in Riyadh, has influenced all the other regional cultures, and therefore, by focussing on the Riyadh offices it is likley that future researchers would make similar findings elsewhere in Saudi Arabia. Had logistical and time constraints been less, the researcher could have collected data from other Saudi cities. However, though limited geographically, it is not felt that this limitation was a major one.

The study involved only female respondents, in keeping with the reality of life in Saudi Arabia, where institutional segregation of male and female is usual practice. This was an all-female institution and was easily accessible to the researcher. There is a possibility that the findings could have been different had the study involved mixed respondents i.e males and females. It could be argued that one side of a cultural divide was researched and that other types of silence might have been found among Saudi men. However, it is

doubtful that Saudi men use any forms of reasoning not susceptible to GGCT and, as such, it is expected that future researchers would find similar connections between thought styles and silences in men as in women, though the proportion of each silence type to the rest – and the reasoning behind them – may differ between genders. Male researchers in Saudi Arabia would face the same constraints, namely of only being able to access respondents of their own gender. A solution to this problem would be to research silence types and thought styles in countries with little or no gender segregation.

This study also considered only supervisors and their managers. The supervisors were sometimes referred to as the employees or subordinates, while their managers were at times referred to as superiors or leaders. These two groups of respondents are persons with authority over, and responsibility to, the organisation and their participation was highly beneficial. The study did not consider the views of the subordinate staff members or the ordinary workers. It is conceivable that junior employees would present with Fatalistic and Egalitarian silences to a greater extent than in this sample. However, because thinking is a dynamic cultural phenomenon, it is just as possible that Hierarchical and Individualist reasonings and silences would be found among junior employees too, and that thoughts and silences of all kinds would change over time for both superordinates and juniors.

8.5 Areas for Future Research

Although this research met the objectives set, there is always room for further research. The following areas may be addressed by scholars in the future;

- **A broader sample:** Most of the respondents were above 40 years old so the findings may have been skewed due to this homogeneity. In addition, issues of gender and geographical region may have affected the results. Future research might include a broader sample, or include organisations of males for comparison.

- **Religion:** There was some suggestion in the current research that religion may play an important role in organisational silence. Further research is necessary to explore this, to see in particular how Islamic values might influence individuals to be silent.

- **Using GGCT to Study Voice and Silence:** The current study demonstrates that GGCT is useful for understanding the phenomenon of silence and its various types which have been produced by thought styles. It has been shown that by applying GGCT to the phenomenon of silence, greater depth of understanding is gained, and a more complete picture is revealed. By first identifying the GGCT thought style of existing categories of silence, the existing studies can be brought into an overall schema of silence. Having done this, the gaps in the schema have been identified and the missing types of silence have been sought and found. Ultimately, the aim of this research is to help to clear a path for the improvement of the effectiveness of Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Effectiveness may be improved by removing organisational silence which causes loss of opportunities and can undermine the motivation of staff. Based on this research, it is possible to make recommendations for action that can be taken.

8.6 Application of the findings in the business context

It should be noted that it is not possible to make blanket recommendations for whole organisations because members' thinking, and their silences, will be far from uniform. However, there are means of lifting each silence that recognises the specific reasoning behind each silence type and recognises also the possibility that persons may shift their reasoning from one thought style to another dynamically. One change in thought will lead to another.

8.6.1 *Support Greater Interaction and Open Work Environments*

The supposition that fear (Pinder and Harlos, 2001) and severe inequalities in authority can induce silences suggests obvious solutions: anxiety reduction and downwards redistribution of authority. There is literature on the containment of anxiety while redistribution of authority is familiar in the form of equal status or open management systems. What these apparent solutions do not suggest is the means of introducing them. Recently Verweij and Thompson (2006) have reviewed the means whereby all four voices can be brought into contact with each other. They have assessed several techniques and all of them are commended. In recommending them, the assumption is made that voices, once heard, elicit different voices in dynamic response. That carries the implication that just a few voices may precipitate many. It falls to trainers to begin such a process.

There is a broad agreement in the existing literature that silence denies an organisation the benefit of information that could be acted upon. It is however, based on the assumption that silence is never good. However, it has been found that silence can be beneficial in some circumstances and that some silences in some contexts should be accepted and even respected. The findings of this study suggest that managers should try to be in a position to understand thought styles and how each thought style influences silence. By understanding the existence of various thought styles and associated reasonable silence styles, managers can support subordinates in the exercise of desirable silence.

It is recognised that the egalitarian hiding of mistakes is unlikely to be good for the organisation. It is suggested that managers should encourage subordinates to report issues without being embarrassed and treat mistakes as learning opportunities. Fatalistic thought comes with fear and despair. By understanding this, managers may be able to remove fearful contexts or provide assurance that if there is an issue raised, no one will be intimidated and that their concerns will be acted upon. As was indicated, subordinates were not being given specific instructions and as such, tended to make mistakes which they would then attempt to conceal. The hierarchically and fatalistically minded employee

yearns for clarity whereas individualistic and egalitarian thinking is more risk tolerant. Clear policies that can be understood and acted upon will satisfy hierarchical thinkers and fatalistic ones especially.

8.6.2   Programs for Staff Training

The research suggests presenting the GGCT typology directly to organisational members, inviting them to identify their thinking on the typology. Note that members need not be asked to disclose their thoughts but rather their way of arriving at them. It may help also if trainers make clear that each thought style is reasonable, though limited to solving problems of four specific types: Hierarchy, problems of deviance; Egalitarianism, systemic failures; Individualistic, lack of innovation and Fatalist, risky projects. Mutual recognition of conflicting reasoning may elicit mutual respect and responsiveness. It is also suggested that managers be trained to identify thought styles and associative silences and provide support or develop for each individual so identified. When such programs are introduced, silences, and known or unknown may be relieved by voice and action. It should be noted that the four types of silence known in the organisational silence literature and others identified are practiced at different times and in different degrees because culture is dynamic, and context is relevant.

It follows that there will be moments when interventions are more, and less, likely to succeed. By understanding the thinking behind what is being voiced, trainers have a good chance of inferring what is not being said, and the alternative reasoning as to why it is not being said. If within a meeting an Individualist opinion is expressed it is not difficult for a GGCT equipped trainer to infer Fatalistic, Hierarchical and Egalitarian responses, and to voice these silent arguments herself. In this way, others may feel more secure in making their private thoughts, feelings and practical recommendations known to all present. GGCT equipped trainers are well-placed to act in a way that is sympathetic to silent members. Developing training programs, however, is a time-consuming activity, which

requires materials and time. The researcher's intuition is that once silent voices begin to speak the level of energy and animation will be considerable and may be self-sustaining.

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Appendix I

Interview Schedule

[Please note: whilst the interview schedule had a broader emphasis than silence and thought styles - also addressing personality type according to Myer Brigges' Type of Personality, as well as self-esteem and power as effectiveness factors impacting on silence, following supervisory advice from Prof. Ruth Simpson - the results were refined to focus on silence and thought styles only. Therefore, data obtained from several section of questions were not included in the analysis, in particular, from question 17-23]

Silence and Different Thought Styles

1. 'Talking is silver, silence is gold?' Do you agree? And could you tell me why?

