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Leaders' Imposter Phenomenon effect on organizational silence in the Egyptian construction sector

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Article History

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Abstract

This paper aim is to empirically investigate the effect of leaders' Imposterism on organizational silence in the Egyptian construction sector. Organizational silence has been shown to reduce innovation and compromise performance in various types of organizations. Also organizational silence has never been studied before with Imposterism pheromone. Construction professionals in Egypt are often susceptible to Imposterism due to the fast-paced nature and rate of growth of this demanding industry. Leaders' Imposterism is measured using "Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale", while organizational silence is measured using Brinsfield (2013) scale. After utilizing simple random sampling, 387 respondents completed the online survey, the data was then tested using multiple regression analysis. The analysis revealed the impostor phenomenon is a significant predictor of organizational silence, where Imposterism has a significant effect on all organizational silence dimensions, namely defensive silence, diffident silence, and acquiescent silence. Finally, practical recommendations were offered as well as directions for future research.

Keywords: Impostor Phenomenon, Organizational Silence, Egypt's construction sector, fraud, fake.

مستخلص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى الكشف عن تأثير ظاهرة الخداع بين القادة على الصمت التنظيمي في قطاع البناء في مصر. حيث أثبتت الأبحاث السابقة أن الصمت التنظيمي يقلل من الابتكار ويضعف الأداء في المنظمات المختلفة و هو أحد العوامل التي لم تتم دراستها مع ظاهرة الخداع بين القادة وغالبًا ما يكون العاملين في هذا المجال في مصر عرضة لظاهرة الخداع بسبب طبيعته السريعة ومعدل نمو هذا القطاع و التي تتسم بكثرة المتطلبات. لذلك قام الباحثين باستخدام العينات العشوائية البسيطة لجمع البيانات، و أكمل 387 قائدا الاستبيان عبر الإنترنت المكون من مقياس Clance Impostor Phenomenon ومقياس Brinsfield (2013) ، ثم تم اختبار الفروض باستخدام تحليل الانحدار المتعدد حيث أظهرت النتائج أن ظاهرة الخداع لها تأثير إيجابي على الصمت التنظيمي . بكافة أبعاده المتمثلة في دافع الصمت الدفاعي و دافع الصمت غير الفعال ودافع صمت الخضوع. وأخيراً، تم تقديم توصيات عملية بالإضافة إلى توجيهات للبحوث في المستقبل.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: ظاهرة الخداع، الصمت التنظيمي، قطاع البناء و التشييد في مصر، الاحتيال، التزييف

Introduction

Organizations' survival is now more reliant on knowledge sharing and management (Tiwari, 2022). Further, due to the growing demands of evolving workplaces and intense competition, organizations must continue to develop employees who can respond to the environment by expressing their thoughts and sharing their experiences (Nikmaram, Yamchi, Shojaii, Zahrani & Alvani, 2012; Seyyed & Arezoo, 2014; Entezari, 2014). Thus, organizations must create an open communication environment to facilitate knowledge sharing, and opportunities for thoughts expression.

Nevertheless, most employees remain silent (Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Research shows that approximately 85% of employees tend to remain silent on organizational problems, affecting employees' and organizational overall performance (Hassan et al., 2019). Employee silence or organization silence is an intentional attempt to hold back information and ideas, obstruction of opinions sharing, and questions about improvements in organizational issues or jobs (Bari et al., 2020).

Studies have shown that while some employees remain silent others show speech behavior even in the same situation. Such observation indicates that organizational silence behavior is dependent on individual differences. A few antecedents of organizational silence on the individual level were determined as gender, personality traits, internal psychological perception, self-monitoring, and self-esteem level (Lu & Xie, 2013). Additionally, self-confidence is another variable that is believed to be correlated to organizational silence (Dalli, & Sezgin, 2022).

Lack of self-confidence, increased depression, anxiety, and frustration at the failure, of coming up to self-imposed high standards, are all symptoms of what is known as the 'Impostor Phenomenon' (IP; Thompson, Davis, & Davidson, 1998).

Despite the academic interest in both imposters and organizational silence (Sherf et al., 2021), both variables have never been examined together. Moreover, Impostor syndrome is highly disregarded in the human resource development (HRD) and organizational behavior literature (KH & Menon, 2022). Indeed, the primary reason behind this is the lack of knowledge of the existence of this phenomenon itself (Rohrmann, Bechtoldt, & Leonhardt, 2016).

IP is generally found among high achievers in any profession. However, construction professionals in Egypt may be particularly vulnerable to IP. The evident rising number of construction projects may lead to heightened pressure on top performers, who normalize their own achievements as usual. All through their career, they are challenged by new tasks, which can intensify feelings of self-doubt and Imposterism. To wrap up, given this gap in the literature and the recent academic attention paid to organizational silence, this paper examines how organizational silence could be the result of imposter syndrome among leaders in the Egyptian construction sector.

