

The Effective Factors on Improving Communication Skills between Regimental Commanders and Conscripts at an Army Introductory Military Training Center

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To investigate the factors affecting communicational skills of regimental commanders toward conscripts at an army introductory military training center in Tehran.

Materials and Methods: The participants were 82 regimental commanders of the regiments and battalions of an introductory military training center. A 21-item questionnaire was used to collect the required data. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation coefficient tests and stepwise regression were also used.

Results: Stepwise regression analysis indicates that in the first step, the individual factors are involved in Regression equation. Individual factors predict 28% and in the second step, environmental and organizational factors can predict 35% of the regimental commanders' communicational skills toward conscripts at the studied military training center.

Conclusion: There is a meaningful correlation between the environmental factors and regimental commanders' communicational skills.

Keywords: communication; communication skills; introductory military training, regimental commander, conscript.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is the key of a civilized society and the requirement of development and progress for human beings. Herbert Simon states that "without communication, there will be no organization and no possibility of the influence of a group on individual behavior." With the aid of communication, managers control, manage, and lead the staffs and plan. Playing an important role in forming an organization, communication is the key to maintain the organization.⁽¹⁾

It is the communication that makes a harmonized organization and grants a sense of unity to it. The manager is responsible for establishing good communication in an organization. He or she should be aware of the details of communicational process.^(2,3) At the present time, one of the most important skills needed for managers

is the communicational skills, which require a special attention. Effective communication is a decisive element for managers to succeed, because in organizational system information, as an important input, is only achieved by the means of effective communication; also after this achievement in an organization, information needs an effective communicational system to process and then spread it in the organization.⁽⁴⁾ Not only is the effective communication the key to all closed doors, but it is an inevitable and necessary activity for the individual, group and organizational life in all human societies.⁽⁵⁾ For an effective communication you need to be understood by others and their response should lead the current of exchanging information in a way that you want.⁽⁶⁾ Thus, the sociable nature of human necessitates communication despite varied societies and its subgroups.

In modern organizations, communication is essential for development, progress and success of human.⁽⁷⁻⁹⁾

An organization as a social establishment, for its own benefits beyond everyday communication, establishes organizational communication between the staff. In this regard, communication and the way it is used to obtain organizational goals are noteworthy for the managers. Managers are required to know that effective communication with human resources and understanding the staff's communicational motives is the key factor to achieve the goals set for their organization.^(10,11,13) In this respect, managers in different levels are responsible for establishing the proper communication in organization. They should be aware of the details of communicational process and of establishing an effective communication effectively.⁽³⁾

The same perspective includes the regimental commanders of the army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02). The purpose of this center is training conscripts and to do so, they are required to establish an effective and reciprocal communication with conscripts. Besides, since regimental commanders play an indispensably crucial role in order for army to achieve military aims, they should have more effective skills in communication than other ranks and create a favorable atmosphere at introductory military training centers. Consequently, success in these courses depends on the establishment of an effective communication between regimental commanders and conscripts, and to obtain this, regimental commanders should have communicational skills.

Many factors affect the communication skills of regimental commanders. The present research studied three main factors which affected the communicational skills of the regimental commanders toward conscripts.

Individual Factors

These factors include using simple language, attentive listening, managing the message current, doing self-analysis, considering soldiers' complaints, establishing individual communication with soldiers, and justifying the soldiers efficiently.

Organizational Factors

These factors include increasing the communicational channels, improving communication between lower ranks and upper peers, using feedbacks, and encouraging mutual reliability.

Environmental Factors

These factors include understanding cultural differences

among soldiers, recognizing the soldiers' psychological needs, understanding the soldiers' language differences, considering the temperature conditions, and the condition of facilities (health and training).

According to Robert Katerz's theory communicational skills are:

1. Speaking skills: Speaking with the staff individually or in groups, and holding effective meetings.⁽³⁾
2. Listening skills: Manager's ability in paying careful attention to suggestions and questions of the staff and understanding them.⁽³⁾
3. Feedback skills: Giving feedback is a process in which the receiver of the message confirms the established communication and declares how he or she feels about the message.^(3,9)