2. Could you please tell me about any recurring conversation you have with yourself?

3. Do you tend to voice your thoughts? How much of what you are thinking do you express to other people in your workplace?

4. Can you describe a thought which you have expressed freely with others?

5. Could you tell me a little about recent two-way conversations you have had with colleagues… conversations they have opened with you within the last week or month, perhaps?

6. Could you tell me a little about recent conversations between you and your manager

7. Nobody can express every thought they have! Can you describe any recent thoughts which you felt it was best to keep to keep private?

   a. You do not have to, but if you can, would you explain this thought to me in confidence?

   b. What made you feel that you could not communicate it?

c. What positive or negative results do you think might have happened if you had expressed your thoughts?

8. In what setting are you talkative and in what settings are you quiet? Could you tell me about any experiences of
   - comfortable silence
   - uncomfortable silence
   - comfortable conversation
   - uncomfortable conversation

9. Do you have a subject which you have a lot to say about? And do you say it?

10. When you receive feedback from your manager how open are you in your reply?

11. When you travel home do the conversations you have had that day at work continue in your own head? Do you re-live those conversations? Could you tell me some of your home-based thoughts about workplace conversations?

12. Have you ever been warned to keep quiet about something? Did you follow this advice?

13. What kind of concerns are especially important to you at work? For example, concerns about:

   a) Preserving your Position
   b) Promotion
   c) Your Relationships with your Managers
   d) Your Relationships with Colleagues
   e) The people who report to you
   f) Your Reputation
   g) Work Loads
   h) Coercion, including inappropriate, indirect coercion by men
   i) Injustices etc.

14. Are you 'the same person' at home and at work?

15. How many opportunities and how much 'talking space' does your manager enable you to have?

16. How many colleagues do you feel very comfortable in talking to?

Different Ways of Thinking

17. When a rule is disobeyed in your organization, should Managers

  a) Make extensive inquiries about what happened and then discipline the rule-breaker?
  b) Use a mix of incentives and sanctions in order to prevent it happening again in future?
  c) Explore whether there were any good reasons why employee did what she did?
  d) Treat rule-breaking as typical of human behaviour and if possible ignore what has happened?

Can you explain your reasons?

18. Which works best:

  a) Respect for clear and authoritative Rules?
  b) Rewarding Individual Performance
  c) Organisations that promote the Wellbeing of all Members
  d) Managers deal pragmatically with each new problem as and when it occurs

Can you explain why do you think that?

19. What's the best way to treat clients

  a) clients should be progressed through the official processes and procedures?
  b) clients should be treated equally?
  c) each client should be treated as a special individual?
  d) clients should accept whatever it is that we can do for them, because we cannot do everything?

20. What is the best way of avoiding complaints from clients

  a) By making sure they understand the rules we work to?
  b) By making sure that everybody benefits from our services?
  c) By conduct Client Surveys and Rewarding the best staff?
  d) By treating Client Complaints as inevitable and expected, without devoting too much scarce resource to them that are already needed elsewhere?

21. What is the best 'glue' for holding Organisations together

   a) A sense of duty and respect for rules at every level?
   b) Shared values and a strong commitment to meeting the needs of every client?
   c) Employees should compete with each other to see which of them is the best at their work and be rewarded according to their individual performance?
   d) Not 'mending' things which are not broken?

22. When the things go wrong I usually think this is because of

   a) Rules-breaking?
   b) The System which needs changing?
   c) Incompetence?
   d) Unfortunate, accidental, unforeseeable coincidences which cannot be avoided?

23. I think of Risk as
   a) That which we can and should prevent using a good rule-book and by identifying non-compliance?
   b) Preventable if our system meets everybody's needs?
   c) Something which can be reduced by workers competing to find the best possible solutions to any challenge?
   d) A threat to myself which I should take action to avoid, knowing that nobody else is likely to protect me from risk?

24. Can you talk a little about any risk(s) you have faced and about how you reduce them?

Personality and Silence

25. Imagine you are in a meeting when your manager asks a question which surprises you. Do you answer immediately or do you need to take time to think before responding?

26. When your manager asks you to find a solution to a problem, describe how you set about finding a solution?

27. How would you react when you find yourself in conflict with colleagues?

28. Do you like to work within a plan or without a plan? Can you give me an example?

Effectiveness factors and Silence

29. How satisfied are you with what you say in the presence of your manager and colleagues?

30. Do you believe in 'making your own luck', or do you believe in accepting whatever good fortune and misfortune comes your way? Please give examples.

31. How do you feel and how do you react when you criticised by your manager?

32. How do you feel and how do you react when you criticised by colleagues?

33. *This is a thought-experiment only*. Let's *imagine* that your manager was demoted and came to work with you as an equal colleague how would your previous way of working with her now change?

34. Can you describe occasions when you attempted to change your manager's mind, successfully or unsuccessfully?

Appendix II

Approval letter from Brunel University

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

Kingston Lane United Kingdom

25 April 2017

Applicant: MRS Fadiah Alraies

Project Title: Culture, Personality and Silence Reference: 6406-LR-Apr/2017- 7097-4

Dear MRS Fadiah Alraies

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.
- On the Participant Information Sheet, for question **"Who is organising and funding the research?" You should also add your name in conjunction with Brunel University.**

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study.
- You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

Professor James Knowles

Chair

College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences

Research Ethics Committee

Brunel University London

Appendix III

Letter from Ministry of Education

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia   Ministry of Education
Ministry of Education   Riyadh (Girls)
General Directorate of Education at Region Department of planning &
of Riyadh   Development
        No.: 28355113
        Date: 29/11/2016

"Certification"

Subject: Approval to apply the study tools in affiliated schools to the Directorate of Education at Region of Riyadh

Name of Researcher	FIDIYA THANI AL RAYES
College/ University	Brunel University- London
Purpose of Study	A thesis of academic research to award Ph. D Degree
Field of Study & Study Sample	Offices of education affiliated to Directorate of Education at Region of Riyadh- study sample contains directors, and staff at offices

His Highness / Saudi Cultural Attaché in Britain

Dear Sir,

According to the generalization of His Excellency Minister of Education No. 610/55 date 17/9/1416Hm regard the authorization of the general directorates of education to issue permission letters for the researchers to do the researches and studies, and according to the authorization of the general director of department of planning and development in letter No. 33674823/11 date 14/4/1433H with regard to facilitate the duties of the male/ female researchers, and whereas the above mentioned researcher submitted an application to study since 15/3/1438H, accordingly, we certify that we have no objection of application study during a limited period of (90) days within the academic year on scope of the schools of region of Riyadh, while the researcher is in full responsibility related with variable sides of the research, and the permission of the general directorate of education doesn't mean its approval to the problem of research or the methods and used means at her study and treatment, this certificate was issued upon her request.
Thanks for cooperation

Director of department of planning and development
Signed
Seal

Appendix IV

Research Participants' Sheet

A Doctoral Study:

Culture, Personality and Silence

Dear Madam

I am Fadiah Al-Raies, a PhD student at Brunel Business School, Brunel University London. I am researching the connection between:
- culture and silence
- personality and silence

… in Saudi educational institutions in Riyadh.

