

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345779588>

The role of communication skills in the promotion of productivity of health human resource in Iran: A cross-sectional study

Article in *Journal of Education and Health Promotion* · September 2020

DOI: 10.4103/jehp.jehp_180_20

CITATIONS

0

READS

22

4 authors, including:



Behrooz Pouragha

Alborz University of Medical Sciences

16 PUBLICATIONS 68 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Hojjat Sheikhbardsiri

Isfahan University of Medical Sciences

45 PUBLICATIONS 171 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Rezaei F [View project](#)



Development and validation of tool of evaluation health feild exercises in emergencies and disasters [View project](#)

Access this article online
Quick Response Code:

Website: www.jehp.net
DOI: 10.4103/jehp.jehp_180_20

The role of communication skills in the promotion of productivity of health human resource in Iran: A cross-sectional study

Behrooz Pouragha, Mahnaz Keshtkar¹, Mahdiah Abdolahi², Hojjat Sheikhbardsiri³

Abstract:

INTRODUCTION: Organization survival is dependent on communications and managers spend a main portion of their time to establish communications. The identification, improvement, and development of communication skills serve as the essential components of successful organizations. The present study aimed to investigate the role of communication skills in human resource (HR) productivity in North Iran and aimed to investigate the role of communication skills in health HR (HHR) productivity in North Iran.

METHODS: The study employed a cross-sectional design and was conducted in six deputies supervised by the Alborz University of Medical Sciences, in 2019. The statistical population included all 302 employees were selected as the sample population according to the Cochran's formula. Using two researcher-made questionnaires of communication skills and HHR productivity, we assessed the role of communication skills in HHR productivity.

RESULTS: According to the research findings, there were significant relationships between communication skills including verbal skills, listening skills, and effectiveness skills with HHR productivity ($P \leq 0.05$). There was a significant relationship between age group, gender, level of education, and travel home-university distance with communication skills and resource productivity of employees ($P \leq 0.05$).

CONCLUSION: This study examines the role of communication skills in the promotion of HHR productivity who work in the administrative section of the University of Medical Sciences in Iran. Findings suggest that health planners and authorities may need to examine factors that contribute to the promotion of the communication skills for increase HHR productivity of employees and improved performance of health organizations.

Keywords:

Communication skills, human resource, Iran, productivity

Introduction

An organization is an example of a communication network that tries to improve its conditions continually. To realize this, it plans its business capitals.^[1] Health human resource (HHR) is an example of such capitals and organizations try to make them be more productive. Working on communication skills is one

of the best techniques for promoting HHR productivity.^[2,3] Organizations need communications to survive. A better understanding and identification of human communication skills leads to organizational promotion, therefore communication skills in health care system should be taught in a systematic way, including practice and constructive feedback.^[4-6] Therefore, modern organizations need to understand the necessity of establishing appropriate

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

For reprints contact: reprints@medknow.com

How to cite this article: Pouragha B, Keshtkar M, Abdolahi M, Sheikhbardsiri H. The role of communication skills in the promotion of productivity of health human resource in Iran: A cross-sectional study. *J Edu Health Promot* 2020;9:229.

Department of Public Health, School of Health, Alborz University of Medical Sciences, Karaj, Iran, ¹Department of Human Resources Management, Alborz University of Medical Sciences, Karaj, Iran, ²Department of Nursing, Islamic Azad University, Zarand Branch, Zarand, Iran, ³Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Institute for Futures Studies in Health, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Kerman, Iran

Address for correspondence:

Dr. Hojjat Sheikhbardsiri, Social Determinants of Health Research Center, Institute for Futures Studies in Health, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Kerman, Iran.
E-mail: hojat.sheikhbardsiri@gmail.com

Received: 28-02-2020

Accepted: 05-04-2020

Published: 28-09-2020

communications with people. However, the lack of understanding and awareness of the quality and nature of communications and their role inside an organization have not still been addressed.^[7]

