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Investigating the Mediating Role of Organizational Dissent in the Relationship Between Organizational Silence and Employee Invisibility in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd

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Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the mediating role of organizational dissent in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd. The research method was descriptive and correlational in nature. The statistical population included all 300 employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd, from whom 152 individuals were selected as the sample based on Cochran's formula. Standard questionnaires were used, similar to those applied in previous studies. In this study, the validity coefficients for the questionnaires of organizational silence, organizational dissent, and employee invisibility were calculated as 0.909, 0.880, and 0.922, respectively. The reliability coefficients for the questionnaires of organizational silence, organizational dissent, and employee invisibility were calculated as 0.904, 0.937, and 0.918, respectively. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20 and LISREL software. Pearson's correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed for data analysis. The research findings indicated that organizational dissent plays a mediating role in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd.

Keywords: Organizational Dissent, Organizational Silence, Employee Invisibility, Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the increasing complexity of organizational life has drawn growing attention to subtle yet critical behavioral phenomena such as organizational silence, employee invisibility, and organizational dissent, which jointly influence the vitality and adaptability of modern institutions. Organizations no longer thrive merely on structural efficiency but increasingly depend on the openness of communication, psychological safety, and employee engagement to sustain innovation and performance (Federman, 2009; Harter et al., 2002; Macey et al., 2009). However, despite the growing body of research



on employee engagement and voice, silence and invisibility remain underexplored dimensions of workplace behavior that continue to undermine collective functioning and individual well-being.

Organizational silence, first conceptualized as a collective-level phenomenon, refers to the intentional withholding of ideas, opinions, or concerns about work-related issues by employees, despite being aware of potential improvements or problems (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Nakhai Sharif et al., 2023). This behavior arises from fear, apathy, or learned helplessness, often stemming from hierarchical rigidity, punitive managerial practices, or lack of trust in the leadership system (Bagheri & Hossein Pour, 2023; Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023). Silence manifests in multiple forms, including obedient silence, where employees comply passively with authority; defensive silence, adopted for self-protection; and prosocial silence, driven by loyalty or concern for organizational harmony (Anbardar & Mohadnia, 2023; Sulphey & Jasim, 2025).

At the same time, employee invisibility represents a nuanced but consequential psychological and social condition in which individuals perceive themselves as unnoticed, undervalued, or ignored within the organizational context (Ghasemi, 2020; Mousavi et al., 2020; Tabatabai et al., 2020). This sense of invisibility may originate from structural marginalization, limited participation in decision-making, or an organizational culture that prioritizes conformity over creativity (Kasianni & Ghanbarzadeh, 2020; Qayeni Ahmadabad, 2020). When employees perceive themselves as invisible, they often disengage emotionally from their roles, reduce discretionary efforts, and withdraw cognitively from the organization's goals (Hosinzadeh, 2019; Mohammadiyari et al., 2018). Consequently, invisibility can reinforce silence, producing a self-perpetuating cycle that erodes both individual motivation and collective effectiveness.

The relationship between silence and invisibility is not merely behavioral but deeply psychological and cultural. Empirical research shows that environments marked by toxic or passive leadership tend to amplify both silence and invisibility, as leaders' avoidance or hostility suppress employee expression and initiative (Akharavi et al., 2022; Aminzadeh, 2019; Fatehi Zadeh & Zare, 2019). Employees in such settings often internalize a perception of futility—believing their voices are inconsequential—which gradually transforms into a state of cognitive withdrawal (Zhang, 2024). This process corresponds to what Richman et al. (Richman et al., 2008) describe as “the quiet disengagement,” where workers refrain from active participation not because of lack of ideas, but due to the perceived absence of responsiveness or recognition from leadership.

From a leadership perspective, recent studies suggest that the quality of managerial relationships, trustworthiness, and strength-based leadership can counteract these dynamics (Iddagoda et al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). When leaders foster open communication and psychological safety, employees are more likely to express divergent views and engage in constructive dissent—an essential component of organizational learning (Quansah et al., 2023; Tran, 2023). Dissent, when managed effectively, transforms from a perceived threat to an asset, promoting innovation and adaptability (Ozturk et al., 2021). In contrast, when dissent is suppressed, organizations risk falling into patterns of groupthink and institutional inertia (Sulphey & Jasim, 2025).