It is said that there are 'Two Sides to Silence' that is, silence between Leaders and Followers and I am fascinated to discover the reasons which Leaders and Followers may have for either communicating or remaining silent.

I invite to an interview to take place only at a time and place convenient to you. Our interview will be in Arabic and will be treated as *Highly Confidential*. The identity of each Participant will never be disclosed to anybody else, not even to my Supervisor at Brunel University.

(i)   My interview questions have been approved by my Supervisor
(ii)   My research has been approved by Brunel Business School Ethics Committee
(iii)   Access to organisations has been approved by the *Educational Institute* and by the *Culture Bureau of Saudi Arabia* in London, UK

These interviews are Voluntary and carried out only with the signed Consent of each interviewee.

For this purpose, a Consent Form is attached. Please choose two dates which would suit you. You can choose to have your interview spread over two meetings if this would suit you.

Yours sincerely

Fadiah Al-Raies - PhD Candidate in HRM, Brunel Business School, Brunel University, Uxbridge, London – UB8 3PH, UK Email: Fadiah.Alraies@brunel.ac.uk Mob. +44 – 7713754402 (What's app.)

Appendix V

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I voluntarily agree to being interviewed about my experience of Communication and Silence by Ms. Fadiah Al-Raies

I understand that the interview is only for academic purposes and will remain STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. My agreement is on the Condition that it will NOT affect my own employment, nor that of my colleagues, nor bring any harm to my leaders.

I can end the interview at any time.

I can refuse to answer questions which I do not wish to answer.

The views expressed in this interview are of my own and will not be treated as if they are the official views of my organisation.

I have the choice whether my interview will be recorded through Note-Taking or by use of a digital recorder.

I would like to be interviewed at the following time(s) and place(s).

Interviewer: Ms. Fadiah Al-Raies

My Name:

Date(s):

Times(s):

Please choose Digital recording **YES/ NO**

Appendix VI

Transcript Example One: Employee A1

[Please note: Whilst audi recordings were in Arabic, the transcripts were translated to English by the researcher. Whilst this proved difficult in terms of precise translation of some words and phrases, and was considerably time-consuming, it was considered by the researcher to be the most accurate way to effectively translate the meaning and sense communicated to the researcher during the interviews].

- **She has bachelor degree**
- **Worked in education for 13 years**
- **Worked in this office since five years ago**
- **Working in the Computer department in this office**

1. I totally agree with this because I think that everyone will regret talking but will never regret being silent. In real life situations for example at work I would rather to be silent than be talkative. actually, when you express your ideas openly one will find some who will judge what you are saying. sometimes you talk about something where you don't have the whole picture, that will lead to harmful consequences. Actually, I prefer the silence as the primary reaction to any problem you face. I will talk later when I have the precise information about the matter.

2. Usually I have an inner recurring conversation with myself about why do people tend to exaggerate the problems?

   Why would one turn a simple conflict into a major issue. What would be worth losing a relationship? Sometimes I ask myself this question: Am I right or wrong because most people around me tell me that: Your positivity is extreme?

3. Usually I express my ideas clearly in front of others (I feel that this answer contradicts her answer in question number 1) nothing is worth making any situation harder. Wasting a lot of time thinking about incidents wouldn't be useful. In fact I would only express my opinions to people whom I trust and who would care and listen.

4. I never express my ideas in front of everyone around me. Sometimes I find my colleagues arguing just because they had different opinions. Actually, I advise people around me to avoid making an immediate reaction about certain issues or problems which has been emerged, because sometimes that makes things worse, it might lead into losing some important relationships. I also advise friends to avoid judging others so, they should have empathy towards one another. For example, some colleagues assume men are not responsible when it comes to their families, I am trying to let them change their minds about that. everyone should understand others, don't expect perfection, because everyone has some lacks in his/her life as a result you are not perfect don't expect other to be perfect.

5. As I belong to (west of Saudi Culture, Hejaz culture) and I am working in (middle of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, Najd Culture) I have difficulty to deal with them openly as they are conservative and judgmental … in my original area Jeddah , I am open minded and I could talk about anything freely. I left my era 13 years ago. in Riyadh, I learnt to be more conservative to avoid misunderstanding from others…really, it's not easy for me.

6. My conversations with my manger is so limited. personally, don't like to deal with people who have authority. I prefer to be far from them. with colleagues we are 13 employees working together in the same office, we have official conversations, so our conversations are about our work even in the break periods. yesterday in our break we talked about the teachers who are working in hurry at their classes ... we talked about who this negative character impact their abilities of manging their classes. we got the conclusion that the teacher who is working not in hurry will have good quality in the teaching compare to who is working in hurry.

7. The conversation about how women should cover their faces as its forbidden revealing the faces. actually I am trying to avid express my opinion about these issues because I know that they are extreme in both sides who are with covering faces or against it ... people in Najd culture look at me as liberated in the other hand people in Hejaz look at me as conservative woman ... at work actually I am trying to avoid expressing my opinions about the polices for example there are 6 managers you should pass them to talk to the minster !! in my opinion there is no need for all that administrations! if they remove some of them it will be better . and I avoid expressing my opinion about the announcements because they pass so much of them, sometimes they are conflict which impact negatively on the operation of the administration. I never express my opinion about it because I know that my voice wouldn't reach and nobody will take my

opinion seriously, so whatever I say ... nothing will change.in addition, if I just say something to support the administration I know how people will judge me and look at me, they will think that I am just follower. If I disagree with the announcements clearly, I will regret because they might exclude me from thing which is important to me.

8. When I feel that people are just fighting I remain silent because think that if I talk I will make the situation be worse. if I feel that the circumstance is suitable and people will listen to me I express my opinion freely. Actually, I practice the comfortable silence, because I never be regretted about my silence. for example, when we know that the government took decision to make the exams earlier, I remain silent and never say anything about what the school should do about the curriculums however my colleagues were discussed this issue loudly and some of them say something was really wrong. I never feel that I am not comfortable with silence, silence makes me comfortable. Sometimes I practiced the uncomfortable talk and I regret later in whole my life I have this attitude about myself, when I talk I will regret later ... for example, I talked about the standards of active leaning then I felt that I said more than which I should do even I was philosopher which I think people look at it as bad behaviour. because I felt that, they think I was trying to transfer message that I am better than them, when I come back home I thought much about that and I felt I shouldn't do that.

9. From my experience in the education, I think I have lots about enjoyable learning and I have specific notion about that, I think the teacher is accuse about the board learning…because I think the teacher who is the responsible to create a good environment for education and inside the class , sometimes when I talk about this idea loudly I found that teachers look at as an arrogant, that disappoint me , I don't like have this feeling I hurt others or let them feel that I am trying to give impression I am better than them . in addition, I think that if they have this feeling about me this will destroy our relationship.

