

## Research Paper

## Investigating Employees' and Health Care Practitioners' Communication Skills

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**ABSTRACT**

**Objectives** Communication skill is one of the basic skills of human social life that have a profound impact on the success of individuals, organizations, and institutions. This study is conducted to determine the status of communication skills and related factors in staff and health workers of burn and psychiatric hospital in Sari city.

**Methods** This descriptive-analytical study has been done with a sample size of 409 people, comprising staff and health workers of a burn and psychiatric hospital in Sari city in 2015. In this study, the samples were selected using the census method. Instruments used for the study were demographic data and communication skills questionnaire consisting of skills of understanding message, listening skills, insight to the communication process and certainty in communication that was completed in an interview with hospital staff. Collected data were analyzed with SPSS software version 18 using Pearson correlation coefficient, ANOVA, and t-test.

**Results** Findings of the present study indicate that the mean of communication skills of staff is 154, which is at a desirable level. In this study, it is shown that there is a significant difference in the mean score of communication skills according to work experience variables, education, work location, employment status, and position ( $P < 0.5$ ). There is also a significant relationship between certainty and the participants' education degree.

**Conclusion** Based on the findings of the current study, it is recommended that the education level and communication skills of the staff and health workers in hospitals should be increased. To increase these skills, it is necessary to conduct service training. It is also important to provide job security to health workers and staff by reviewing job rules and employment status using rewards and timely encouragements and determining service place of staff regarding their interests and expertise. This can result in significant improvements in communication skills, thereby, raising the satisfaction of staff and clients.

**Key words:**

Communication skills, Health care workers, Message, Communications

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## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

Communication skill is one of the essential skills of human life. According to many scholars and psychologists, communication skill is one of the main concern and challenging factor in human life for being successful. The Importance of Communication Skills in social life is so much that some thinkers know the basis of human growth, personal injury, and human progress in the process of communication. Studies have showed that many employees consider the role of communication skills in their job success to be more important than specific technical skills. Managers and staff who are skilled in communication are faced with fewer problems, make fewer errors, spend fewer resources, and also handle their opponents more efficiently. Communication skills are recognized as an important component of medical and nursing care. Effective communication has always been raised as the basis of quality of care services. Ability to communicate with colleagues, patients and others forms the basis of clinical skills required to provide ideal medical care and the core of the optimal medical activity. Establishing therapeutic communication is considered as the most basic step in the field of treatment in a way that many scholars believe that establishing therapeutic communication has an essential contribution to the success of the treatment. This study has been conducted with the aim of determining the status of communication skills and its related factors in health care workers and employees.

### 2. Method

This study uses survey and descriptive-analytical design. The sample size was 409, consisting of staff and workers of

the Zare' psychiatric and burn hospital of Sari City in 2015. It was carried out by census method.

Data collection method was based on unnamed questionnaires. Measurement tool in this study was an unnamed questionnaire that was divided into two sections: 1) Demographic characteristics; and 2) Standard questionnaire for communication skills. This questionnaire has been excerpted from the revised version of Inventory of Communication Skills. This questionnaire is standardized in Iran, and its validity and reliability have been determined. The credibility of this questionnaire has been reported to be 0.71 and 0.69 using the Cronbach's Alpha Method and Split Half method. This test includes 34 questions with 5 sub-scales of ability to receive or understand verbal and nonverbal messages, ordering the emotions, listening skill, insight into the process of communication, and decisiveness in communication.

After collecting questionnaires, data were entered into SPSS statistical software version 18, and data analysis was carried out using the t-test parametric test in relation to the comparison of the means of data in an independent population for means such as age, gender, level of education, work experience, position and workplace. Based on the nature of the variables in terms of being quantitative or qualitative and according to the goals and assumptions of the study, ANOVA test was used to check the relationship between data.

### 3. Results

In the present study, the average age of participants was 34.9 years. Of the total 409, 198 participants (48.4%) were women and 211(51.6%) were men. It was also found that 147 participants had under-diploma education level, 47 were undergraduate, 195 had Bachelor Degree, and 20 had Master's Degree and higher. The average work experience was  $4.7 \pm 1.9$  years; based on the place of service, 21.76% of the

**Table 1.** Demographic information and communication skills differentiated by other variables

Variable	Different Variable Variables	Mean	P
Gender	Female	40.9	0.31
	Man	34.71	
Age classes	Less than 25	30.31	0.53
	35-25	35.69	
	More than 35	37.65	
Education level	Under Diploma and Diploma	28.85	0.25
	Associate Degree	31.29	
	Bachelor	33.74	
	Master's degree and higher	39.6	

Variable	Different Variable Variables	Mean	P
	Services	28.36	0.33
	Administrative	38	
	Burn	33.74	
	Psychiatry	38.63	
Mean scores of communication skills by component in psychiatry	Skill understanding message	26.4	
	The skill of arranging for emotions	36.18	
	Listening skills	32.27	
	Skill Insight into Communication	34.47	
	The skill of determination is in communication	40.09	
Mean scores of communication skills by component in administrative	Skill understanding message	29.58	
	The skill of arranging for emotions	28.85	
	Listening skills	34.22	
	Skill Insight into Communication	35.25	
	The skill of determination is in communication	30.31	
Mean scores of communication skills by component in burn category	Skill understanding message	28	
	The skill of arranging for emotions	34.71	
	Listening skills	31.78	
	Skill Insight into Communication	33.74	
	The skill of determination is in communication	20.04	

Iranian Journal of  
PSYCHIATRY AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

**Table 2.** Correlation coefficients between variables of age, work experience and communication skills and their sub-scale

Variable	Understanding Message	Skill of Ordering Emotions	Skill of Insight Into Communication	Determination in Communication	P
Age	0.52	0.48	0.57	0.61	0.38 0.31
Work experience	0.64	0.41	0.74	0.59	0.38 0.41

Iranian Journal of  
PSYCHIATRY AND CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

participants worked in the clinical department of psychiatry, 42.78% in the burned-healing section, 15.5% in the administrative department, and 29.20% were working in the service sector. There were 159 officially recruited participants, 212 contracted staff, and 38 were termed employees. In data analysis, the average score of communication skills was 154, which was at a desirable level. Average total points earned under the sub-scales were separately documented as follows: Skill of understanding message was 31.21, the ordering skill of excitement was 31.73, listening skill 31.63, insight into communication 31.17, and decisiveness was 31.34. Average rating of communication skills was 40.90 and 34.71 in women and men, respectively. Although the score of communication skills varies among men and women, but this difference was not significant ( $P=0.53$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, there is a significant relationship between age, the level of education, and communication skills ( $P=0.31$ ), ( $P=0.31$ ), (Table 1). Table 2 shows a significant correlation between variables of age and work history with the components of communication skills.

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#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.