

# Effect of Employees' Communication Skills on the Development of Health Services Management in the Jordanian Hospitals

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## Abstract

At any organization, communication between the employees plays a significant role in improving its operations. In hospitals, communication between employees is more critical since they are dealing with lives of patients, where a single error could be devastating. In hospitals, communication between the employees plays a significant role in enhancing the health services through patients handling between the different teams and in knowledge sharing that have many advantages including saving effort and time, avoiding repeated procedures, raising the experience, and increasing the patients' satisfaction.

**Key words:** Communication, Employees, Health services, Jordanian hospitals

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of hospitals, nurses have gradually taken the responsibility of team, personnel, as well as process management, in a direct or indirect way associated to care that includes articulating and coordinating activities with many professional performances in the hospitalization units. Therefore, communication skills emerge to be a strategic tool aimed for nursing management.<sup>[1]</sup>

Communication is considered as an act inherent behavior in individuals, including the understanding and sharing of messages received, and sent between people, and in the setting, they influence, relate, and have the ability to modify the real situation in which they are inserted. In the communication process, a variety of materializations that imply the demonstrations of what the person wants to say are expressed and outlined in non-verbal and verbal forms, mostly by postures, gestures, and words.<sup>[2]</sup>

In Jordan, interorganizational communication in hospitals has not been studied in a way that focuses on the effect of it on the development of health services. In this study, we will focus on evaluating the role of communication between the employees in the hospital in Jordan.

## Study Problem

Rising evidence specifies that errors that are existed in intraorganizational health-care communication are conveyed by an increase in medical errors, which result in mortality and morbidity. Communication failures that are due to an insufficient information exchange between the health-care providers are between the most spread reasons that help in the incidence of adverse drug. Communication errors are the leading reason besides insufficient clinical skills in medical errors. Some studies showed that 37% of medical errors in the critical care unit are caused by the wrong verbal exchange of information among doctors and nurses.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Study Questions

1. What is the employees' perspective toward communication with other team members?
2. What is the level of successful communication management in the Jordanian hospitals?
3. Is there is an effect of employees' communication in improving healthcare services in the Jordanian hospitals in terms of knowledge sharing and handling patients?

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4. Is there is a relation between the demographic variables of the study and the study variables?

### Hypothesis

There is a positive effect of employees' communication skills on the development of health services management in the Jordanian hospitals.

### Communication in Nursing

In administrative processes, communication process is important to exchange ideas, information, orders as well as facts, allowing coordinated actions accomplishment, reducing modifications, and resembling people to shared objectives. Messages can be formally and informally transmitted. Formal communication is happened mainly in writing such as in the file notes case besides standards and elaboration of reports. It takes place constantly in daily contact between individuals, independently of their function or job, and is related to professional activities or sometimes not. Furthermore, communication can be categorized as downward (management-subordinate) and upward (subordinate-management).<sup>[4]</sup>

Communication, in nursing management, is based on the connections nurses create as they perform management roles in the context of nursing work, specifically human care, and in the overall context of hospitals. Particular activities face nurses usually done are orientation and elaboration regarding routines, standards, and performance valuation of the members of the nursing team, writing memos, explanation of work scales, and other types of fine-tuning with people by written, face-to-face, computerized, and telephone messages.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Challenges Facing Communication Between Nurses

Communication skills in nursing management are not successful always. There are some conflicts in the communication process in the communication between nursing leaders and subordinates including lack of honesty in interpersonal relations, lack of respects from direct superior to nurses, lack of constructive criticism on the professional performance of nurses as well as lack of acknowledgement of nursing work and non-welcoming of the opinions of nurses. Additional problem related to the decision process centralization in nursing management obstructs that obstructs the flow of communication and delays the decision, which leads to hampering agility and information distortions.<sup>[6]</sup>

In that logic, it must be emphasized that effective communication as a social process is related directly with the objectiveness and clarity of the speakers about what must be communicated, awareness of the bodily and basic communication knowledge that influence management practice and human relations of nurses.<sup>[1]</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, the questionnaire was used as the study tool to collect the primary data. The questionnaire was distributed on a sample of 200 employees working on the Jordanian hospitals. The main questions that were asked to the sample members include the following main topics:

1. Employees' perspective toward communication with other team members.
2. Communication management.
3. Effect of employees' communication in improving health-care services in handling of patients and knowledge sharing.