10. Recently, for 5 years ago there is no opened conversations between me and my leader, I cannot discuss any subject with her, because she is not a good listener and she doesn't like anyone who has different opinion with her, she is not that person who do care about the quality of work or about the details which   improve the   quality   of work. she   doesn't give me positive feeling about her, she has different perspective about the work. about me I think the leader should consider the performance of her employees as the major factor to evaluate them so, she shouldn't treat equally with all the employees who are doing well and who are carless. if she deals with equally regardless of their level of performance that will

disappoint the employees who needs motivations, noon will work hard in her organization just who are fascinated with their work. I think if leader just look at employees who make show off of their achievement that will lead employees who are working on behind to stop.

11. Yes, when I practice my role as trainer, sometimes I talk outside the topic of training as I advise the teacher to not think about finishing the curriculum versos the influencing of the values of students , by that time I felt teacher look at me as a person who is not realistic , I felt that I has been hurt by them . comeback home I was thinking about situation has bad feeling about myself.

12. Yes, it happens, 5 years ago I have been advised from my manger to be careful about revealing something belong to my family. and ma colleagues were warning me as well that revealing something about my family is not accepted at workplace. I was trying to practice that advise, after time I was successes to get that point, but as I belong to Hejaz culture, actually I have that feeling I am stressed according to adopt some thing is different from my nature as open minded person … at my work I spend my time as I am suppressed waiting to have the vacation and comeback to my original era to be relieved.

13. The most important thing I am concerned about it: the relationships with my colleagues, justice and my position. really, I do carful about my relationships with my colleagues because if I have any problem with that impact me on my work, impact my comfortable at work.

14. Yes, I have the same problem at work and at home because I get married with NAJEAN man so, I used to be conservative with him and with his family as they are judgmental and explain your pinion in the way which may harm you. I have not find myself either at work or at home, I find myself at my original area as I surround there with people who are understandable and never judge me.

15. My manger gives opportunity of conversation for anyone who compliant to her orders and for anyone she knows she will agree with her, if you start conversation with her and she realised that you disagree with her opinion she might quit the relation with you…I know that three years ago she was the vice manager and she has conflict with the manager, recent manager exaggerate the problem and complain against the previous manger many times until lead her to ask for change the place of her work...since that time nobody here has the encourage or…to fight with her because all of us know that anyone

confront her will be loser, so all of us are trying to be saved not appear as….

16. I feel comfortable to express my opinions in front of just one of my colleagues because she is understandable and not judgmental, however she is from Riyadh but really she has different culture, I knew her 7 years ago .. however, I am not close for my colleagues but I seek to keep good relationship with all of them and not lose anyone.

17. D is the perfect answer for me because I do believe that, the rules are generated by human, so it would not be convinced by all, and I think we could break some unnecessary rules.

18. D. is the perfect answer for me because, its necessary to deal with every problem when it happens that will make the work better, if you make plan it wouldn't fit with all the problems, every problem has it owns details.

19. C is the perfect answer, because when you deal with every client as a special case that will help to raise their satisfaction about the service, everyone in this life like to be treated as special and that makes him be happier...individuals are different in their needs and their expectations.

20. B is the perfect answer, I think if you assure that everyone has benefit from the service, that will reduce their dissatisfaction about the service. And do the best to make the satisfied.

21. B is the perfect answer because the common values and the commitment of employees about these values that will help to upheld the whole organization. common values will increase the loyalty for the organizations and increase the empathy between the employees.

22. B is the perfect answer because if employees found that the administration do care about his/ her needs and it is trying to meet their needs that give him/ her impression that he or she is valuable so, all that let him/her feel they are secured at the organization.

23. I think my work has some of risk, some time when you monitor the teachers as one of the duty of my work, that the teachers could exploit some of your written comments or some of the conversations on WHATSAPP, so I am so careful when I write any comment for the teacher, and when I answer any questions poste by then on WHATSAPP. Actually, I am trying to avoid provoking the teachers, however I found many mistakes which supposed to report them, I have not done that for many reasons, one of them I don't

want to disappoint them and another thing I am that person who doesn't like to have any complain against her. As a result of my carful I don't have that much of risk because I avoid it...for example, I was the supervisor of teacher who has difficulty of communication, she is an ambiguous person, which impact you when you communicate with her, I felt that she will misunderstand and exaggerate any point, her performance was very low, she doesn't prepare for her classes. after observing her performance I was trying to help her to improve her performance instead of writing report might destroy her...I talked to her, explain the importance of preparation of classes, help her to find specialized websites…then I told her I wouldn't report her weakness but she should work seriously to improve all that. and I told her that I will comeback for her to look how much she is improving. I gave her chance to improve herself, and instead of motivating her to take the matter personal...

24. Actually, if I have unexpected question, I never answer immediacy, but I could answer immediately if I have enough information about the matter.

25. If I have conflict is not complain with my values that let me feel that I have conflict, otherwise I take everything simple, other thing I don't let anyone to drag me down ... and I have this strategy to deal with conflict, I am not that person who likes to confront the conflict, as I has order conflict with my values I ignore it without discuss that with the head of department or with the manger. I am trying to not reveal my opinion loudly in front of others if I know that they wouldn't agree with me. I don't like to fight with others under any circumstances.

26. Actually, I prefer to be silent, I never disagree loudly with anyone, either my manger or my colleagues, like to use different ways which let them don't have that feeling I disagree with them, that help me to save my relationships and not lose any one in my life.

27. I feel more comfortable if I have plan to work, I feel that everything is clear which help me to finish my work. If I have plan I wouldn't be worried about my work.

28. I have moderate satisfaction about my conversations, because sometimes I feel regret about what I said...I have pattern in my conversations, usually I give more details, or I appear as someone who make show off of her information.

29. I can do my opportunity but not always for example, I have a dream to be an active member in the curriculum committee, I got it because I focused on my conversations on many conferences of curriculums, then I proved how much I knowledgeable about that then they hired me on the committee as I want.

30. One day I was in the office of manager, she was fighting with other employees, I was trying to play positive role, so I advised the manger to be more tolerated with the employees. I think that conversation was one of the rare conversations I didn't regret about them.

31. My reaction to be criticised is the same either from my manger or from my colleagues, I wouldn't be upset if I face the criticism, I am trying to think carefully about the point and change it if I could do that, otherwise I would try to forget it.

32. In this case, I will deal with her generously, also, if I feel that she is sad according to this situation losing her positon I will do my best to support her regardless of her image which I already have.

Transcript Example Two: Employee C1

- **The interviewee is an educational supervisor.**
- **She has a 16 years' experience is this office.**
- **She is the Arabic language supervisor.**
- **She is forty years old.**
- **Her highest degree is Bachelors of Arabic from Princess Noura College.**
- **She is also married.**

(Transcript with initial coding notes).