Literature review and hypotheses formation

Organizational silence

Silence in organizations is generally believed to be the suppression of concerns and their perspectives (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). Scholars presented employees silence as the deliberate withholding of information, ideas, opinions, suggestions, and complaints due to personal and interpersonal motives from those who are in critical positions (Brinsfield et al., 2009; Brinsfield, 2013; Milliken et al., 2003; Pinder & Harlos, 2001; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008).

For managers and organizations to handle silence and its consequences among employees, scholars started considering that the intended behavior of silence by itself is vague, and the only way to understand it is through considering its underlying motives. In other words, employee silence antecedents and consequences differ according to the type of underlying motive.

Scholars over the years, have identified many motivating factors behind employee silence and recognized several different forms of silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001; Dyne et al., 2003; Brinsfield, 2013). One form introduced by Pinder and Harlos (2001) is ineffectual silence or acquiescent silence. They defined it as the withholding of information due to a resignation intention and low self-efficacy (Jain, 2014). Hence, acquiescent silence is a passive type of silence. It can be the result of the belief that speaking up will make no difference as it is useless due to personal incapability to change the situation at hand. It occurs when employees are quite sure their opinions will not be valued by superiors (Hawass, 2015).

A more proactive type of silence is the quiescent silence or defensive silence (Pinder and Harlos, 2001). This type of silence comes from individuals' fear of extrinsic consequences and attempts to protect themselves against external threats consciously and proactively (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Defensive motive entails alternative awareness and consideration, then hiding ideas, thoughts, and information for self-protection and self-storage as a conscious decision (Alisher, 2015).

Another type of motive is diffident silence. It is the type of motive that is the result of self-doubt or low self-confidence. Brinsfield (2013) described diffident motive as being uncertain of speaking up to avoid drawing attention. It is being silent due to concerns about the consequences of sharing work issues including losing a job or promotion within the organization (Milliken et al, 2003). Employees' belief that their voice can cause job loss or status often becomes a cause for organizational silence.

Other motives were also introduced in the literature including deviant silence (silence with the aim of revenge; Shih, 2017; Brinsfield, 2013), relational\prosocial silence (silence to avoid trouble with coworkers and protect relationships), disengaged silence (silence due to lack of interest), and the opportunistic motive (silence to promote one's self-interest; Ali, 2015; Ferris and Judge, 1991).

All the motives mentioned above are subjective to the individual and may be based on employee personality, feelings and beliefs, relationship with others, or the organizational context. This leads us to the next section about imposter syndrome.

Impostor Phenomenon (IP)

Psychologists Clance and Imes (1978), were the first to come up with the term Imposterism or impostor phenomenon. This syndrome refers to the perceived intellectual and professional fraudulence common in high achievers who are incapable of internalizing their achievements and accomplishments. Employees with impostor syndrome discount their positive performance remarks and believe that they would not be able to repeat their accomplishments (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1985; Clance & O'Toole, 1987). Further, the definition is broadened by Harvey (1981), who indicated that imposter syndrome is not common only among high achievers, but any individual faced with achievement tasks irrespective of their success status or gender (Barrow, 2018). Employees with impostor syndrome discount their positive performance remarks and believe that they would not be able to repeat their accomplishments (Clance, 1985; Clance & Imes, 1985; Clance & O'Toole, 1987). Additionally, individuals with high IP think others have inflated views of their abilities and worry about being judged.

Impostors believe that their luck, charm, or intensive hard work instead of their intelligence or efficiency are the reasons for their success. Still, they struggle to conquer their perceived inadequacies by putting unrealistically high standards on themselves. As soon as they fail to reach those “unrealistically” standards, their impostor beliefs are strengthened. This creates the vicious impostor cycle (Clance, 1985). Consequently, imposters fail to celebrate and appreciate success; leading them to distress. Employees are likely to handle such feelings through maladaptive coping behaviors such as procrastination (Rohrmann et al., 2016).

Imposterism is usually coordinated around three smaller constructs – first, Fake which represents self-doubts about aptitudes, intellect, and authenticity. Second, Luck where imposters attribute successes to luck or some random good fortune. Finally, Discount is the devaluing of one’s contribution (Clance, 1985). Literature has presented different diagnostic tools with changing levels of construct and criterion validity (Mak et al., 2019). However, the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale is the most commonly used measure, consisting of 20 items measuring the three constructs (fake, luck, and discount; Clance, 1985).

To conclude, imposters undervalue themselves and their own aptitudes causing anxiety about being exposed as intellectual frauds. This syndrome results in feelings of unworthiness placing a lot of pressure to hide their weakness which may lead them to hide behind silence, therefore, the connection between IP and organizational silence discussed in the following section.

Impostersism and Organizational silence

To understand the mechanisms behind IP effect on different outcomes, scholars rely on Conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989). This theory suggests that individuals are likely to protect current resources and pursue new ones (Halbesleben et al., 2014). For example, employee voice and ideas may serve as resources that enable organizations to handle setbacks and facilitate goal achievement through creativity, resources in the COR theory comprise several factors including resources provided by others (e.g., monetary, logistical, or social support) and internal resources (e.g., strength, effort, a calm behavior).