The statistical software was used to analyze quantitatively the collected data. The main results were then organized in tables to extract the needed information to answer the study questions.

## RESULTS

### Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha Reliability Test

A total of 25 items hypothesized to represent ten scales were developed for use in the present study. The scales were developed for the use in the present study. The scales were developed based on a thorough review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature, which provides some evidence of their content validity. This section describes the selection of items for the evaluation of the reliability and validity of these measurement scales. In this study, the reliability of scales was measured using Cronbach's coefficient alpha based on the internal consistency of the items in each scale. The acceptable and unacceptable levels of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient are presented in Table 1.

Beside that in Nunnally's (1978) guideline, scale reliability of 0.70 and above is preferred. Nunnally (1978) also suggests that items that have <0.30 values to total correlation could be deleted to improve the reliability of the scale. The results of this study show that the value of Cronbach's coefficient alpha for scales is different in the values according to analysis data. In this study, we computed Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the scales before data screen and after data screen.

**Table 1: Acceptable and unacceptable levels of the Cronbachs' alpha coefficient**

Alpha coefficient	Implied reliability
Below 0.60	Unacceptable
Between 0.60 and 0.65	Undesirable
Between 0.65 and 0.70	Minimally acceptable
Between 0.70 and 0.80	Respectable
Between 0.80 and 0.90	very good

### Respondents' Characteristics

The profile of the respondents with respect to their education, type of hospital, job title, age, and gender is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that:

1. Most of the respondents in the gender group are male (45.5%) and are female (54.5%) respondents.
2. With regard to the age, most of the respondents (54.0%) are in the age group of <35 years and 46.0% are more than 35 years of age.
3. With regard to the job title, most of the respondents (65.5%) are in the nurse and 8.5% per doctor.
4. With regard to the education, most of the respondents (83.5%) are in the bachelor, and 2.0% are high school.
5. With regard to the type of hospital, most of the respondents (71.5%) are in the private, and 28.5% are public.

**Table 2: The stability of the instrument (Cronbach's alpha) for the variables of the study**

Fields	Cronbach's alpha
Employees perspective toward communication with other team members	0.89
Communication management	0.93
Effect of employees' communication in improving health-care services	
In handling of patients situations	0.90
Knowledge sharing	0.78
Effect of employees' communication in improving health-care services	0.91
Total	0.94

All alpha values were acceptable

**Table 3: Frequency and percentage for demographic information**

Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	91 (45.5)
Female	109 (54.5)
Total	200 (100.0)
Age	
<35 years	108 (54.0)
More than 35 years	92 (46.0)
Total	200 (100.0)
Job title	
Doctor	17 (8.5)
Nurse	131 (65.5)
Other	52 (26.0)
Total	200 (100.0)
Education	
Graduate	29 (14.5)
Bachelor	167 (83.5)
High school	4 (2.0)
Total	200 (100.0)
Type of hospital	
Public	57 (28.5)
Private	143 (71.5)
Total	200 (100.0)

### Results of the First Question

What is the employees' perspective toward communication with other team members?

Table 4 shows some descriptive results for the research variables used in this study. Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation for the research variables of employees' perspective toward communication with other team members.

Table 4 shows that the means for the sample's approval for the level of the employees perspective toward communication with other team members ranged from 3.03 to 4.31 and the highest was item No. (2), which reads: "Confident communicating with interdisciplinary teams," while the lowest was item (3), which reads: "Satisfied with communication skills," and the mean for the field as a whole was 3.59 with a medium degree.

### Results of the Second Question

What is the level of successful communication management in the Jordanian hospitals?

Table 5 shows some descriptive results for communication management used in this study. Table 5 shows mean and standard deviation for the research variables of communication management.

Table 5 shows that the means for the sample's approval for the level of the communication management ranged from 2.44 to 4.32 and the highest was item No. (8), which reads: "Staff caution each other about potentially dangerous situations," while the lowest was item (1), which reads: "Staff seek information from all available sources," and the mean for the field as a whole was 3.55 with a medium degree.