1. I agree to a high extent, because I believe this proverb is used in the context of conflict, rather than the context is related to rights. If the struggle was about to lead to a pointless argument, then it is better to stay silent **F/AQ NOTHING WILL CHANGE**. If the speech may lead to any harm to the speaker or the addressees then it is better to stop it **E/ PROSOCIAL NOT HARMING OTHERS** . And if what I'm going to say will not lead to a fair conclusion E/PROSOCIAL TO ASS , then it is better not to talk so that no one considers it evidence against me.

2. I have reoccurring internal conversations especially those based on past experiences that tend to be painful IN AND F / . Now I am 40 years old see myself as a judge to those past experiences who is wiser. IN **AND H** The example I see relevant is the way i was dealt with by my relatives IN/, I always ask myself why that has happened ?? F **IN RESPON TO H** despite the fact that it is a religiously emphasised concept that relatives in Islam should keep good relationships among each other E/PROSOCIAL HERE THE ROLE OF RELIGIN TO PUSH THE CULTURE OF EAGLITERIANISM . I faced injustice by most direct and closest relatives, and so I think I would not blame those who are not as close to behave in the same way F **IN RESPONS TO H** . Those reoccurring internal conversations take place the most when i am provoked by specific situations, not on a daily basis, nor in the context of work IN / because usually at work people are busy with the pressure as well as the daily planning and there is usually no time to think about such

issues. IT SEEMS SHE HAS INDIVDUALISTIC THOUGHT BECAUSE THE PERSONAL LIFE IS THE DOMINANT IN HER THOUGH

3. I am an expressive person, I say what I feel and think about. IN/ The extent to which I able to express myself is based on the nature of people I am dealing with on one hand, and the type of ideas I have in mind on the other hand. If I suspect that I would be misunderstood or that my ideas may not be acceptable, then I prefer not to express them F/Q FEAR OF MISUNDERSATNDING AND ACCEPTANCE . The ideas I don't not mind expressing simply are related to work, planning, suggestions. **IN AND H**

4. The ideas that I am conservative with expressing them are related to social relationships, E/AND F /**Q** ~~PROSCOIAL~~ / HER SHE IS TALKING ABOUT THE IMPACTING OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS ON HER SILENCE for example my in -laws and cousins. When I find cultural and intellectual differences between me and them prefer not to talk/Q FERA OF SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS specifically differences in openness is costumes and ways of dressing such as Hijab **F/Q FEAR OF CQUENSECUESES** IT SEEMS SHE AVOIDS THE REJECTION FROM OTHERS and more personal opinions that you know may not be accepted, whereas in the work environment most of the ideas are expressed.

5. Most conversations at work are merely related to work, by a percentage of almost 98% for IN/example in the current period most of the conversations are related to 'performance evaluation of teachers' and its criteria and how it is applied on teachers. Another main topic of conversations is rescheduling the dates of exams to become two weeks earlier than they were supposed to. i could evaluate the degree of openness in conversations at work between me and my colleagues and manager to lie in the middle between openness and conservativeness. I could emphasised that I can't express my opinion in certain issues such as specific plans when most of the other members agree on a point, **F/ Q ' EXPRESSING THE OPINION IF SHE ASSURE THAT THE MAJORITY WILL AGREE** AGINE SHE IS CONCERND ABOUT REJECTION FROM OTHERS ! I prefer not to express my opinion so that I wouldn't appear odd AGAIN SHE NEEDS THE CERTINITY OF AGREEMENT FROM OTHER TO EXPRESS HER OPINIONS SO HER SILENCE BASD ON FEAR OF REJECTION . Another example some problems that take place at schools which include complaints by employees.

6. The example for a situation where I was the most conservative was when a group of teachers at a school requested a substitute teacher to lessen the load on them, the I was unable to provide this substitute as I do not have the authority to do so, hence I was accused by the teachers because I didn't solve the problem, so my office manager was angry with my direct manager as she held her responsible for the mistake, yet I preferred to be silent so as not to complicate the situation more. **F/ Q SILENCE BASED ON FEAR OF QUENSQUENSES**

7. If we assumed that I decided not to be silent, I expected that all the results will be negative and all the conversations will be sharp rather than quiet, my office manager is a firm person and she would have found a pint against me to put me r under blame **F/FEAR OF CQUENSECUENSES ,** so I preferred not to speak. I know that if I was proved wrong, the manager would have sent me an official warning, and this would have affected my career. **F/Q BASED ON FEAR OF CQUENCUENSES** Also, this is applicable to social relationships, I prefer silence over speaking whenever I expects that speaking will lead to worse situations **F/ Q BASED ON FEAR OF CQUENCUENSES** . I think I can only be very open and talkative with those close to me , with which I feel safe and comfortable both at work or in social contexts. On the other hand, I prefer to be silent with those who tend to criticise others bitterly or misunderstand them, because they may convey the speech to others in a wrong way. However, I don't not think that most people are like that, also, I believes that people sometimes do not convey wrong messages on purpose, they only do it out of chatting and daily conversations. **F/Q BASED ON FEAR DISADVANTEGES OF SPEAKING UP** For example, my performance evaluation level was much higher than last year, yet I told absolutely no one about it, not even the closest people to me because I was afraid that when the news is told, some may not be happy with them and may start comparing my results to theirs.

8. i have experienced comfortable silence, although it is a hard mission to force oneself to be silent sometimes, but after some time I feel happy that I did not give others the chance to prove anything against me **F/Q BASED ON FEAR OF CQUENCUENSES** .I experienced uncomfortable silence less than comfortable one. I have experienced comfortable talking only with those who are close to me with whom I feel safe. Finally, i have experienced uncomfortable talking. IN THE PAST I PRACTICED THE TALK MORE but I really regretted...**F/Q control for prior experiences** In the past I express my ideas and opinions lots which really so insulted to me the past I used to criticised everything, say very

thing easily.. but I changed even most of people around me at work have noticed that , and told me you changed , I think I took lesson from my experience to be more silent to avoid problem or being insulted…F/Q **control for prior experiences** Once I heard that from my colleagues she said something really I love it.. she said its better regretting for silence than regretting for talk F/Q **control for prior experiences**

Of all the four types of silence, the comfortable talking was the least I have experienced throughout the 16 years of experience, I practised it only with close ones. As for uncomfortable talking I used to apply it but I mostly regretted doing so. Since seven years I tended to use more comfortable silence than before, in comparison to the other types. now I prefer not to express my opinions loudly as I am afraid to cause harm in others. I am doing this by my r own decision, it has become my lifestyle and that I prefer regretting silence than regretting talking. I have fears that others will hold evidence against me when I speak F AND E / Q AND PROSCOIAL

9. The topics I feel comfortable and confident talking about are related to: 1. my specialization 2. The General skills Test for Saudi High school students because she is a member of the committee that sets the test. She believes she can talk about these two topics openly because they are very general and not sensitive. **IN AND F / LOOKING AT TOPIC NOT SENSTIVE FEAR**

10. In terms of feedback, I barely ever receive feedback from the office manager, this job was delegated to the direct manager, yet I also receive feedback rarely. A year may pass without he receiving any sort of feedback, but if that take place, I receive it with an open heart and accept my direct manager's opinions. **H IN RESPONS TO H** Most of the feedback I get is from my Arabic Language supervisor colleagues at meetings covering the whole area of Riyadh.