Based on the above discussion, impostors misuse their resources for the sake of self-protection which compromises their ability to conserve current resources or seek new ones. In fact, Neureiter and Traut-Mattauch (2017) describe IP as a resource that hinders employees from assigning their personal resources effectively, as the time and resources spent in hiding their supposed fraudulence (Hutchins et al., 2018), this lessens their capability to share their thoughts effectively at work. For instance, repeating work because a high IP employee challenges its robustness, will leave them with less time to engage with coworkers which may lead to silence. Furthermore, Whitman and Shanine (2012) suggest that high-IP employees expend greater resources (time, effort, and attention) overperforming to hide their self-perceived shortcomings than low-IP employees. This process is further complicated by imposters' anxiety about being viewed as frauds, which makes them unwilling to talk about their worries with others.

Feelings related to IP such as low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, negativity, despair, and a persistent fear of success and shame (Neureiter and Traut-Mattausch, 2016; Li et al., 2019; Luthans et al., 2014; Hudson & Gonzalez-Gomez, 2021), are also closely associated with the concepts of employee voice and organizational silence (Kaya & Eskin Bacaksiz, 2021). Such correlations may explain the reason behind individuals spending too much effort in hiding their fraudulence from others. The potential relationship between IP and silent behavior is evident in one of the successful subjects in Gardner et al. (2019) study stating clearly: "I have to hide myself from everyone because I can't let them know that I suck" (p. 1). This exposure puts an individual at risk to the perception that they are not as competent as their peers.

Voice behavior emerges when employees believe that they have something to say and feel competent. They will only risk sharing their thoughts if they feel confident and think that they can enhance their self-image through this behavior (Morrison, 2011), however low self-efficacy, shame, and fear of failure associated with high IP may keep them silent. Moreover, recent research by Brauer and colleagues (2023) proved that IP leads to a lower willingness to communicate among learners.

In conclusion, Impostors are careful not to violate others' expectations and experience negative appraisals (Clance & Imes, 1978). They feel shame as their shortcomings may come on public display (Cohen et al., 2011) and worry that others may discover their supposed fraudulence and judge them as lacking in ability (Gardner et al., 2019). The researchers propose that such characteristics in an imposter may lead to silence in organizations.

Given the above evidence, the researchers believe that IP victims display diffident silence because of shame-induced low self-esteem and confidence. Thus, IP leaders may feel ashamed and may keep silent because of self-doubt and lack of confidence (diffident silence).

Finally, as IP victims feel that their opinion can't change anything for the better and could harm them, they would probably keep to themselves (defensive silence). IP victims who tend to hide in fear of exposure, would stay silent due to resignation tendencies (acquiescent silence).

Based on the COR theory and the cited literature, it is hypothesized that IP has a positive effect on employee silence. Although employee silence can be motivated by various motives (Milliken et al., 2003; Dyne et al., 2003), this study focuses on defensive silence, acquiescent silence, and diffident silence, as they are the most relevant to the study at hand.

The following are the research hypotheses:

H1: IP has a statistically significant effect on organizational silence

H1a: IP has a statistically significant effect on defensive silence

H1b: IP has a statistically significant effect on diffident silence

H1c: IP has a statistically significant effect on acquiescent silence

Research model

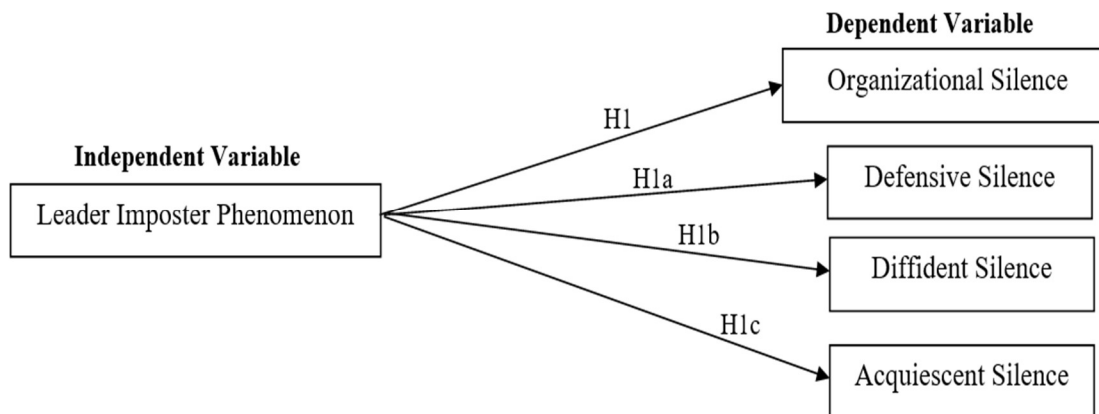


Figure 1: Research Model

Source: Developed by the Researchers

Measures

A number of tools have been developed to detect IP and measure its severity. The most commonly used instrument is the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS; Clance, 1985). The CIPS is composed of 20-items, with the aim of assessing an individual's self-reported characteristics of IP. This research used a Likert 5-point response scale ranging from *very true* (5) to *not true at all* (1), asking participants how true each item was for them.