Communications can be considered as the obligatory element of success in all social systems and subsystems. Managers have found that establishing effective communications with HHR and understanding their communication motives plays an effective role in their success in achieving organizational targets. Communication skills and their role in human resource (HR) productivity contribute to the main portion of organizational communications. Therefore, managers should be aware of the quality of the communication process and establishing effective communications.^[8-10] Communication in the health system may become quite challenging due to the complexity of this field. The interaction between health workers and patients is influenced by the feelings and thoughts; patients' outcome and patient and physician satisfaction can be improved with a good communication.^[11]

To provide optimal patient care, all members of the health care team must effectively communicate with patients and communication skills of physicians and nurses are critical components in quality of health care,^[12] and also, patients' satisfaction is obtained when facilities provided health service (hospital, health center, and clinic) pay attention to patients' experiences as well as their demand and need.^[13] Studies have shown that good communication skills in the health system can increase staff and patients' satisfaction,^[14] quality of care, and patients' safety.^[15,16] Communication is a skill, and skills are capabilities that are obtained by people via learning and education.^[11] They are actually the different dimensions of people capabilities that should be effectively manifested in practice.^[12]

Medical University in Iran is in charge of medical education and health-care delivery, so paying attention to the skills learned in medical universities with regard to their role in promoting community health is really important. This study aims to answer this question that "what is the role of communication skills in the productivity of the employees of University of Medical Sciences in Iran?" and "can we use it as a fit measure in universities, considering the importance of these variables?"

Methods

Respondent characteristics and setting

The statistical population of the study included all 302 personnel who work in the six administrative deputies at Alborz University of Medical Sciences including

health ($n = 92$), treatment ($n = 79$), logistic ($n = 39$), food and medicine ($n = 32$), student cultural ($n = 28$), and educational ($n = 32$). The appropriate sample size was selected from all the above staff as the statistical population estimated using Cochran's formula:

$$n = \frac{N \times z^2_{\alpha/2} \times p(1-p)}{\varepsilon^2(N-2) + z^2_{\alpha/2} \times p(1-p)}$$

$$= \frac{302(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05^2)(302) + (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5} = 169$$

Data were kept confidentially by putting no name or other personal information in the questionnaires. Questionnaires were handed out by research assistants and distributed to the participants in the office environment and participants filled the questionnaire during their daily work hours.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were all the personnel worked in the office environment. Exclusion criteria included a lack of consent for participation in the study and incomplete questionnaires.

Data collection

For data collection, the research team initially developed a tree questionnaire after an extensive review of the relevant literature to achieve good content validity. We developed the tree questionnaire in Farsi to reconcile study issues and concepts culturally and linguistically for Persian-speaking study participants. The first questionnaire included questions about demographic characteristics of employees including sex, age, education level, job experience, position, and travel home-university distance. The second questionnaire contained 18 questions to investigate communication skills of employees including verbal dimension (items 1-6), listening dimension (items 7-12), and effectiveness dimension (items 13-18). The third questionnaire contained 14 questions to investigate HHR productivity. Two questionnaires of communication skills and HHR productivity were scored using Likert 5-point scale (completely agree = 5, agree = 4, no idea = 3, disagree = 2, and completely disagree = 1).

The communication skills and HHR productivity questionnaires were validated using the viewpoints of ten faculty members at Alborz University of Medical Sciences to resolve ambiguities indicating an acceptable content and face validity of the test. To assess the reliability of the scales in this research, a reliability test was conducted by Cronbach's alpha method among 30 subjects yielding and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.95 for communication skills and 0.83 for HHR productivity, showing good reliability of the questionnaires.

Data analyses

To analyze data, descriptive tests including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation and analytical tests including the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test were conducted to indicate that the data were sampled from a population with a normal distribution. The correlation between demographic data and communication skills and HHR productivity was examined by the Pearson correlation coefficient and one-way ANOVA and *t*-tests. The multivariate regression was used to determine the effects of variables that were assessed using the SPSS software (version 19, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA). There was a significant difference at the level of $P < 0.05$.

Results

According to the results, 39.1% and 60.9% of the studied cases were male and female, respectively. In addition, 12.4%, 46.7%, 30.7%, and 10.2% of the cases were 20–30, 30–40, 40–50, and >50 years old, respectively. Regarding education, 2.9%, 66.2%, and 30.9% of the cases had over-diploma, BS and MS, and above degree, respectively. Furthermore, 11.2%, 22.4%, 38.4%, 17.7%, and 10.3% of the cases had <5, 5–10, 10–15, 15–20, and >20 years of job experience. Of the studied cases, 13.6% were no experts, 76.3% were experts, 7.1% were experts in charge, and 3% were managers. Regarding the travel time from home to university, 32.6%, 42%, and 25.4% of the cases were traveling the distance in <½ h, 0.5–1 h, and >1 h, as shown in Table 1.