11. Actually I have some problems at work.. what I am concerned about it I don't hurt or insult anyone even though they did that but I don't like to do that with others **E/PROSOCIAL NOT HARMING OTHERS**

12. I always take my work conversations back to my home. I actually relive them. For example, one of the teachers was unsatisfied with her work performance. That conversation made her sad. The conversation bothered me to an extent where I was dreaming about it in my sleep. so, after any conversation that bothers me, I would take an immediate action to make sure no one is being treated with unfairness IT SEEMS

SHE IS VERY SENSTIVE SHE IS CONCERND TO BE INSULTED OR INSULT OTHERS SHE REGREES OF TALKING AND FEEL GUILTY OF OTHERS   FAND E/ Q AND PROSOCIAL . sometimes even after the action was taken my employees would still feel unsatisfied. I don't like this and I don't want to relive work situations at home, yet I can't change it.

13. I have been advised to stop talking about my personal life in front of others **F IN RESPONS TO H** . Also, I was told to stop giving my opinions publicly to my colleagues because it might be told to the people I talked about which will lead to severe conflicts.

14. the most important factors are reputation and relationships COULD WE LOOK AT HER CONCERN OF REPUTAION AS IN and E THOUGHT STYLE ? . As for relationships, I can't work in an environment where I am being disliked or have conflicts. While reputation because I doesn't want people to have a certain negative image about me.

15. She said she is the same person outside the workplace. Her freedom in expressing her ideas depends on how strong her relationship is with the person she is talking to.

16. As for the amount of freedom given to me by my manager to express my feelings. My relationship is mainly with my direct manager who is kind and very accepting to opinions but because of the nature of their work which is a   field   work,   there   aren't   much   chances   to   express what they want directly. The direct manager's communication is limited to following up with main tasks. **F IN RESPONSE TO H**

17. i feel total comfort with talking with three of my colleagues IT SEEMS SHE IS CONSEVATIVE IN HER TALKING AS SHE DOSNT TRUST OTHERS EASILY . As for out OF WORK talks, I can talk freely with my sisters and three of my friends.

18. A. H because in leadership, one must be strict and firm, a leader must tries to reduce the amount of mistakes to an extent where they rarely accrue.

19. A and D. H AND F

20. B. E Because if clients were treated equally it will prevent complaints.

21. A. H because she thinks if there was a mistake the blame would be on them not the institute.

22. B. E because common values are important to keep the organization held together. For example, feeling responsibility.

23. A. H because she believes breaking rules is the main cause leading to major issues.

24. A. H   Because she thinks risks come from breaking rules.

25. According to risk and threat come from leaders if they weren't qualified or they would be easily influenced by others IN AND H . Also, if they were prejudice towards some of their employees IN IN RESPONS TO IN . I had an experience where the management made me move my office because I was bothered by them IN/ . The management used to reject any idea or project made by me because they would listen to what other people say about me IN IN RESPONS TO IN . I prefer to move to other place instead of fighting with them **IN AND F /Q FEAR OF CQUENCUNSES**. In the past really I had faced threatened from the manager and it was the reason to transfer to other office IN IN RESPONS TO IN AND H / IT COMES F ... because of the lack of authority and the prejudice toward some of the employees they reject any suggestion from you deliberately IN IN RESPONS TO IN AND H   ... Even they do their best to find any mistake to take it as reason to reject your HER MANAGER STYLE IS IN AND H project.. When the authority discriminates with some certain people... And give them everything and ignore the others STILL; SHE DESCRIBED HOW THE THOUGH STYLE OF HER MANAGER IN AND H IMPACING NEGATIVELY ON THE EMPLWYEES ... When I have faced these problems I don't like to compline. IN AND F . I look at the mentality of the person who I talk with if I found the mentality of prejudice I wouldn't discuss with her IN AND F / Q AND AQ 1 IN AND F / Q AND AQ
WE WILL STOPE HERE

26. She said she will be silent for little bite, then she will respond to her .as she said she needs a short time for thinking then she will be ready for answer. to be honest

27. ……..

28. If I face challenge I am trying to support myself... improve myself... For example I have been chosen to be the coordinator of the abilities

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committee... this committee has people who are really experts …… and the coordinator should be specialized in mathematics and I am not .. the head of department trusted me that I will produce good work ..I was keen to raise my confidence and give good impression and practice the role of leadership to conduct the meeting and writ the letters and so on ... I was trying to raise my confidence.. And do everything properly... I was successful

29. IN AND F /... I am trying to count my words and avoid the person who I have conflict within AND F ... I wouldn't be comfortable in dealing with people who I conflict with ,, but avoiding have any clash with them **IN AND F /FEAR OF CQUENSCUENSES**

30. …...

31. …….

32. ... I have not been criticised from my manager but If I face criticism from my manager if its objective I will accept it and I will feel ashamed to have this lack... so in reality I don't have this kind of criticism from my manager but sometimes she monitored me regards the writhing of letters and she corrected me,, in the past on of the manager criticised me in bad way really it was subjective so, she told me what is this , see the work which has been produce by certain colleague I avoided her and never discuss that with her .. because I believe that if the person accept me and accept my point of view I will do that if not I wouldn't give my opinion .. Especially when I know that she doesn't like any work I do it... I had experience... once I produced work to the committee and I wrote book and received bad criticism , I was so sad but I didn't discuss and I have been told that its personal criticism .. I stop talking about the point and I believe that life has variety so why I keep thinking about this point.

33. If I face criticism from my colleagues... if what they told me is right will accept it if it's objective and tell myself yes I should do that. but if not I will discuss and justify that bout normally I wouldn't be aggressive or using anger sound when I discuss that

34. Before moved to... in our previous office I and my manager should raise the issues to the vice of educational affairs who was so tough... I was trying to help my manager to deal with her so I monitor her... Writ that. Raise the issue to the higher manager and so on.. sometimes I was successful of doing that

Appendix VIII

Transcript Example Three: Leader D

- **She has been working in education for 22 years, 9 of them as a leader.**
- **She supervises 203 schools.**
- **She is a direct manager to around 240 employees.**
- **She is 53 years old.**
- **She has a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry.**
- **She is married.**

1. I agree with the proverb when I am not asked for my opinion and if I do not know the consequences of what I will say either in the personal life or at work otherwise I believe that silence is a barrier which imped getting right information or analyse it and taking the decision upon these information or that analyse.