As for the organizational silence variable, the researchers adopted Brinsfield (2013) scale to measure with Cronbach's alpha (0.868) on a five-point Likert scale. There were 12-items; an example was "I frequently remain silent at work because I do not want to appear incompetent".

Data collection and analysis

Pilot Test and Survey Respondents

The population of interest for the present study includes all managerial levels in the Egyptian construction sector. The questionnaire was translated into Arabic to ensure participants' understanding of the items. The general managers and middle managers of the Egyptian construction companies were interviewed to assess understanding of IP and organizational silence used in the questionnaire.

Empirical assessment of the research framework

Accordingly, the researchers decided to distribute the questionnaire among the whole population (Egyptian construction companies). The questionnaire was sent through e-mails in Arabic and English to 400 managers in the targeted population. Finally, 387 questionnaires were received back, representing a 96.75 % response rate.

Factor analysis was used to test validity of these scales and to describe the underlining structure in data matrix variable. This analysis describes the correlation among many factors in terms of a smaller number of constructs. That is, all the factors within a particular group (construct) are highly correlated among themselves but have relatively smaller correlations with factors in a different construct (Mukhopadhyay, 2009).

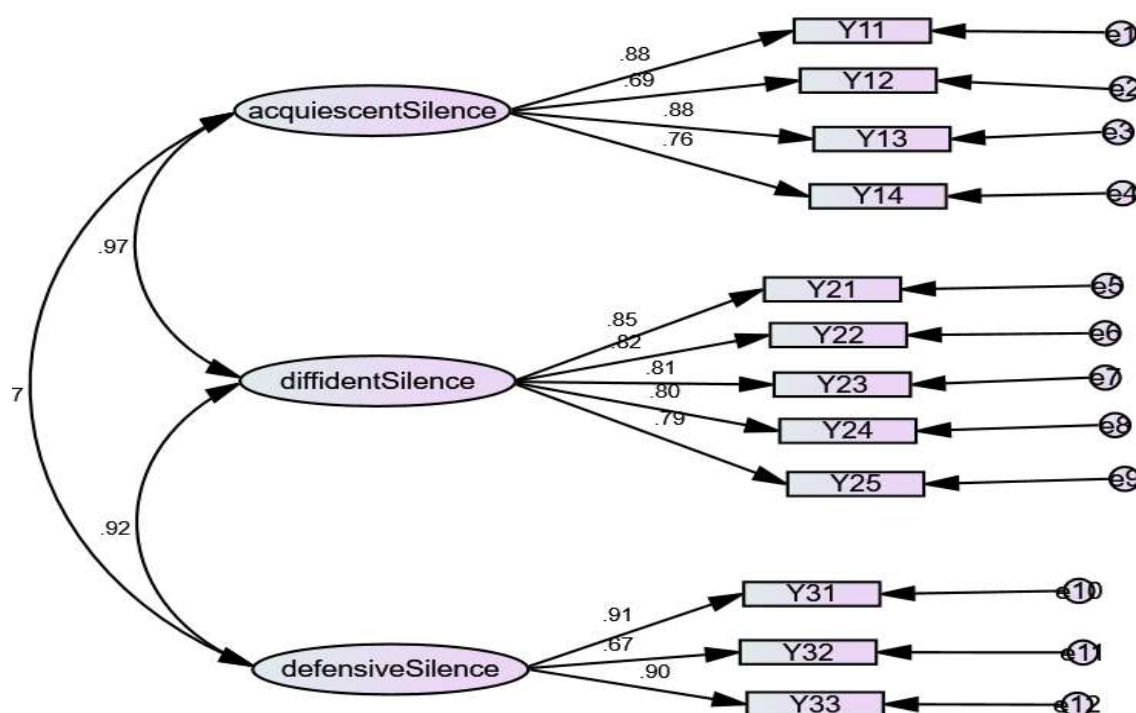


Figure 2: CFA path diagram of the dependent variable

Table 1 - Goodness of fit indices for dependent variable

Variable	CMIN/DF	RMSEA	AIC	GFI
Organizational silence	6.81	0.0814	1207.4	0.914

Source: developed by the Researchers

All goodness of fit indices was provided for the initially hypothesized model in this first application; hereafter, only a selected group of fit statistics was reported. Next is an examination of each cluster, as they relate to the hypothesized model (Arbuckle, 2007).