Organizational dissent itself represents an antithesis to silence. It is the deliberate expression of disagreement or alternative viewpoints within the organizational framework, often with the intention of improving processes, fairness, or outcomes (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Yazdani et al., 2024). Unlike destructive conflict, dissent provides a channel for constructive feedback and self-correction. When encouraged through transparent leadership and participatory structures, dissent enhances employees' sense of voice, reduces feelings of invisibility, and strengthens engagement (Ghanbari & Majooni, 2022; Lee et al., 2023). However, when dissent is discouraged or punished, employees internalize silence as a defensive strategy, reinforcing alienation and invisibility (Anbardar & Mohadnia, 2023; Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023).

Research on the psychological antecedents of invisibility underscores that this phenomenon extends beyond mere communication barriers. It often reflects deeper systemic inequities, organizational cynicism, and the erosion of professional identity (Bagheri & Hossein Pour, 2023; Ghasemi, 2020; Zar'at Doost Estadi, 2021). In educational and public service institutions, for instance, structural hierarchies and bureaucratic cultures may inadvertently produce invisibility by discouraging initiative and rewarding conformity (Mousavi et al., 2020; Qayeni Ahmadabad, 2020). This aligns with earlier findings



indicating that employees who perceive their contributions as undervalued or ignored exhibit higher tendencies toward withdrawal, absenteeism, and emotional exhaustion (Douglas & Roberts, 2020; Harter et al., 2002).

The mediating role of dissent in this context becomes especially salient. Studies have demonstrated that the transformation of silence into voice often occurs through the intermediate mechanism of dissent cognition—that is, employees' internal deliberation over whether to speak up or remain silent (Sulphey & Jasim, 2025; Zhang, 2024). This mediating process determines whether organizational silence translates into disengagement and invisibility or evolves into constructive communication. In environments where leadership supports dialogue, dissent can act as a protective factor, converting suppressed concerns into actionable insights (Quansah et al., 2023; Tran, 2023). Conversely, where leaders exhibit authoritarian or passive tendencies, silence consolidates invisibility and alienation (Akharavi et al., 2022; Fatehi Zadeh & Zare, 2019).

In Iranian organizational settings, particularly within public institutions such as education and social welfare organizations, silence and invisibility have become pressing issues due to bureaucratic inertia, limited participation mechanisms, and hierarchical leadership styles (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Bagheri & Hossein Pour, 2023; Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023). For instance, empirical findings show that teachers and administrative staff often refrain from expressing innovative ideas due to perceived futility or fear of reprisal (Anbardar & Mohadnia, 2023; Nakhai Sharif et al., 2023). This behavior, while protective, restricts organizational adaptability and hinders professional growth. Similarly, studies on governmental employees reveal that invisibility correlates with high organizational laziness and psychological withdrawal (Ghasemi, 2020; Mohammadiyari et al., 2018).

The intersection of these phenomena—organizational silence, dissent, and invisibility—thus forms a critical domain of inquiry. By examining how dissent mediates the link between silence and invisibility, it becomes possible to understand the mechanisms through which communicative suppression transforms into psychological marginalization (Iddagoda et al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Furthermore, exploring this relationship in the context of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd, a public welfare organization characterized by hierarchical decision structures and service-oriented values, offers unique insights into how public institutions manage or mismanage employee voice and recognition (Salehi Noudaz, 2021; Yazdani et al., 2024).

Prior research underscores that addressing silence requires more than open communication policies; it necessitates cultural transformation that legitimizes dissent and visibility as organizational virtues (Ozturk et al., 2021; Quansah et al., 2023; Tran, 2023). Leadership interventions that enhance trust and engagement—such as servant leadership, green leadership, or strength-based approaches—have shown measurable effects on reducing silence and improving employee empowerment (Lee et al., 2023; Rabiul et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Similarly, organizational development initiatives that recognize invisible work and encourage contribution diversity help counteract alienation (Zar'at Doost Estadi, 2021; Zhang, 2024).