2. The most reoccurring conversation I have with myself is 'what is the print I am leaving behind what is the impression of others about my leadership?' sometimes I ask this question to my employees I try to find an answer to those questions by asking my employees...I do believe in the effecting of survey so actually I create questionnaires and ask my employees to fill it to find what others think of me, especially I am working in this office since I was a supervisor then I promoted from a supervisor to a leader. Part of this questionnaire shows the importance of human relations, when I saw the results I found that I deserve this position...After I became a manager I also made a questionnaire and I directed to the supervisors, principles of schools and administration staff because I need to know how the people I serve them evaluate my service, and I planned my remedial plan at the office based on those results, in general I tend to follow a scientific way in getting precis results. This year I chose two groups one is perfect and one has some problems in the performance I worked to remedy the problems in the group who is not perfect... then I distributed survey to see how they evaluate me!

3. I am either in meetings or in the institution and the higher management try to express my thoughts and my perspective as much as I can and adopts a scientific way in doing so my opinion actually rely on

specific information, I collects data and provide statistics as evidence, I use these when I express my opinions and with discussion with others, and I have annual meeting with leaders I express my opinions and my observations   at the same time I listen to them
when I observed certain problem as part of the accountability I send inquiry letter asking for explaining why this happened? when I look at the hand writing will give me idea how I could deal with her? Should I talk her only? Or make investigation or conducting formal meeting to know what happened? So actually I need to know if she reads the Memo about certain regulation. Does she understand it And so on …. I do that because I do believe that you should listen to this person before taking the step of accountability, there are many leaders tend to use the accountability immediately which I think is a wrong strategy. For me first I ask her why you did that, for example when principle of school change the date of exams which was determined by the ministry so I ask her why you did that ? I should do all these procedures to give her chance to justify the mistake and I listen to her even though I see that her justifiable is not reasonable. And when I do that I prefer to do it through formal committee to document everything I try to document everything and get written responses. Because some people if they think that the will be in trouble and the say something showing that they are mistaken they change their mind so to prevent that it's better to document everything in front of committee. And after the investigation I ask the committee to tell me what they do think about the case?

4. In The ideas I can talk about openly about the development, I have consultation team I ask them to give me their view points about any idea we tend to implement it because in my opinion ' I see by tow eyes , but when I have ten people around me there are 20 eyes extra will help me to see better 'so I should look at their opinions and make integration between my opinion and their opinions, when I meet the administration I provide suggestions. Most people around me know that I provide suggestions and I convince them about it, I am transparent actually , I am 'talented in documentation'. Everyone knows that I am capable of presenting my ideas and convincing others with them', even if they did not agree with it. Everyone knows that I am a transparent leader who believes there are no differences between leaders and followers. I always suggest ideas and discuss them with others, except that there are always 'rebels who object to things all the time... Here, I use my authority and make a vote and take the majority opinion'.

5. The recent open conversations some questions I ask them... Where are we? And where should we be? Actually I am asking myself what I have

now. What I could do as contribution tomorrow? Or should I leave this point and move to other one which will support the main point? About an evaluation of the current situation, I ask my employees all the time 'where are we, what do we want'. For example now we are working through vision 2030 so I wrote my perspective but I asked the consultation team to let each department in this office to write their perspective to how we could develop this vision according to the general policies of Saudi Arabia and according to new version of vision 2030 There is much openness with my team at the office as well as with another team of 21 distinguished principals I work with titled 'quality team'. And other team 'quality is the responsibility of every one' in all these we will have evaluation from these teams about the work of the institution so, I am keen to know if this principle has good thinking about development? Is this thinking realistic or not... I need to know that because I need their participation because I know that they will implement the plans, so they should participate in any idea we will implement it, so they will help me to implement it so all people who work with me say that ' as much as she implements the accountability she believes in freedom of voice the opinion '...I adopt the 'open door policy' on the condition that the person who will give me any idea I demanding that she should documents whatever it is. Because I need to review it carefully I can't rely on just talking ... I refuses any discussions that include 'I feel that… or I sense that…' this is work it shouldn't rely on merely feelings

6. We are talking about closing the file of 'Nor system of getting the results of school exams 'the current topic of conversations at the office are related to performance evaluation and final exams. I received a complaint of performance evaluation results for a supervisor who was sick, I gave her a chance to work without going to the field or school visits, but this supervisor did not do her follow up with her teachers with documentation and gave them her feedback only orally. All this led to the fact that her performance evaluation's marks were lower. So in my opinion she didn't do her work properly, I think you saw her when you come to see me she was crying because her performance was not good as she expect, I clarified to her that even I gave her chance to monitor the teachers from her office according to her health condition but unfortunately she didn't do that properly, I found that many of her employees rebelling against her guidance but she didn't document anything I told her you should encounter your employees who were rebelling and you should document that. I convinced her about her mistakes...

7. There's an Arabic proverb that says: 'Ignoring is half the wisdom', some people when they feel that you know their mistakes and weaknesses they get a negative energy and take steps back in their work so, I don't want them to get this result because they just commit simple mistakes and I ignore that to give them chance to fix their mistakes. I do not talk when I can observe or am told about mistakes certain employees are committing but I prefer not to tell them that I know either because this will help them fix their mistakes, or because they have always had excellent results for their work which allow them a space of mistake I should win or get benefits. I will gain that when I push the employees to give the best… If I faced the ones who make mistakes every time this will lead to negative feelings and will not support them to work better, so I decide to act as if I do not know. I do believe that as the leader you should keep a good relationships with your employees but if you fail to do that... your efforts will gone for nothing. I used to be a very tough leader and then I was chosen to work on supervisors' improvement. There was a time when my leader found me very angry and disturbed that not everyone is doing their job as they should, so my leader taught me a lesson in an indirect way that my mistake is prioritizing the work productivity over human relationships and this way will not lead to success. She gave me a material of a workshop about human relations so I understood the implied message that my leader wanted to convey, I needed to work on my relationships. I am more talkative when I notice anything wrong, but I am' silent and patient when it is related to change, and this change needs time'.

8. I experience comfortable silence when I overlook situations like the ones I mentioned. I experience uncomfortable silence only with my manager, 'I am forced to be silent, he will either take an opposite action against me, or simply will not take my opinion into consideration' I experience comfortable silence with my assistants, especially one of them who was always present with me in all situations and whom I depended on her in giving feedback about 'was I right? Did I behave correctly?' but she was transferred to another unit and then I felt really bad. I need someone else to evaluate me and tell me if I am doing the right thing. I experience uncomfortable talking sometimes, For example of there was an employee who objected on my performance evaluation results and talked to me and told me that she deserved better results, I tried to explain to her that she even deserved a worse evaluation and that I even ignored some points against her, so at the end of the conversation I had to hang up and tell her to write an official complaint and end the call, I felt very bad after this for the rest of the day, and sked my assistant again if I did the right thing or not.

(OBSERVATION: there was a long irrelevant talk after this point). Of the four types I experience comfortable talking 70% and uncomfortable silence 20 % and uncomfortable taking 10% in accountability situations.

9. The topic she can talk about openly is improvement, I like to focus on improving the input so as to get excellent results and outputs. My main concern is improving students' academic and non-academic levels.

10. I apply feedback on different levels, I delegates the direct managers to provide feedback on the, and in case the supervisor does not improve I send an official letter for everyone. I am the last resort for the supervisors to meet with, if they do, I give them a chance to discuss it with me but ends the conversation when it does not lead to any fruitful results.