The preliminary results are presented by fit statistics. First, the chi-square is considered, followed by the RMSEA, and the AIC and CFI. Results from the continuous data models are evaluated first to show a point of reference for the categorical models of primary interest. Across all conditions, the majority of replications converged. Consistent with (e.g., Barendse et al., 2015), almost all replications that failed to converge were over factored three-factor models.

Descriptive analysis

To examine the feel of the measured data, basic descriptive statistics were done to confirm that the distortion of the participant responses outputs was negligible. The descriptive analysis results, shown in Table (2), demonstrate that the mean and the standard deviation is small which uncovered a weak distortion of the collected data for all variables. These results indicate a level homogeneity of the data. The Skewness coefficients are negative, which shows that the surveyed sample is left skewed and the mean is less than the median.

Table 2 – Descriptive analysis

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Acquiescent Silence	387	4.4335	.03038	.59760	-.862	.124
Diffident Silence	387	4.4031	.03195	.62850	-.809	.124
Defensive Silence	387	4.3773	.03320	.65321	-.761	.124
Organizational Silence	387	4.4046	.03045	.59907	-.748	.124

Source: developed by the Researchers

Goodness and validity of Data

The validity of the collected data for the factor dimensions were identified by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The SPSS reliability analysis was executed independently for the values of each scale as indicated in Table (3).

Table 3 – Reliability analysis for Leader Imposter and organizational silence

Scale	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
All Leader Imposter Phenomenon	20	0.950
acquiescent silence	4	0.867
diffident silence	5	0.907
defensive silence	3	0.840
All organizational silence	12	0.958

Source: developed by the Researchers

Generally, reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.6 or higher are considered adequate (Sekaran, 2003). As shown in Table (5), as the calculated Cronbach's alpha values range between 0.840 and 0.958 and the overall, the research can depend on the gathered data for testing the research hypotheses.

Hypotheses testing

General Hypothesis: Leader's Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on organizational silence.

To examine the research hypotheses, three simple linear regression models were formulated to explore the extent to which Leaders' Imposter Phenomenon affect organizational silence in the Egyptian construction sector.

Regression Model (I) Analysis

This model will investigate the effect of Leader Imposter Phenomenon on acquiescent silence with the aim of testing the following hypothesis:

H1: Leader Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on acquiescent silence

The SPSS (version 25) simple regression procedure was used to assure the proposed relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Model (I) evaluation

As shown in the model summary Table (4), the model coefficient of determination (R-square) equals 65.9% which means that Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon describes 65.9% of the variations in acquiescent silence.

Table 4 – Model (1) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.812 ^a	.659	.658	.34940	1.698

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

b. Dependent Variable: acquiescent Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The ANOVA Table (5), assesses the overall statistical significance of the model, revealed that model (I) is significant as p-value < 0.05 (Healey, 2009).

Table 5 – ANOVA for Model (2)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.848	1	90.848	744.159	.000 ^b
	Residual	47.001	385	.122		
	Total	137.849	386			

a. Dependent Variable: acquiescent Silence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

Source: developed by the Researchers

The simple regression equation is formed from the “Unstandardized Coefficients” in the coefficients Table (6).

Table 6 – Coefficients table for Model (2)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.729	.137		5.320	.000
	Leader Imposter Phenomenon	.849	.031	.812	27.279	.000

a. Dependent Variable: acquiescent Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The Standardized Beta Coefficients offer insight of the contribution of the independent variable to the model. Results shown in Table (6) indicate standardized beta coefficient is 0.812. This means that Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon makes strong contribution for explaining the variations in the dependent variable (acquiescent Silence). Moreover, the sig is 0.0 is less than 0.01 significance level which shows that this variable significantly contributions to the prediction of the dependent variable (acquiescent Silence).

Checking model (I) assumptions

Considering the assumptions regarding residuals distribution, Durbin-Watson test was performed. The results showed that the Durbin-Watson computed value was 1.698 even though the table upper limit value at 5% significance is DU=1.628 (Freund et al., 2006). That is, the computed value is higher than the table value indicating that residuals were actually independent from each other, this means that serial correlation is not a problem in this model.

Model (I) discussion

Finally, a simple linear regression is calculated predicting acquiescent silence based on Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon. A significant regression equation was found (F (1,385): 744.16,

sig < 0.01 and 0.05), with an R-square of 65.9 %. These results offer an empirical evidence for verifying the hypothesis (H1) which confirms a positive relationship between Leaders' Imposter Phenomenon and acquiescent silence, thus it was concluded that Leader Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on acquiescent silence.

Regression Model (2) Analysis

This model will explore the effect of Leader Imposter Phenomenon on diffident silence with the aim of testing the following hypothesis:

H2: Leader Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on diffident silence

The SPSS (version 25) simple regression procedure was employed to ascertain the proposed relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Model (2) evaluation

As shown in the model summary Table (7), the model coefficient of determination (R-square) equals 64.8% which means that the Leader Imposter Phenomenon explains 64.4% of the variations in diffident silence.