The center of Shahid Enshayi (02) as a NEZAJA's cultural and training centers is considered to be apioneerintroductory military training center of soldiers, which benefits from communicational skills. That is all due to possessing efficient and professional managing staffs well as such regimental commanders' with adequate mastery on communicational skills. The appropriate treatment of regimental commanders towards the soldiers enables this center to reach its goal and carry out its policy. The present research aimed to investigate the factors affecting the communicational skills between regimental commanders and conscripts according to existing theories and studies. With regards to the traditional methods employed at introductory military training centers for Army's Infantry forces of Islamic Republic of Iran and inefficiency of these methods in offering new training for soldiers, the subject of the current study practically demands more argumentations. There are also some other factors which emphasize on the necessity of conducting more argumentative studies on this subject, as an example the fact that the regimental commanders at the aforementioned centers are required to increase their communicational skills at the present time as well as the inadequacy of previous studies about communicational skills in Army of Islamic Republic of Iran. The operational model of the independent variable can be seen in **Figure 1**, while the operational model of the dependent variable is illustrated in **Figure 2**.

The subject matter investigates the factor affecting the improvement of communicational skills of regimental commanders towards conscripts at military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research was done at an army introductory

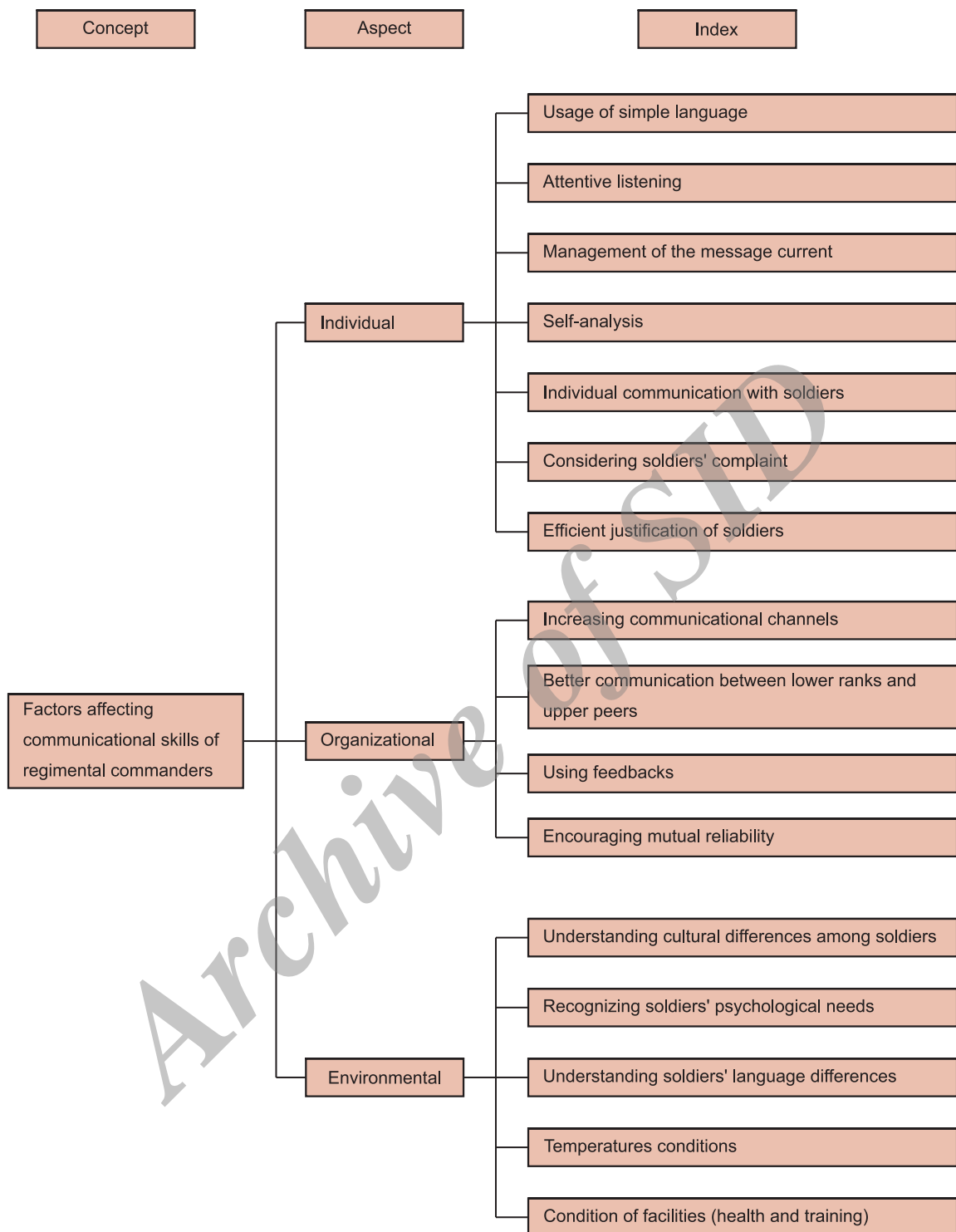


Figure 1. Operational model of independent variables

military training center in Tehran. The participants were 82 regimental commanders and battalion regimental commanders at the same army introductory military training center. Because of the limited number of participants, a census sampling was done.