In summary, although previous studies have independently explored organizational silence (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023), employee invisibility (Ghasemi, 2020; Mousavi et al., 2020), and dissent (Sulphey & Jasim, 2025; Yazdani et al., 2024), the integrative mechanisms linking these constructs remain under-researched. In particular, the mediating role of organizational dissent—through which silence may either intensify invisibility or transform into productive engagement—has not been systematically examined in public-sector contexts.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the mediating role of organizational dissent in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility among employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) in Yazd.

2. Methods and Materials

The present study is applied in purpose, as it develops practical knowledge regarding the mediating role of organizational dissent in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd. In terms of data collection and analysis method, this research is descriptive and correlational. The statistical population of this study included all 300 employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd. To determine the



sample size, Cochran's formula was used, and 169 individuals were selected through simple random sampling. For data collection, a total of 190 questionnaires were distributed among the employees, and after eight days, 169 completed questionnaires were collected.

Questionnaire A: This questionnaire pertains to organizational silence and includes 12 questions. Each participant responded to the items using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Among the 12 questions, 4 items relate to acquiescent silence, 4 items to defensive silence, and 4 items to prosocial silence.

Questionnaire B: This questionnaire pertains to organizational dissent, developed by Kassing (1998), and consists of 12 questions. Among these, 4 items relate to articulated dissent, 4 items to latent dissent, and 4 items to displaced dissent. Each item has 5 response options, rated as follows: strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1.

Questionnaire C: This questionnaire pertains to employee invisibility and consists of 16 questions. Among these, 4 items relate to virtual withdrawal, 4 items to work neglect, 4 items to underperformance, and 4 items to work avoidance. Each item has 5 response options, rated as strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, neutral = 3, disagree = 2, and strongly disagree = 1.

Dehabadi (2014), in a study titled *"Examining the Relationship Between Organizational Silence and Organizational Citizenship Behavior Among Employees of the East Tehran Tax Affairs Administration,"* reported a reliability coefficient of 0.880 for the organizational silence questionnaire. Albantoglu and Kansai (2023), in their study titled *"Measuring Organizational Dissent in the Industrial and Service Sectors,"* reported a reliability coefficient of 0.909 for the organizational dissent questionnaire. Norouzi et al. (2023), in their study titled *"Examining the Effect of Organizational Structure on Invisible Employees,"* reported a reliability coefficient of 0.922 for the employee invisibility questionnaire. Therefore, the validity of the questionnaires used in the present study was confirmed.

In this study, Cronbach's alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the tests. This method is applied to calculate the internal consistency of measurement instruments that assess various attributes. The reliability coefficients for the organizational silence, organizational dissent, and employee invisibility questionnaires were calculated as 0.904, 0.937, and 0.918, respectively.

For data analysis, SPSS version 20 and LISREL software were used. Pearson's correlation coefficient and structural equation modeling (SEM) were employed to analyze the data.

3. Findings and Results

The analyses aimed to assess the normality of data distribution, the relationships between key research variables, and the structural fitness and significance of the hypothesized model. The following tables and their corresponding explanations summarize the main empirical results derived from the study.

Table 1. Results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test for Assessing Normality

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Test Statistic	Significance Level
Obedient Silence	0.205	1.14	2.38	0.000
Defensive Silence	0.136	0.95	2.20	0.000
Altruistic Silence	0.144	0.826	2.30	0.000
Organizational Silence	0.131	0.717	2.10	0.000
Expressed Dissent	0.275	0.667	2.27	0.000
Hidden Dissent	0.227	0.916	2.00	0.000
Substituted Dissent	0.229	0.752	2.22	0.000
Virtual Turnover	0.140	0.637	2.17	0.000
Work Neglect	0.227	0.916	2.09	0.000
Underperformance	0.129	0.960	2.10	0.000
Work Avoidance	0.152	0.818	2.40	0.000
Employee Invisibility	0.144	0.752	2.20	0.000

As observed in Table 1, the significance values for all variables were less than 0.05, indicating that the data do not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, although the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test showed non-normality, the use of structural equation modeling (SEM) was appropriate, as it is robust against moderate deviations from normality, especially with large samples.