Table 7 – Model (2) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
2	.805 ^a	.648	.648	.37315	1.764

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

b. Dependent Variable: diffident Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The ANOVA (Table 8), which assesses the overall statistical significance of the model, revealed that model (2) is significant as p-value < 0.05.

Table 8 – ANOVA for Model (2)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2	Regression	98.870	1	98.870	710.081	.000 ^b
	Residual	53.606	385	.139		
	Total	152.476	386			

a. Dependent Variable: diffident Silence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

Source: developed by the Researchers

The simple regression equation is created from the “Unstandardized Coefficients” in the coefficients Table (9).

Table 9 – Coefficients table for Model (2)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
2	(Constant)	.538	.146		3.680	.000
	Leader Imposter Phenomenon	.885	.033	.805	26.647	.000

a. Dependent Variable: diffident Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The Standardized Beta Coefficients give a measure of the contribution of the independent variable to the model. Results in Table (9) show that the standardized beta coefficient is 0.805. This means that Leader Imposter Phenomenon makes strong contribution for explaining the variations in the dependent variable (diffident Silence). Moreover, the sig is 0.0 is less than 0.01 significance level which reveals that this variable makes a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable (diffident Silence).

Checking model (2) assumptions

With respect to the assumptions regarding residuals distribution, Durbin-Watson test was performed. The results showed that the Durbin-Watson computed value was 1.764 while the table upper limit value at 5% significance is $DU=1.628$. That is, the computed value is higher than the table value implying that residuals were actually independent from each other which means that serial correlation is not a problem in this model.

Model (2) discussion

Finally, it could be concluded that a simple linear regression is calculated predicting diffident silence based on Leader Imposter Phenomenon. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1,385): 710.1, sig < 0.01$ and 0.05), with an R-square of 64.8 %. These results provide empirical evidence for verifying the hypothesis (H2) which supports a positive relationship exists between Leader Imposter Phenomenon and diffident silence, thus it was concluded that Leader Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on diffident silence.

Regression Model (3) Analysis

This model will investigate the effect of Leader Imposter Phenomenon on defensive silence with the aim of testing the following hypothesis:

H3: Leader Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on defensive silence.

The SPSS (version 25) simple regression procedure was employed to confirm the proposed relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Model (3) evaluation

As shown in the model summary Table (10), the model coefficient of determination (R-square) equals 67.6% which means that the Leaders' Imposter Phenomenon explains 67.6% of the variations in defensive silence.

Table 10 – Model (3) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
3	.822 ^a	.676	.676	.37207	1.759

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

b. Dependent Variable: defensive Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The ANOVA Table (11), calculates the overall statistical significance of the model, implying that model (3) is significant as $p\text{-value} < 0.05$.

Table 11 – ANOVA for Model (3)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
3	Regression	111.401	1	111.401	804.731	.000 ^b
	Residual	53.297	385	.138		
	Total	164.698	386			

a. Dependent Variable: defensive Silence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leader Imposter Phenomenon

Source: developed by the Researchers

The simple regression equation is established from the “Unstandardized Coefficients” in the coefficients Table (12).

Table 12 – Coefficients table for Model (3)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
3	(Constant)	.275	.146		1.884	.060
	Leader Imposter Phenomenon	.940	.033	.822	28.368	.000

a. Dependent Variable: defensive Silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The Standardized Beta Coefficients assess the contribution of the independent variable to the model. Values in Table (12) illustrate that the standardized beta coefficient is 0.822. This indicates that Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon contributions strongly for the explanation of the variations in the dependent variable (defensive Silence). Besides, the sig is 0.0 is less than 0.01

significance level which uncovers a significant contribution to the estimate of the dependent variable (defensive Silence).

Checking model (3) assumptions

As for the assumptions regarding residuals distribution, Durbin-Watson test was implemented. The values showed that the Durbin-Watson computed value was 1.759 meanwhile the table upper limit value at 5% significance is DU=1.628. This means that the computed value is higher than the table value indicating that residuals were indeed independent from each other, this means that serial correlation is not an issue in this model.

Model (3) discussion

In conclusion, a simple linear regression is calculated predicting diffident silence based on Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon. A significant regression equation was found (F (1,385): 804.7, sig < 0.01 and 0.05), with an R-square of 67.6 %. These results offer empirical evidence for confirming hypothesis (H3), this means that there is a positive relationship exists between Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon and defensive silence, hence it was determined that Leaders’ Imposter Phenomenon has a statistically significant effect on defensive silence.

Summary of the general hypothesis:

The following Figure (3) presents the overall general hypotheses.