The *t*-test results also revealed the positive and significant relationship of gender with the communication skills ($P = 0.04$). The ANOVA results revealed the positive and significant relationship of age group, level of education, and travel home-university distance with the communication skills affected the productivity of employees ($P \leq 0.05$).

The results of Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive significant relationship between the dimensions of communication skills and HHR productivity ($P = 0.000$). On the other hand, the coefficient of correlation is $R = 0.814$ which has a positive sign and is a high value. Therefore, this relationship is direct and strong in the meaning that as communication skills increase HHR productivity. The results of Pearson correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of communication skills and HHR productivity where effectiveness ($r = 0.812$, $P = 0.000$), listening ($r = 0.706$, $P = 0.000$), and verbal ($r = 0.624$, $P = 0.000$) dimensions have the highest correlation with HHR productivity, respectively shows in Table 2.

The regression implementation stages of communication skills with standard and nonstandard coefficients,

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the research sample

Variable	Frequency (%)
Sex	
Male	66 (39.1)
Female	103 (60.9)
Age	
20-30	21 (12.4)
30-40	79 (46.7)
40-50	52 (30.7)
>50	17 (10.2)
Education	
Over diploma	5 (2.9)
BS	112 (66.2)
MS and above	52 (30.9)
Job experience	
<5	19 (11.2)
5-10	38 (22.4)
10-15	65 (38.4)
15-20	30 (17.7)
>20	17 (10.3)
Position	
Non specialist	23 (13.6)
Specialist	129 (76.3)
Responsible specialist	12 (7.1)
Manager	5 (0.3)
Travel home-university distance	
<½h	55 (32.6)
0.5-1 h	71 (42)
>1 h	43 (25.4)

Table 2: The coefficient of the correlation of communication skill dimensions with human resource productivity of the research sample

Variable (communication skill dimensions)	Coefficient of correlation	Significant level	<i>n</i>
Verbal → HR productivity	0.624	0.000	169
Listening → HR productivity	0.706	0.000	169
Effectiveness → HR productivity	0.812	0.000	169

HR=Human resource

standard deviation, and *t*-test with their significance levels are shown in Table 3. Therefore, it can be stated that there is a significant linear relationship between communication skills and HHR productivity. The *t*-test for regression coefficient also shows the significance of this coefficient (significance = 0.000). In other words, communication skills have a positive significant effect on HHR productivity as indicated by the positive sign of B-factor, as shown in Table 3.

The effect and explanatory role of each communication skills dimension on HHR productivity were determined by entering method regression analysis. The study data indicate that the correlation of the effectiveness dimension, which was introduced to the regression model to explain the variance of HHR productivity, is

0.812 and it explains 66% of changes to HHR productivity. Listening skill was introduced to the model too with the coefficient of correlation of 0.706 and the coefficient of determination of 49%. Moreover, the correlation between verbal skills and HHR productivity was 0.624 and verbal skills explained 38% of changes to HHR productivity, as shown in Table 4.

Multiple regression models showed that increased verbal skill, listening skill, and effectiveness skill increased HHR productivity. Among all factors influencing HHR productivity based on β coefficient, the dimension of effectiveness skill among communication skills dimensions had the most impact on HHR productivity, as shown in Table 5.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of communication skills on HHR productivity. Based on the results of demographic variables, communication skills have a higher influence on female employees of the studied university because the number of females is higher in the population. Majority of communication skills affected the productivity of employees aged 30–40. Moreover, employees with BS. degree obtained more benefits from this study. The participation of the specialists of the studied university in this study was high and the effect of communication skills on their productivity was higher. Finally, the employees who

travel home-university distance in 0.5–1 h showed more productivity.