Data Collection

a. Library Studies

In this research, initially, library studies were widely done in order to collect data on review of the literature. The investigated items included some related theses,

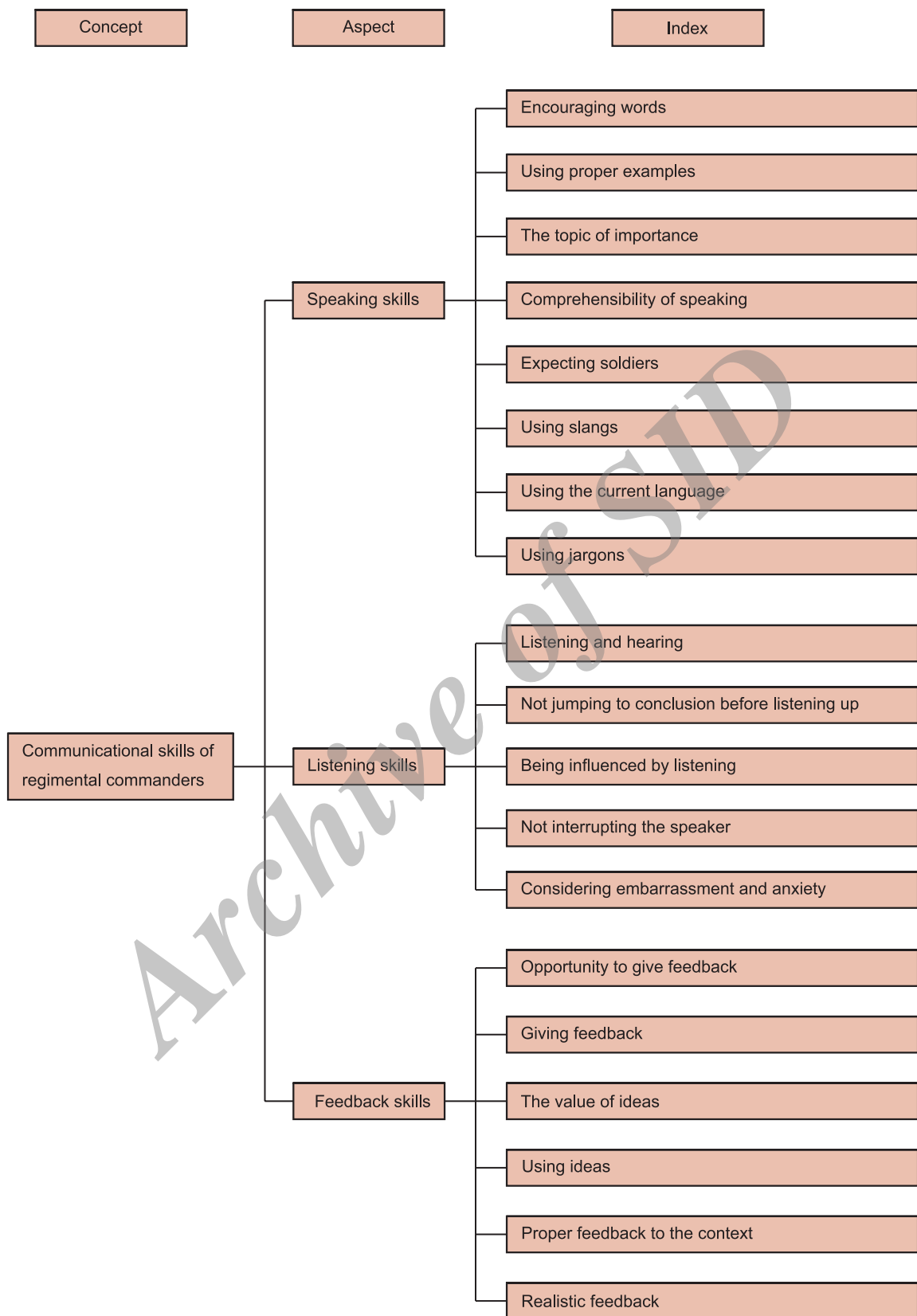


Figure 2. Operational model of dependent variables

studies, articles, and Latin and Persian books relevant to the subject. Also, the internet was used in order to review new findings.