Table 2. Correlation Between Research Variables

Variable	Pearson Correlation Coefficient with Employee Invisibility
Organizational Silence	0.718
Organizational Dissent	0.235

Page | 5

The results presented in Table 2 reveal that organizational silence has a strong positive correlation with employee invisibility ($r = 0.718$), indicating that as silence increases within the organization, employees' sense of invisibility also tends to rise. Meanwhile, organizational dissent shows a weaker but positive correlation with employee invisibility ($r = 0.235$), suggesting that dissent has a limited yet significant association with this construct.

Table 3. Model Fit Indices

Index	Acceptable Threshold	Reported Value
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.074
χ^2/df	< 3	2.097
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.91
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.83
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.98
NFI	≥ 0.90	0.97
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.97
IFI	≥ 0.90	0.98

Table 3 illustrates that most fit indices are within the acceptable range. The RMSEA value (0.074) indicates a satisfactory model fit, and the χ^2/df ratio (2.097) falls below the threshold of 3, confirming that the model adequately fits the data. High values for CFI, NFI, TLI, and IFI (all above 0.95) further support the robustness of the structural model, although the AGFI (0.83) slightly falls below the ideal cutoff, suggesting minor model refinements could further improve the fit.

Table 4. Path Coefficients, t-values, and Significance Levels

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	p-Value	Type of Relationship
Organizational Dissent $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.75	8.45	0.000	Direct
Organizational Silence $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.55	4.26	0.000	Direct

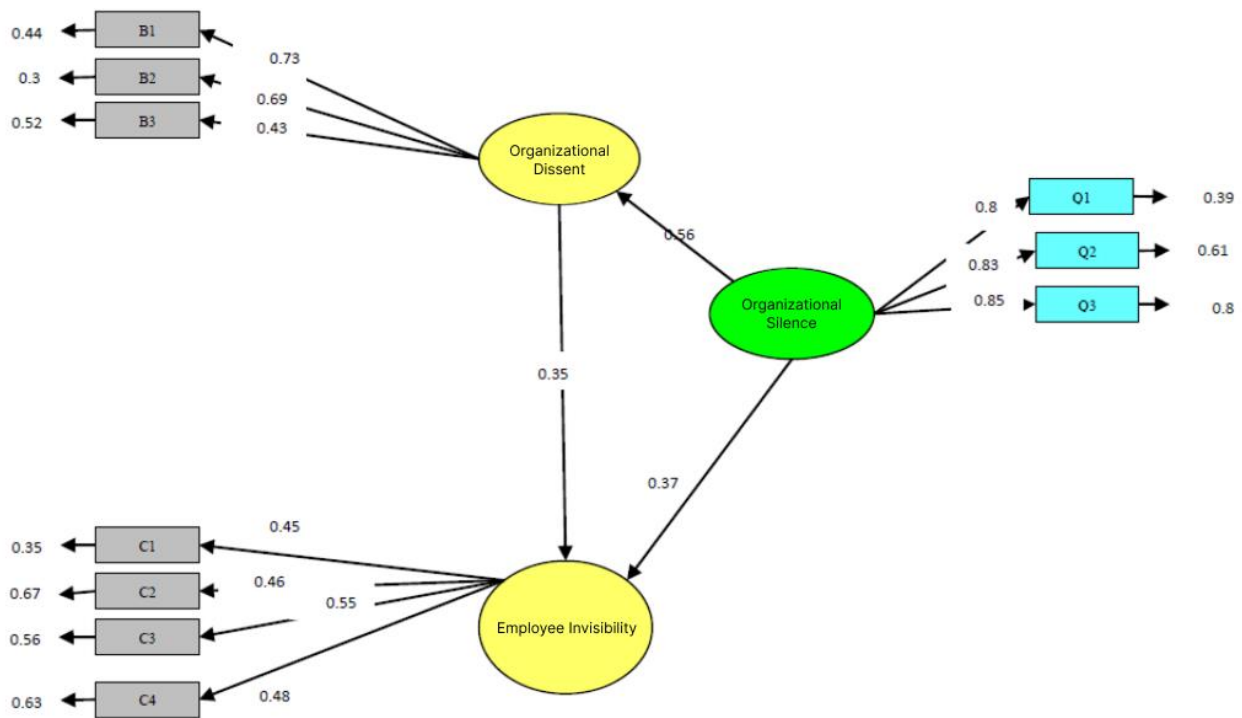
According to Table 4, both hypothesized direct relationships are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Organizational silence positively predicts employee invisibility ($\beta = 0.55$, $t = 4.26$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that increased silence leads to a stronger sense of invisibility among employees. Similarly, organizational dissent significantly predicts employee invisibility ($\beta = 0.75$, $t = 8.45$, $p < 0.001$), confirming its substantial role as a mediating factor between silence and invisibility.