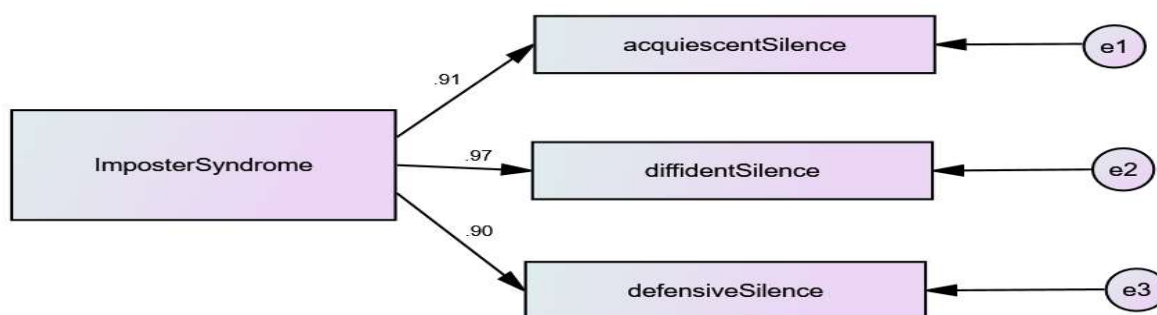


Figure 3 path diagram general hypothesis

Source: developed by the Researchers

Regression Model (4) Analysis

This model will investigate the effect of Leader Imposter Phenomenon (fake- Discount- Luck) on organizational silence; multiple regression analysis was employed to evaluate the effect of three indented variables on a dependent variable. The results are listed below:

Model (4) evaluation

As shown in the model summary (Table 13), the model coefficient of determination (R-square) equals 65.2% and adjusted (R-square) equals 65% which means that the Leader Imposter Phenomenon fake, discount and luck are explain 65.2% of the variations in organizational silence.

Table 13 – Model (4) Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.808 ^a	.652	.650	.35455	1.739

a. Predictors: (Constant), Luck , fake, Discount

b. Dependent Variable: organizational silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The ANOVA (Table 14), which assesses the overall statistical significance of the model, revealed that model (4) is significant as p-value < 0.05.

Table 14 – ANOVA for Model (4)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	90.385	3	30.128	239.671	.000 ^b
	Residual	48.146	383	.126		
	Total	138.530	386			

a. Dependent Variable: organizational silence

b. Predictors: (Constant), Luck , fake, Discount

Source: developed by the Researchers

The multiple regression equation is created from the “Unstandardized Coefficients” in the coefficients table (Table 15).

Table 15 – Coefficients table for Model (4)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.672	.142		4.728	.000		
	fake	.070	.031	.093	2.286	.023	.547	1.829
	Discount	.320	.060	.307	5.323	.000	.273	3.666
	Luck	.460	.055	.467	8.405	.000	.294	3.402

a. Dependent Variable: organizational silence

Source: developed by the Researchers

The Standardized Beta Coefficients give a measure of the contribution of the independent variables to the model. Results in table (15) show that the standardized beta coefficient for Luck is 0.467. This means that Luck as one of Leader Imposter Phenomenon makes strongest contribution for explaining the variations in the dependent variable (Organizational Silence). Moreover, the sig is 0.0 is less than 0.01 significance level which reveals that this variable makes a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable (organizational Silence).

Checking model (4) assumptions

With respect to the assumptions regarding residuals distribution, Durbin-Watson test was performed. The results showed that the Durbin-Watson computed value was 1.739 while the table upper limit value at 5% significance is $DU=1.620$. That is, the computed value is higher than the table value implying that residuals were actually independent from each other which means that serial correlation is not a problem in this model. More over with respect to multicollinearity the value of variance inflation factor (VIF) for all independent variables are less than the value (10) so we can conclude that there is no multicollinearity problem.

Model (4) discussion

Finally, it could be concluded that a multiple linear regression is calculated predicting organizational silence based on Leader Imposter Phenomenon fake, discount and luck. A significant regression equation was found ($F(3,383): 239.67, sig < 0.01$ and 0.05), with an R-square of 65.2 %. These results provide empirical evidence to support a positive relationship exists between all Leader Imposter Phenomenon (fake, discount and luck) and organizational silence, thus it was concluded that Leader Imposter Phenomenon fake, discount and luck has a statistically significant effect on organizational silence.

Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to bring together research and extend the literature on IP and organizational silence. Based on evidence in the literature, IP could lead to negative outcomes, it could also affect an employee's mental state leading to silent behavior. In other words, feelings of IP or "fakeness" may prevent competent employees from sharing their thoughts and ideas leading to increased organizational silence.

The statistical analysis of the data collected from the research sample, concludes that IP has a significant effect on organizational silence dimensions. This result is in line with Van Dyne et al. (1998) research, stating that self-esteem is a major antecedent of voice. Previous research has shown that when leaders feel like frauds exhibit less citizenship behaviors that entail voice behaviors. These managers and leaders are more likely to have lower affective commitment, the commitment most desired by organizations (Grubb & McDowell, 2012).

Additionally, Fast, Burris, and Bartel (2014) results suggest that those managers who feel the most uncertain about their capacity to meet expectations related to their managerial role are the most likely to avoid soliciting input from employees about organizational improvements resulting in less actual input from the employees' side.