b. Interview

In order to achieve valid and critically analyzed data, the researchers interviewed principal managers and some experts, whose views and opinions were used in the preparation of the conceptual model and the questionnaire.

c. Observation Method

The instrument used in this research was a 21-item questionnaire developed to assess the research variables and their operationalization. This questionnaire used in the field studies enabled us to measure the participants' characteristics like age, education level, years of service and other independent variables affecting the improvement of the levels of regimental commanders' communicational skills.

Validity and Reliability of Data Collecting Instrument

In order to demonstrate the authenticity of the questionnaire used in data collection, the content (face) validity was used in this research in a way that 10 management experts checked the developing questionnaire for its face validity (whether a questionnaire is measuring what it is supposed to). Getting the experts feedbacks, the questionnaire changed according to their opinions wherever necessary.

Cronbach's alpha was used for the final evaluation of the questionnaire. Conducting a primary study on 35 regimental commanders, the Cronbach's alpha for the questions concerning individual, organizational and environmental factors was obtained .712, .529, and .774,

respectively. The Cronbach's alpha for communicational skills questions was estimated .734. The above results demonstrated the validity and reliability of the designed questionnaire.

Data Analysis

To analyze the collected data through questionnaire, the descriptive and inferential statistical method was used. To describe the answers given to the questions on the questionnaire, a table of frequency distribution, which demonstrated the percentage of the answers concerning each questions, was used. To test hypothesis No. 1 in inferential level, the Spearman correlation test was used. Also, to test hypothesis No. 2, 3 and 4 in inferential level, the Pearson correlation coefficient test was employed while the stepwise Regression was the test used for hypothesis No. 5.

RESULTS

As seen in **Table 1**, mean and standard deviation values indicate a good dispersion of data, also the measures of skewness and stretch show a normal distribution. To test the relationship between variables, Pearson correlation test was used. According to **Table 2**, the results of Pearson correlation test indicated that there was a positive correlation between the individual factors and communicational skills of regimental commanders towards conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02), with values of .24, .31 and .45 for speaking, listening and feedback skill, respectively. Also, there was a positive correlation between the organizational factors and listening communicational skills with the values of .41 and .46, respectively. Furthermore, the results

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of studied variables

	Speaking skills	Listening skills	Feedback skills	Communicational skills of commanders
N	82	82	82	82
No answer	0	0	0	0
Average	82.2025	82.1326	84.2988	84.1234
Standard Deviation	12.30138	13.60527	11.55181	88.99040
Minimum	5.000	50.00	50.00	52.00
Maximum	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table 2. Pearson r correlation test to determine correlation between individual, organizational and environmental factors and communicational skills of regimental commanders towards conscripts at NAZAJA military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02)

Variables	Speaking Skills	Listening Skills	Feedback Skills	Total Communicational Skills
Individual factors	.24	.31	.45	.43
Environmental factors	.18	.41	.46	.43
Organizational factors	.23	.67	.41	.54

demonstrated a correlation between the environmental factors and communicational skills (speaking, listening and feedback skills) of regimental commanders towards conscripts at the military training center, with values of .23, .67 and .41, respectively. In other words, the increase in the individual factors led to a mutual increase in organizational and environmental factors of regimental commanders' communicational skills at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02). Stepwise regression analysis was used to investigate the effects of environmental, individual and organizational factors on the communicational skills of regimental commanders.

As seen in **Table 3**, Stepwise Regression testing analysis indicates that in the first step of analysis, the individual factors are involved in Regression equation. The individual factors predict %28 of variance in the regimental commanders' communicational skills towards conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi ($P = .001$, $F = 33.75$). In the second step of analysis, the individual factors along with organizational factors can predict %35 of variance in the regimental commanders' communicational skills towards conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi ($P < .001$, $F = 23.36$). One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the significance of the regression, which means that whether the predictive variables are effective in predicting criterion variables (communication skills) or not. The obtained F in the first model (23.578), when individual factors were predictive variables, is also significant at .001 level. Thus, according to **Table 4**, the individual factors are the best predictor of communication skills.

