

COMMENTARY

## Building on top the “architects of silence”

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Asselineau et al. (2024) propose the idea of leaders as “architects of silence” (p. 12); therefore, it would be beneficial to discuss how the practice of the imposed collective silence may work more effectively under specific leadership types and leader characteristics. This commentary will elaborate more on the author’s proposed idea of leaders serving as architects by providing more insight from leadership effects perspectives through the exploration of what kind of leaders could be better architects. Leaders should be open to innovation and flexible, as silence practices are a relatively new proposed concept for organizations. Leaders who might be fitting as effective architects of changes within organizations may undertake leadership styles such as servant, authentic, and transformational (Agote et al., 2016; Heine et al., 2022). Due to the short nature of commentaries, this paper will primarily focus on transformational leadership style as one of the examples.

### Transformational leaders as silence architects

Leaders’ innovation fostering can be applied to the example of imposed collective silence, such as silent meetings (Asselineau et al.). As a specific example of procedural change in meetings, leaders implementing this change in meeting structure should be open to innovation by learning new processes. According to Kayes et al. (2023), one of the proposed practices that leaders should engage in when learning new goals is searching for new innovative processes for issues they are facing. Additionally, in a meta-analytical examination, transformational leadership was positively related to creativity and innovation climate (Koh et al., 2019, p. 635). On top of following the traditional set of preexisting organizational procedures, leaders should also be able to foster a creative environment for their team and pursue new methods of completing tasks when necessary.

Leaders should foster flexibility when silence changes are applied in meeting structures. Kayes et al. (2023) have also stated that it is important for leaders to be flexible when handling newly discovered obstacles. Work meetings tend to be unproductive and expensive (Mroz et al., 2018); thus, including a new procedure of silence practices prior to active conversing as a time for more detailed reflection and analysis to reach efficient collective decision-making could be significant (Asselineau et al.). It is a challenge to avoid traditional meeting processes where time is filled with bouncing the same ideas around and the loudest member overpowering the critical silent ideas in the group. It might save time in the long run by taking a moment in the imposed collective silence to make decisions using well-reflected thoughts, so they can move on to the next task. Through these, leaders should actively evaluate the procedural change’s success and modify the silence practices as needed during meeting times. Additionally, these types of leaders stimulate a vision that the company values employees’ innovative behaviors, and it is influenced

by how open and flexible the leaders and workplace are toward innovation (Kim & Yoon, 2015). Last, with added flexibility characteristics, it allows leaders to seek constructive feedback from attendants and colleagues as these changes need to be tuned based on organizational and team-based needs.

Transformational leadership has four dimensions: *inspirational motivation*, *idealized influence*, *individualized consideration*, and *intellectual stimulation* (Bass et al., 2003). Based on the inspirational motivation dimension, leaders engage in behaviors that uplift and inspire employees to have a shared outlook and vision (Bass et al., 2003); in this instance, it is accepting new practices of silence in organizations. Next, idealized influence highlights leaders' admirable, trustable, respectable, and altruistic attributes, enabling employees to act similarly to them (Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003). Third, this type of leader is individually considerate and serves as an attentive mentor to employees' success and development goals, allowing mentees to become increasingly competent professionally (Bass, 1985, 1997; Grau-Alberola et al., 2022). In the last dimension, leaders create a safe space for employees to be inquisitive and have novel ideas with regard to preexisting procedures, and their inputs are valued (Bass et al., 2003). In the context of silence practice in organizations, these leaders will create a shared vision toward silence by being attentive, creating a safe space for employees to be inquisitive toward these changes, and encouraging them to provide input when implementing silence practices and modifying it as necessary.

## Conclusion

For final remarks, although discussing the potential benefits of silence-based practices in organizations is essential, detailed research on which leader characteristics are vital, as they are the architects of this change. Exploring the transformational leadership styles' connection to silence practices is one of the first attempts made to explore the leader's influences in this new avenue of research; however, it is essential to note that this is not the only leadership that might be effective for change. Thus, other styles should also be reviewed equally. For organizations to succeed in collective silence practices, researchers and practitioners should contextually assess various leaders' characteristics and styles when leading their respective team members.

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