The results of this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between communication skills and HHR productivity. This agrees with the results studies of Raina and Roebuck,^[13] Abas and Imam,^[14] and Omani and Yu and Nilsson.^[15] Our results showed that communication skills play a role in promoting the productivity of the employees of the studied university so that the employees believe that the existence of effective communication skills will promote HHR productivity. It is suggested, therefore, that managers should empower their employees by educating them how to concentrate on different issues that are in connection with communication skills or should strengthen their communication skills by arranging different courses to build new skills in them. In addition, managers can promote employees' productivity by arranging training courses associated with verbal, listening, and effectiveness skills. On the other hand, HHR productivity could be promoted by the awareness of the planning department of the mission, vision, and organizational objectives.

This study showed a significant relationship between verbal skills and HHR productivity. This agrees with the results of studies Noe *et al.*^[16] and Kiani *et al.*^[17] In other words, verbal skills play a role in promoting the productivity of the employees of the studied

Table 3: Regression model coefficients

Model	Nonstandard coefficient		Standard coefficient (β)	t	Significant level
	B	SE			
Constant	0.512	0.163	-	3.140	0.000
Communication skills	0.831	0.046	0.814	18.100	0.000

SE=Standard error

Table 4: The effect and role of each communication skill dimensions on human resource productivity of the research sample

Regression results	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	Significant	STD	Durbin-Watson
Verbal skill	0.624	0.389	0.385	106.214	0.000	0.49037	1.74
Listening skill	0.706	0.498	0.495	165.598	0.000	0.44444	1.92
Effectiveness skill	0.812	0.660	0.658	323.690	0.000	36.591	1.52

STD=Standard Deviation

Table 5: The coefficient of the correlation of communication skill dimensions with human resource productivity of the research sample

Model (dimensions of communication skills)	Nonstandard coefficient		Standard coefficient (β)	t	Significant level
	B	SE			
Constant	1.274	0.212	-	6.016	0.000
Verbal skill	0.602	0.058	0.324	10.306	0.000
constant	1.313	0.167	-	7.848	0.000
Listening skill	0.609	0.047	0.706	12.869	0.000
Constant	0.953	0.140	-	6.806	0.000
Effectiveness skill	0.711	0.040	0.812	17.991	0.000

SE=Standard error

university so that the employees believe that the existence of effective verbal skills will promote HHR productivity. It is suggested that managers should state ideas in the framework of general words to strengthen verbal and speaking skills of their employees through education.

This study obtained a significant relationship between listening skills and HHR productivity. This agrees with the study results of Arnold and Boggs, Grudzen *et al.*, and Kurtz *et al.*^[18-20] In other words, listening skills play a role in promoting the productivity of the employees of the studied university so that the employees believe that the existence of effective listening skills will promote HR productivity. It is suggested that employees should listen to the words of their clients more accurately to establish an effective listening and comprehend their whole words.

This study obtained a significant relationship between effectiveness skills and HHR productivity. This agrees with the results of studies Najafi *et al.*^[21] and Delery and Gupta.^[22] In other words, effectiveness skills play a role in promoting the productivity of the employees of the studied university so that the employees believe that the existence of effective effectiveness skills will promote HHR productivity. Therefore, employees can speak with clients in a manner that could enable them to get an accurate feedback of their words.^[22]

Limitation

Potential limitations of the present study were a lack of cooperation of the participants and not responding to the questions truly due to fear of revealing information. These limitations were partially overcome by communicating to the participants properly and explaining that their participation is optional, their responses will be kept confidential, and they can fill it without writing their names on it.

Conclusion

This study examines the role of communication skills in the promotion of HHR productivity who work in the administrative section of the University of Medical Sciences in Iran. Findings suggest that health planners and authorities may need to examine factors that contribute to the promotion of the communication skills for increase HHR productivity of employees for improved performance of health organizations. Conducting similar comparative studies in different organizations is recommended.

Acknowledgment

This article is based on the findings of an approved research project with a number: IR.ABZUMS.REC.1395.1438, and

also, we would like to thank all the people who helped us to perform this study.