### Results of the Third Question

What is the level of handling of patients situations in the Jordanian hospitals?

Table 6 shows some descriptive results for handling of patients situations used in this study. Table 6 shows mean and standard deviation for the research variables of handling of patients' situations.

Table 6 shows that the means for the sample's approval for the level of the handling of patients' situations ranged from 3.91 to 4.17 and the highest was item No. (1), which reads: "Decrease medical errors," while the lowest was item (3), which reads: "Save time," and the mean for the field as a whole was 4.06 with a high degree.

### Results of the Fourth Question

What is the level of knowledge sharing in the Jordanian hospitals?

Table 7 shows some descriptive results for knowledge sharing used in this study. Table 7 shows mean and standard deviation for the research variables of knowledge sharing.

Table 7 shows that the means for the sample's approval for the level of the knowledge sharing ranged from 3.89 to 4.34 and the highest was item No. (1), which reads: "Built the experience of the employees," while the lowest was item (3), which reads: "Enhance the communication between the employees and patients," and the mean for the field as a whole was 4.11 with a high degree.

**Table 4: Means and SD for the approval of the members of the study sample on the level of employees' perspective toward communication with other team members in a descending order**

Rank	No	Item	Mean±SD	Degree
1	2	Confident communicating with interdisciplinary teams	4.31±0.70	High
2	6	Willing to share my knowledge with others	4.04±0.84	High
3	5	Prepared to integrate cultural awareness/sensitivity into practice	3.58±1.14	Medium
4	1	Confident communicating with my team	3.50±1.20	Medium
5	4	Able to ask colleagues for help with challenging situations	3.12±0.94	Medium
6	3	Satisfied with communication skills	3.03±1.12	Medium
Employees' perspective toward communication with other team members			3.59±0.40	Medium

SD: Standard deviation

**Table 5: Means and standard deviations for the approval of the members of the study sample on the level of communication management in a descending order**

Rank	No	Item	Mean±SD	Degree
1	8	Staff caution each other about potentially dangerous situations	4.32±0.79	High
2	9	There are special devices used for communication between the medical staff	4.19±0.71	High
3	2	Staff follow a standardized method of sharing information when handling of patients	4.13±0.84	High
4	3	Staff verbally verify information that they receive from one another	3.98±0.81	High
5	5	Staff relay relevant information in a timely manner	3.97±0.80	High
6	7	Staff request assistance from colleagues when they feel overwhelmed	3.21±1.04	Medium
7	6	Staff assist colleagues during high workload	3.13±0.89	Medium
8	4	Staff use common terminology when communicating with each other	2.57±0.81	Medium
9	1	Staff seek information from all available sources	2.44±0.77	Medium
Communication management			3.55±0.37	Medium

SD: Standard deviation

**Testing the Study Hypotheses**

Tests of the hypothesis in the desired model were made based on three measures, the significance of correlation coefficients (R), the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>), and the multiple regression (beta).

Possible correlations range from +1 to -1. As a rule of thumb, r values of 0– 0.2 are generally considered weak, 0.3–0.6 moderate, and 0.7–1 strong (Brace *et al.*, 2000). The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) is useful because it gives the proportion of the variance of one variable that is predictable from the other variable. It is a measure that allows us to determine how certain one can be in making predictions from a certain model/graph. The multiple regression measured by beta which is a measure of how strongly each set of predictor variables (independent variables) influence the criterion variable (dependent variable). Using multiple regressions, we can test theories (or models) about precisely which set of variables is influencing our behavior. In general, the correlation coefficients (R) measure the relation between only two variables while the multiple regression, beta, measures the relation between a set of variables with one variable. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) shows the linearity between variables. In this research, we examine r using Pearson correlation coefficients calculated for pairs of variables to test the significance of correlation

**Table 6: Means and standard deviations for the approval of the members of the study sample on the level of handling of patients' situations in a descending order**

Rank	No	Item	Mean±SD	Degree
1	1	Decrease medical errors	4.17±0.79	High
2	2	Save the efforts	4.11±0.78	High
3	5	Increase patient satisfaction	4.07±1.02	High
4	4	Avoid repeated tests and treatments	4.06±0.88	High
5	3	Save time	3.91±0.95	High
In handling of patients' situations			4.06±0.75	High