Table 5. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects in the Main Path Model

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Organizational Dissent $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.75	—	0.75
Organizational Silence $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.55	—	0.55
Organizational Dissent $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.26	0.41	0.67
Organizational Silence $\rightarrow$ Employee Invisibility	0.39	0.42	0.57

As shown in Table 5, organizational dissent and organizational silence have both direct and indirect effects on employee invisibility. The total effect of organizational dissent (0.67) surpasses that of organizational silence (0.57), indicating that organizational dissent serves as a partial mediator. This means that silence not only directly influences invisibility but also indirectly affects it through its impact on dissent dynamics. Therefore, the results validate the proposed mediating role of organizational dissent in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility among staff in the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee of Yazd.





Chi-square=3471.18, df=1401, P-value=0.000, RMSEA=0.054

Figure 1. Final Model of the Study

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the present study indicated that organizational dissent plays a mediating role in the relationship between organizational silence and employee invisibility among employees of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (RA) of Yazd. Specifically, the findings demonstrated that organizational silence had a significant positive effect on employee invisibility, while organizational dissent significantly influenced the same outcome, both directly and indirectly. These results suggest that silence in the workplace not only leads to psychological and social withdrawal but also strengthens the perception of invisibility among employees. Moreover, when organizational dissent is encouraged and appropriately managed, it can act as a buffer—transforming silence into constructive dialogue rather than emotional disengagement.

The strong correlation found between organizational silence and employee invisibility confirms the premise that employees who refrain from expressing their opinions often experience marginalization, diminished recognition, and reduced participation in decision-making processes (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Bagheri & Hossein Pour, 2023; Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023). Similar to the findings of Ahmadi et al., silence is not merely the absence of communication but a defensive strategy adopted by employees to avoid potential conflict or punishment. When individuals repeatedly suppress their voices, they internalize a sense of helplessness that ultimately manifests as invisibility within the organization. The study by Bagheri and Hossein Pour (Bagheri & Hossein Pour, 2023) further supports this dynamic by showing that silence mediates the relationship between organizational cynicism and deviant behaviors, which often stem from perceived alienation and disregard.

The findings are also consistent with Mirzaei and Deloui (Mirzaei & Deloui, 2023), who emphasized that organizational silence is closely tied to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. When employees perceive that their voices are not

heard, their attachment to the organization weakens, and they withdraw emotionally. Such withdrawal aligns with the concept of invisibility, as described by Qayeni Ahmadabad (Qayeni Ahmadabad, 2020), where employees begin to perceive their presence and contributions as unnoticed or undervalued. Thus, organizational silence and invisibility can be viewed as complementary outcomes of an environment that restricts psychological safety and participatory communication.

The mediating role of organizational dissent observed in this study provides deeper insight into the transformation of silence into action. Dissent, when appropriately channeled, can serve as a corrective mechanism by providing employees with an outlet to express disagreement, thereby mitigating the negative consequences of silence (Sulphey & Jasim, 2025; Yazdani et al., 2024). The results corroborate the work of Sulphey and Jasim, who argued that paradoxical leadership—characterized by openness to contradiction—can reduce organizational hypocrisy and inertia, thus transforming silence into voice. In the same vein, Yazdani et al. (Yazdani et al., 2024) demonstrated that organizational trust and resilience reduce the tendency toward silence by reinforcing the legitimacy of employee dissent. Accordingly, in the context of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, fostering a culture of dissent may enable employees to articulate concerns that would otherwise manifest as invisibility.