11. (actually I talk about situations that happened at work with my family on lunch and tries to send messages to teach my children lessons) yet I do not discuss private or immoral issues that happen with students, do not discuss those issues as long as they are not on social media because if they were, they will be out of control. I always pretend that I don't know what happened when the issue is sensitive.

12. I was advised not to be too open by my manager after an incident in a meeting when I expressed my idea and took a vote but employees asked me 'why did you do this', this did not affect me but I started to avoid meeting with her and started sending her voice instead.

13. Justice, I think I am a very dedicated person and cares about justice, this leads to better relationships and it will all result in a better reputation. The second point is relationship with my managers.

14. She is not the same person at work and at home because socially she has to deal with relatives from different backgrounds and educational level. She deals with people according to their levels and thinks this is healthy.

15. I give my employees direct and written chances for expressing their opinions. For instance, there was this supervisor whose reputation in the unit she worked at was that she did not do her job and does not go to field trips and prefers working workshops, I encouraged and motivated her which made her an excellent employee to the extent 'that when she presented a project on the level of Riyadh, everyone asked me what I did

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to this person!'. She created a project titled 'eye' in which technology is used in presenting lessons in education, I like to support my employees and give them chances to talk and work.

16. I am totally comfortable and open to talk with all the units except one, those I feels are negative and I avoid talking to them openly.

    (OBSERVATION: The interviewee tends to theorise all her opinions, it took her around 10 minutes to add details or even preach on how to give comments to employees, the comments must refer to the work performance not the person himself, The interviewee looks like she tends to theorise more than apply theories in reality, sometimes she provides excellent theories but when she describes practical examples it shows that she does not apply the theories she talks about, it looks like there is an opposition between theory and practise).

17. A, they need to work immediately as this office is an executive place, so there is no possibility for any delay of work, as a result A is the perfect producer in this case.

18. I would go for both B and C for example Disney company provides entertainment for its employees it is still successful since 1980s, they are entertained even during working hours until now because of the luxury it offers to the of the employees ...

19. A

20. B and wait, I think C is very important too.

21. B , values such as justice, freedom of speech and offering incentives to distinguished employees it will be like a glue which help to hold the organization together.

22. A. it is always the case

23. A is the closest. If you plan and expect the future then the mistakes are minimised.

24. I consider risk is what happens if there is any barrier preventing to provide the services to the clients, be it a human or a systematic barrier, because we are the executive part of the job, risk takes place when we are unable to offer what the clients what they need, which will affect them negatively, when a mistake takes place and it is not solved and that

affects clients. For example a certain school conducted a make-up exam for those who didn't pass on a date which is not the one who specified by the ministry, so when I report I will recommend punishing the school but definitely not the clients, it's not the students fault that the school did something wrong and hence it wouldn't make sense if I cancelled those exams and asked them to re-do them again. It is a risk for the work itself, it is in my hand to take action and solve the problem. I think that to reduce the risk it's necessary to follow the rules and regulations...

25. She said she should prepare herself for any question it might come from the employees ... as she mention that, sometimes some questions come from employees as tricky or test to look to which extent the manager is under control, if they found that they could attack her in any point that will let them discover her lacking of mage the meeting and mange herself, otherwise if she doesn't know the answer for the question is being asked she will try to give them answer later.

26. I faced challenge when the office started to apply 'Mandumah system' which was supposed to be applied from the beginning of the term, yet we started applying it two months after the school has started ..I am a person who likes to be "in the front" so I asked her myself if I should which is more important? Implementing this system perfectly even though it will put employees and supervisors under pressure? Or do what we could do and but we will be satisfied because they wouldn't be exposed to much pressure but we wouldn't be in the front and hence win the people so that they wouldn't go search for a different place to be in. So, I called them for a meeting and told them: 'look we are all facing challenge and I am sure you will do your best, but I wouldn't count this work as part of the performance evaluation so as to be fair what I care about is you, and that you like the job and feel comfortable.' This speech spread out around the office and even outside it, the supervisors told each other that this is the way a leader would deal with them rather than put them under pressure. As a result, about 15 new supervisors asked to be transferred to my offices win ' I couldn't win in the Manthouma competition but I earned a good reputation as a leader which I am concerned with…and now after a year and for two years my family that her office got an advanced level on the competition on the last two years, I made a fortune by investing in the people. I have been winning higher levels every year.

27. I deal with conflict, be it about work or personal through using consultations and taking the majority's opinion and giving up my opinion to get the best way to deal with it, but if the conflict exceeds to

misbehaving then I will use the official and written way to deal with it. For example a conflict among employees has taken place, a group of employees complained orally on a vice manager and asked to changer her, I asked them to file the complaint officially and provide evidence that this person deserves to be transferred, they were unable to do that and their evidence was incomplete, and it turned out that they did it for their friend whom they wanted to be the new manager, I sent them an official warning because of what they did. When the manager was delegated a new mission they tried to complain against her again and filed an official complaint but I created a committee to check the complaint and it turned out to be false so they created anonymous accounts on twitter to attack her, me, and a ministry official... the ministry started to inquire about the issue I provided the evidence against them and turned the issue against them and decided to sue them and asked for a punishment because it was discovered that the accounts were all created by only a couple of people who said the exact same points in their tweets that were on the complaint papers, so it was very obvious who created them. After they were discovered and warned by a colleague that the management investigated the accounts and they were linked to their mobile phones, I told them to better write an official complaint and discuss it so as not to be sued. My winning card was the complaints they wrote, whose language is identical to the one on twitter.

28. She prefers to work according to a plan and specific deadlines, this is due to both her personality as well as the nature of her job.

29. She evaluated her satisfaction on her conversations as 85%, because she says some emergencies force her to take a procedure without knowing the people very well. But in general, she is satisfied.

30. She creates her own opportunities.

31. I accept criticism by others and take their suggestions if the criticism is mostly for the benefit of the work, then it doesn't annoy me, most of the criticism I receive is objective.

32. most of the criticism I receive by managers is official, so if I thinks it is right I accept it, otherwise I writes back with my opinion and tries to provide evidence to prove it otherwise. Criticism to me does not depend on the person (colleague or manager) as much as it depends on the nature and content of the criticism itself.

33. Well, I do not think I would accept to be devoted back in the office to be a supervisor, I do not accept to be inferior to someone who used to be a colleague.

34. There was this colleague who pursued her higher studies and got a PhD, when she came back to the office she was assigned to be a manager over the interviewee, I was able to accept that and told her that 'God distinguished you in your level of education, but He distinguished me in experience'. The colleague admitted her lack of experience and was willing to learn from me which made the situation easier to accept. She says in general she tries to influence the decisions of her superiors and highly succeeds in doing so because she gives suggestions and provides procedures of applying them, this is what the superiors like about her way of suggesting.

    (OBSERVATION: The interviewer noticed a pattern of repeating certain terms by the interviewee which are: evidence, accountability, rebel)