SD: Standard deviation

**Table 7: Means and standard deviations for the approval of the members of the study sample on the level of knowledge sharing in a descending order**

Rank	No	Item	Mean±SD	Degree
1	1	Built the experience of the employees	4.34±0.67	High
2	4	Save costs	4.18±0.65	High
3	2	Strengthen the team you are included in	4.11±0.77	High
4	5	Increase the feeling of the team spirit	4.07±0.73	High
5	3	Enhance the communication between the employees and patients	3.89±1.01	High
Knowledge sharing			4.11±0.57	High

SD: Standard deviation



coefficients. Beta is measured by applying the linear regression test.

$H_{01}$ : The major hypothesis: There is a statistically significant effect at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for employees' communication skills on the development of health services management in the Jordanian hospitals:

According to the results of Table 8, there is a relationship statistically significant at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ) between employees' communication skills and the development of health services management in the Jordanian hospitals. The value of the correlation coefficient (R) is 0.67, which is a statistically significant value and indicates that the degree of correlation is statistically significant between the independent variables and the dependent variable, and the value of (R2) is (0.45), a which is a statistically significant value, and the value of the test (F) is (81.35) where it is statistically significant at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ); therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_{01-1}$ : The sub-hypothesis: There is no statistically significant effect at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for employees' communication skills on the in handling of patients' situations in the Jordanian hospitals:

According to the results of Table 9, there is a statistically significant relationship at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ) between employees' communication skills and handling of patients' situations in the Jordanian hospitals. The value of the correlation coefficient (R) of (0.66), is statistically significant and indicates that the degree of correlation are

statistically significant between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The value of (R2) is (0.44), which is a statistically significant value, and the value of the test (F) is (76.45) where it is statistically significant at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ); therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

$H_{01-2}$ : The sub-hypothesis: There is no statistically significant effect at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for employees' communication skills on the knowledge sharing in the Jordanian hospitals:

According to the results of Table 10, there is a relationship statistically significant at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ) between employees' communication skills and knowledge sharing in the Jordanian hospitals, as the value of the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.58, a value statistically significant and indicate that the degree of correlation is statistically significant between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The value of (R2) is (0.33), which is a statistically significant value, and the value of the test (F) is (48.84) where it is statistically significant at the significance level ( $0.05 = \alpha$ ); therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that the employees' perspective toward communication with other team members was in a medium degree where this result can be attributed to the fact that there are some competitiveness and careless in the communication process. However, this attention to the

**Table 8: The results of the application of the regression employees' communication skills on the development of health services management in the Jordanian hospitals**

Item	$\beta$	T	Significant	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significant
Employees perspective toward communication with other team members	0.32	4.67	0.00	0.67	0.45	81.35	0.00
Communication management	0.42	6.21	0.00				

**Table 9: The results of the application of the regression employees' communication skills on the in handling of patients situations in the Jordanian hospitals**

Item	$\beta$	T	Significant	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significant
Employees perspective toward communication with other team members	0.31	4.40	0.00	0.66	0.44	76.45	0.00
Communication management	0.42	6.14	0.00				

**Table 10: The results of the application of the regression employees' communication skills on the knowledge sharing in the Jordanian hospitals**

Item	$\beta$	T	Significant	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significant
Employees perspective toward communication with other team members	0.29	3.78	0.00	0.58	0.33	48.84	0.00
Communication management	0.35	4.66	0.00				

importance of communication is raised when dealing with dangerous and emergency situations where the interest of the patient came first.

There are some great advantages of good communication between the staff when handling of patients from one team to another. Those advantages include decreasing the medical errors where recognizing the medical history of the patient and his medicines will help in a better diagnosis and hence a better treatment. Moreover, communication in handling off the patients can help in decreasing the time and effort spent in conducting unnecessary tests and repeated procedures.

Knowledge sharing is one of the great results of communication between the staff where this can contribute in building the experience of the staff, which will lead to

strengthen the team they are included in and improve the communication skills between them and the patients.

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