Financial support and sponsorship

This study was financially supported by Alborz University of Medical Sciences.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Tayebi MA, Pouragha B, Bagheri MK. The performance of select universities of medical sciences based on the components affecting medical education. *F1000Research* 2018;7:301.
2. Nobakht S, Shirdel A, Molavi-Taleghani Y, Doustmohammadi MM, Sheikhbardsiri H. Human resources for health: A narrative review of adequacy and distribution of clinical and nonclinical human resources in hospitals of Iran. *Int J Health Plann Manage* 2018;33:560-72.
3. Highfill T, Ozcan Y. Productivity and quality of hospitals that joined the Medicare shared savings accountable care organization program. *Int J Healthc Manage* 2016;9:210-7.
4. Kamuzora F. Enhancing human resource productivity using information and communication technologies: Opportunities and challenges for Tanzania. In: Mzumbe University-CAFRAD Regional Conference. Arusha, Tanzania; February, 2006.
5. Ammendolia C, Côté P, Cancelliere C, Cassidy JD, Hartvigsen J, Boyle E, *et al.* Healthy and productive workers Using intervention mapping to design a workplace health promotion and wellness program to improve presenteeism. *BMC Public Health* 2016;16:1190.
6. Giannini M. Performance and quality improvement in healthcare organizations. *Int J Healthc Manage* 2015;8:173-9.
7. Ghalesefidi MJ, Maghsoudi J, Pouragha B. Effectiveness of gratitude on psychological well-being and quality of life among hospitalized substance abuse patients. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*. 2019;16(2):123-8.
8. Tabibi SJ, Nasirpoor Amended A, Zahiri Abyaneh Z. Relationship between managers communication skill and staff motivation in Modarres Hospital of Tehran. *JHOSP* 2013;1273-80.
9. Brunton M, Cook C. Communication in the clinic Negotiating nursing practice in sexual health clinics. *Int J Healthc Manage* 2019;1260-7.
10. Laspa C, Priporas CV. The productive efficiency of blood banks Using data envelopment and simple ratio analyses to measure the performance of health services. *J Manage Mark Healthc* 2008;14:12-28.
11. Sheikhbardsiri H, Mousavi SH, Doustmohammadi MM, Karimi M, Salahi S. The effect of educational workshop on emergency department nurses' self-efficacy in patient training. *J Edu Health Promot* 2019;8:136.
12. Sheikhbardsiri H, Khademipour G, Nekoei-Moghadam M, Aminizadeh M. Motivation of the nurses in pre-hospital emergency and educational hospitals emergency in the southeast of Iran. *The International journal of health planning and management* 2018;33:255-64.
13. Raina R, Roebuck DB. Exploring cultural influence on managerial communication in relationship to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the employees' propensity to leave in the insurance sector of India. *Int J Bus Commun* 2016;5397-130.
14. Abas MC, Imam OA. Graduates' competence on employability skills and job performance. *Int J Eval Res Educ* 2016;5:119-25.

15. Yu L, Nilsson J. Social capital and the financing performance of farmer cooperatives in Fujian Province, China. *Agribusiness* 2018;34:847-64.
16. Hollenbeck JR, Noe RA, Gerhart BA. *Human resource management: Gaining a competitive advantage*. McGraw-Hill Education; 2018.
17. Kiani F, Balouchi A, Shahsavani A. Investigation of nursing students' verbal communication quality during patients' education in Zahedan hospitals Southeast of Iran. *Global J Health Sci* 2016;8:331.
18. Arnold EC, Boggs KU. *Interpersonal Relationships E-Book Professional Communication Skills for Nurses*. Maryland: Elsevier Health Sciences; 2019.
19. Grudzen CR, Emlet LL, Kuntz J, Shreves A, Zimny E, Gang M, *et al.* EM Talk: communication skills training for emergency medicine patients with serious illness. *BMJ supportive & palliative care* 2016;6:219-24.
20. Kurtz S, Draper J, Silverman J. *Teaching and Learning Communication Skills in Medicine*. Calgary, Canada: CRC Press; 2017.
21. Najafi K, Tirgari A, Yazdani J, Falaki M, Salehi F. Investigating Employees' and Health Care Practitioners' Communication Skills. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Clinical Psychology* 2017;23:208-17.
22. Delery J, Gupta N. Human resource management practices and organizational effectiveness Internal fit matters. *J Organ Eff People Perform* 2016;3:139-63.