Another explanation for the observed relationships lies in leadership styles and organizational structures. The results align with those of Rabiul et al. (Rabiul et al., 2023) and Ozturk et al. (Ozturk et al., 2021), who found that leadership behaviors that emphasize trust, empathy, and inclusion significantly enhance employee engagement and reduce the prevalence of silence. In organizations where leadership is perceived as open and supportive, dissent is not interpreted as disloyalty but rather as constructive feedback. Conversely, passive or toxic leadership—identified by Akharavi et al. (Akharavi et al., 2022) and Aminzadeh (Aminzadeh, 2019)—can amplify both silence and invisibility by discouraging initiative. Employees under such leadership conditions learn that conformity is rewarded, while dissent invites sanctions, leading to emotional detachment and withdrawal.

The findings also resonate with Ghanbari and Majooni (Ghanbari & Majooni, 2022), who showed that toxic leadership and organizational blockage increase teacher burnout through the mediating role of organizational silence. Similarly, Fatehi Zadeh and Zare (Fatehi Zadeh & Zare, 2019) identified passive leadership as a driver of incivility and workplace alienation. Together, these studies suggest that leadership behaviors and organizational climates that suppress voice directly contribute to invisibility. In such settings, employees may physically remain within the organization but become “psychologically absent,” which reflects the core construct of invisibility as defined by Mohammadiyari et al. (Mohammadiyari et al., 2018).

Furthermore, the structural equation modeling results confirmed that dissent not only influences invisibility directly but also mediates the relationship between silence and invisibility. This dual role emphasizes that dissent operates as a psychological bridge—transforming the internalized frustration of silence into constructive expression. Supporting this interpretation, Wang et al. (Wang et al., 2023) and Tran (Tran, 2023) observed that leadership grounded in strengths-based and green human resource practices fosters environments where employees feel psychologically safe to voice opinions. This sense of safety disrupts the silence-invisibility cycle by validating individual perspectives.

The model’s goodness-of-fit indices (RMSEA = 0.074, CFI = 0.98) confirmed that the hypothesized structure fit the empirical data well, suggesting the theoretical coherence of the mediating role of dissent. This outcome aligns with the conceptual models proposed by Quansah et al. (Quansah et al., 2023), who linked employee engagement and psychological safety to performance outcomes through leadership behaviors that encourage open communication. In contrast, when organizations neglect the cultivation of psychological safety, employees engage in defensive silence—a phenomenon elaborated by Zhang (Zhang, 2024), who found that professional identity among nurses was weakened by organizational silence, leading to emotional invisibility.

The significant correlation between organizational silence and invisibility ($r = 0.718$) is noteworthy and comparable to results reported by Mousavi et al. (Mousavi et al., 2020), who demonstrated that bureaucratic culture fosters invisibility through passive leadership mechanisms. The same pattern was reported by Ghasemi (Ghasemi, 2020), whose findings indicated that organizational laziness and invisibility co-occur in environments characterized by silence. The positive relationship between dissent and invisibility ($r = 0.235$) in the present study reveals that dissent is not entirely risk-free; when not supported by a receptive culture, even constructive criticism can heighten employees’ perception of being sidelined. This



paradoxical finding is consistent with Macey et al. (Macey et al., 2009) and Federman (Federman, 2009), who emphasized that engagement and voice initiatives must be accompanied by cultural transformation to be effective.