DISCUSSION

Most problems are rooted in establishing a “proper communication”. The ability to establish a proper

communication is a skill. No one is born with this skill but acquires it gradually through his or her lifetime. Successful people are the ones who recognize their deficiencies in this regard and try to solve their problems and learn a better way to act.

The results of the present research shows that by strengthening individual, organizational and environmental factors, the communicational skills of regimental commanders towards conscripts at the studied military training center can improve. In this way, these efforts can lead to establishing effective communications for regimental commanders towards conscripts.

The following are the items which can strengthen regimental commanders' communicational skills.

- Strengthening individual factors affecting regimental commanders' communicational skills:
This can be obtained by using simple language in talking with soldiers; attentive listening when a soldier is complaining or speaking his mind; trying to communicate individually with soldiers; and trying to give unambiguous briefs and instructions patiently.
- Strengthening organizational factors affecting regimental commanders' communicational skills:
The results showed that there is a meaningful correlation between the organizational factors and regimental commanders' communicational skills. It is suggested that commanders use different communicational channels when communicating; for instance, using suggestion Boxor, using bulletins of the regiment or battalion, going among soldiers and asking their problems, or assigning a specific time to spend with soldiers.
- Improving environmental factors affecting regimental commanders' communicational skills:
The results showed that there is a meaningful correlation between the environmental factors and

Table 3. Stepwise regression for determine the effects of individual, organizational and environmental factors on communicational skills of commanders with conscripts at the studied military training center

	B	beta	T	P value	R	R2	R2 Adapted
1 Individual factors	.83	.54	5.81	< .001	.54	.279	.28
2 Environmental factors	.69	.45	4.79	< .001			
3 Organizational factors	.95	.28	.06	< .001	.69	.37	.35

Table 4. The results of ANOVA on analyzing the stepwise regression testing

	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Level of Significance
1 Total remained	1370.873	1	1370.873	23.578	0.000
Regression	3248.703	80	40.609		
	4619.579	81			
2 Total remained	1716.977	2	8.493	23.366	0.000
Regression	2902.589	79	3.742		
	4619.567	81			

regimental commanders' communicational skills. In order to strengthen the regimental commanders' communicational skills, we suggest commanders to understand the cultural differences among soldiers and try to recognize soldiers' psychological needs, to use the educational materials related to the lesson plan of the class, and to use modern teaching and training facilities.

Nowadays, despite the dramatic changes in the global equations, authority and strength of a country depends on its proper defensive power, and training facilities play a vital role in providing this factor. If we consider the army as a special governmental organization, it is necessary to pay attention to its management situation, management activities of the commanders and their supervisory. According to the results of the present study, special measures about educating and training the regimental commanders should be taken into accounts. These measures may include environmental, individual and organizational factors, which are needed to establish effective communication towards conscripts. This is because of the fact that improving the regimental commanders' communicational skills leads to an improvement in the attitude and performance of the soldiers in the training process.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to investigate the effective factors to improve the levels of communicational skills of regimental commanders towards conscripts at an army introductory military training center. The results show that there is a positive correlation between the organizational factors and communicational skills (speaking, listening and feedback skills) of regimental commanders towards conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02). Also a positive correlation was seen between the organizational factors and listening communicational skills.

In other words, the increase in the individual, organizational and environmental factors led to an increase in communicational skills of regimental commanders at army introductory military training center. The stepwise Regression testing analysis showed that in the first step of analysis, the individual factors are involved in Regression equation. The individual factors predict 28% of variance in the regimental commanders' communicational skills towards conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02). In the second step of analysis, the environmental factors along with organizational factors can predict %35 of variance in the regimental commanders' communicational skills towards

conscripts at army introductory military training center of Shahid Enshayi (02).

Suggestions for Future Studies:

1. We suggest researchers to conduct their research somewhere else, in other centers of the army, in order to compare results of different studies in this field and with a greater confidence in applying the results.
2. In this research we investigate the factors affecting the improvement of communicational skills including individual, organizational and environmental factors, we suggest other researchers to investigate other factors than those presented here.
3. We also suggest researchers to run the models and other methods of communicational skills in the real world of Army of Islamic Republic of Iran and also to do the research in other contexts, such as industrial poles, universities, governmental institutions, etc.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None declared.

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