The first hypothesis shows that high IP increases defensive silence. This means that managers in the construction sector with high IP develop and maintain exaggerated protective behaviors manifested in the form of silence. In other words, managers high in IP consciously protect themselves from external threats, such as being punished, by staying quiet (Van Dyne

et al., 2003). This result is concurrent with previous research showing that employees' low trust in managers increases employee silence, especially on important issues that may affect organizational success (Hamstra, Schreurs, Jawahar, Laurijssen, & Hünermund, 2021). According to Van Dyne and LePine (1998) Voice by definition involves challenging the status quo with constructive suggestions, even when others disagree. This makes voice a potentially risky behavior for employees, making silence their safe choice (Cortina & Magley, 2003). Therefore, due to fear experienced by high IP managers, they become reluctant to voice their thoughts.

The second hypothesis was also proven to be true as the statistical analysis indicated a statistically significant effect on diffident silence. Meaning that successful individuals who suffer from impostorism, show signs of self-doubt and low self-esteem, leading them to think that their opinions don't matter and thus stay silent. This result is in line with research showing that diffident silence induced by shame has less effect on employees with high core self-evaluation. This means that managers feel shame influencing diffidence-related constructs like self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a sense of self-safety or security (Krishna, Soumyaja, & Sowmya, 2023).

The statistical analysis results also supported the research final and the third hypothesis, indicating that IP has a statistically significant effect on acquiescent silence. In other words, managers with high IP seem to passively conceal important ideas, due to being submissive and accepting of the status quo. This is consistent with Near and Miceli (1985) as well as Near and Miceli (2012), who indicated that low self-esteem drives employees away from participating in controversial situations while those with high self-esteem are likely to be involved in efforts to reform the situation (Near & Miceli, 1987).

This result agrees with the conclusion provided by García-Cabrera, & García-Barba Hernández (2014) stating that the employees' perceived value in the organization has greater worth than carrying out beneficial change, thus staying submissive and accepting of the status quo. Additionally, research by Pierce, Gardner, Dunham, & Cummings (1993) supports this finding by proving that low-self-esteem employees may well cope passively with organizational problems, without voicing their thoughts to solve them.

Recommendations

The findings presented above suggest several practical strategies for leaders, managers, and Human Resources (HR) professionals to handle IP and organizational silence. First, managers and leaders can offer opportunities for those with high IP to speak up privately, this can help managers “save face” reducing defensive silence and the likely feelings of threat. They can also emphasize the importance of open communication channels, through encouraging active seeking of feedback and opinions from colleagues and team members. This measure can create an urge to challenge the status quo reducing acquiescent silence. Moreover, regular constructive feedback on leaders' and managers' contributions and thought-sharing can help combat Imposterism by reinforcing a sense of accomplishment.

The role of the Human Resources professionals is as important, as they should offer mentorship programs and facilitate support networks to build trust, foster communication, and overcome impostor feelings. The HR department can also focus on training programs that build skills and competencies, helping employees feel more confident and reassured about their roles and successes. Such programs need to be tailored to address the specific perceived weaknesses by managers and leaders related to their own performance. It would also be beneficial if these programs comprise technical skills development as well as soft skills, for instance, effective communication and leadership. Training professionals are also required to establish workshops that focus on stress management, resilience, and coping strategies.

Both managers and HR professionals should recognize the significance of mental well-being in a high-pressure industry like construction. They are both responsible for creating a climate characterized by psychological security and constructive organizational norms, for instance, learning from errors and constructive criticism. Finally, managers and HR teams should set organizational policies, that include engagement, participation, and voice in their performance management systems.

Future research and limitations

This paper contributes to both the literature and the practical field; however, a few limitations are worth mentioning. First, the questionnaire used to collect data from the research sample in the Egyptian construction sector was translated into Arabic, which may increase the likelihood of misinterpretation. It would be beneficial if future research would consider conceptualizing the concepts based on the Egyptian culture and in Arabic. Second, the self-administered

questionnaire magnifies the biased responses increasing the risk of unreliable results. Thus, future research should examine IP and organizational silence using different data collection methods. A third and final limitation is disregarding some variables that may affect the relationship between IP and organizational silence, such as personality traits, organizational culture, appraisal, and rewards systems. Future research should consider the mediating and moderating effects of various variables to provide a comprehensive framework for the effect of IP and organizational silence. Lastly, it could be helpful for research on leadership to focus on leaders' thoughts and feelings about their role as a critical determinant of organizational success rather than merely their leadership style.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research aimed at testing the effect of IP on organizational silence among managers in the Egyptian construction sector. It was found that those who suffer from IP are significantly less likely to voice their thoughts and are more likely to show silent behaviors. Organizational silence is a determinant of organizational success, thus silence behaviors among employees is critical. This study shows that appropriate measures must be taken to treat IP among leaders, especially in the Egyptian construction sector, to improve their participation and sharing among their peers and followers. This research is one of the few that test IP in organizational setting offering a new path for future research to test the role that the IP plays in practical management settings.

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