Moreover, the direct and indirect path coefficients obtained ($\beta = 0.75$ for dissent $\rightarrow$ invisibility; $\beta = 0.55$ for silence $\rightarrow$ invisibility) reveal that silence and dissent exert substantial but distinct influences. Silence exerts a suppressive influence by diminishing visibility, while dissent, if managed correctly, serves as an emancipatory force. However, when organizational structures are rigid or punitive, dissent may amplify invisibility due to perceived nonconformity (Anbardar & Mohadnia, 2023; Lee et al., 2023). This dual role of dissent highlights the need for leadership sensitivity to contextual factors, as echoed in studies by Iddagoda et al. (Iddagoda et al., 2023) and Douglas and Roberts (Douglas & Roberts, 2020), which found that employee age, trustworthiness, and leadership support significantly influence the expression of voice.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the study's findings reinforce the idea that invisibility is not only an individual perception but a collective phenomenon shaped by cultural norms and organizational ideologies (Salehi Noudaz, 2021; Tabatabai et al., 2020; Zar'at Doost Estadi, 2021). In highly bureaucratic institutions, conformity is often equated with loyalty, and dissent with disobedience. This cultural bias toward obedience inhibits innovation and marginalizes critical thinkers. As reported by Nakhai Sharif et al. (Nakhai Sharif et al., 2023), political behaviors and hierarchical power structures contribute to silence by discouraging open debate. In contrast, organizations that institutionalize dialogue—through formal participation mechanisms or feedback systems—can counteract invisibility and enhance engagement (Ozturk et al., 2021; Quansah et al., 2023).

In educational and welfare organizations, where service orientation and ethical compliance dominate, silence often emerges from moral tension: employees may recognize problems but refrain from voicing them to preserve institutional reputation (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Ghanbari & Majooni, 2022). This dynamic mirrors findings by Hosinzadeh (Hosinzadeh, 2019) in municipal contexts, where silence and invisibility were driven by fear of reprisal and perceived power imbalance. Such evidence collectively underscores that invisibility is both a symptom and a consequence of organizational climates that suppress critical dialogue.

Taken together, the findings of this study contribute to a growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of communicative openness as a predictor of organizational health. By demonstrating the mediating role of dissent, this research extends prior models of employee engagement (Harter et al., 2002; Macey et al., 2009; Richman et al., 2008) to contexts where voice suppression is structurally embedded. It highlights dissent not as a disruptive behavior but as a potential adaptive mechanism that can restore employees' psychological visibility.

This study, despite its theoretical and empirical contributions, is subject to several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference; future longitudinal studies could better capture the dynamic evolution of silence, dissent, and invisibility over time. Second, the research was confined to employees of a single public organization—the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee of Yazd—which limits generalizability to other sectors or cultural contexts. Third, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases, particularly given the sensitive nature of the constructs under investigation. Moreover, contextual variables such as leadership style, organizational size, and departmental structure were not included as moderators, which might have influenced the strength or direction of observed relationships. Finally, qualitative insights, such as interviews or focus groups, could have enriched the interpretation of the quantitative findings by uncovering the lived experiences behind employee silence and dissent.

Future studies should adopt mixed-methods approaches to capture the multifaceted nature of organizational silence and dissent. Researchers could explore how cultural dimensions—such as power distance and collectivism—shape the expression or suppression of dissent across different sectors. Comparative studies involving private and public institutions may reveal whether bureaucratic rigidity or market competitiveness exerts stronger effects on invisibility. Additionally, future research should consider integrating psychological constructs such as self-efficacy, resilience, and moral courage to explain why some employees choose to dissent while others remain silent. Longitudinal research can further elucidate the temporal interplay between silence, dissent, and invisibility, identifying potential feedback loops. Furthermore, intervention-based studies could test the effectiveness of leadership development programs or communication training designed to enhance voice behavior and reduce invisibility.



For practitioners and organizational leaders, the findings underscore the necessity of cultivating a culture that legitimizes dissent as a constructive force rather than a threat. Establishing transparent feedback mechanisms, participatory decision-making processes, and recognition systems can reduce employee invisibility. Leadership training should emphasize emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and active listening to encourage employees to express their views without fear. Organizations should also adopt reward systems that value innovation and voice behaviors, thereby transforming silence into engagement. Finally, fostering peer support networks and informal dialogue spaces can serve as catalysts for trust-building, helping employees regain a sense of visibility and belonging within the organization.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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