

Interpersonal Communication, Teamwork Effectiveness, and Organizational Commitment in Pakistani Nurses

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The current study was focused on identifying how interpersonal communication affects teamwork effectiveness and organizational commitment in nurses. The sample of ($N = 150$) nurses were recruited through purposive sampling technique from a public hospital of Lahore. To test the study assumptions, Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990), Teamwork Effectiveness Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Sterling & Selesnick, 1988), and Organization Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990) were used. Results showed that interpersonal communication was directly proportionate to teamwork effectiveness and all measures of organizational commitment. Whereas, team effectiveness was partially linked with dimensions of organizational commitment. Furthermore, findings showed that organizational commitment (affective commitment and normative commitment) was predicted by measures of interpersonal communication that is assertiveness and responsiveness. Interpersonal communication may play a leading role in developing organization commitment, therefore, efforts should be made to improve and enhance the interpersonal communication skills of nurses in Pakistan.

Keywords. Interpersonal communication, teamwork effectiveness, organizational commitment, nurses

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Interpersonal communication is the most important factor in every organization especially in health care organizations where experienced and skilled nurses play a vital role in the healthy life of patients in specific and community in general. Nurses having good interpersonal communication skills can effectively work with colleagues, doctors, subordinates, attendants, patients, and their families. Furthermore, they also remain committed to their organizations (Nazari, Ehsani, Ashraf, & Ghasemi, 2011).

In health care settings, it's important for health care professionals that they learn to work together while communicating effectively which further enables them to make good health care decisions (Morgan, Pullon, & McKinlay, 2015). Nurses in health care organizations effectively communicate with each other which enhances and enables them to manage their work through team building. Through teamwork, they provide the best care to the patients. Effectiveness of teamwork is a salient factor in making important decisions in the health care delivery system. Moreover, the communication quality among nurses and patients plays an integral role and influence patient health outcome. Based on that it can be concluded that interaction among nurses and patients has a foremost impact on the health sequel of patients (O'Hagan et al., 2014).

Interpersonal communication is defined as a process through which information is transferred along with understanding as it is an essential component predicting the success of an organization. There are many contexts of communication including psychological, situational, relational, cultural, and environmental. Psychological framework caters to employees' values, needs, and personality, whereas relational contexts deal with interpersonal relationships (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006). Moreover, situational contexts deal with psycho-social situations, environmental contexts address physical spaces and time in which they interact with each other, and cultural context examines patterns of communication that are given by (learned from) our culture and which differ from other cultures. A gesture might be acceptable in one culture, but will not be acceptable in another culture (Lunenburg & Irby, 2006; Singh & Lalropuii, 2014).

Interpersonal communication is a salient factor in building a climate of trust and support between employees in an organization. Literature has established a significant relationship between interpersonal communication, worker's morale, and the safety of patients. Lack of proper communication among team members significantly linked with avertible medical mistakes, a higher turnover rate among nurses, and lower morale rates (Brinkert, 2010; Vessey,

DeMarco, & DeFazio, 2010). Due to a lack of interpersonal communication and low job morale further, leads towards the high-stress level, burnout, lack of job satisfaction, and negatively impacts the quality of life (Vertino, 2014).

On the other hand, teamwork can be defined as a group that performed organizational tasks by maintaining interdependence related to tasks and goals. Team members maintain and manage their boundaries when performing the task (Kozłowski & Bell, 2003). There are some basic elements associated with effective teamwork such as shared goals, commitment towards team success, interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), open communication, relational skills, and positive feedback, appropriate team configuration, commitment towards team procedures and leadership for making an important decision and solving the problems (Tarriconi & Luca, 2002).

Nurses' interpersonal communication, respecting each other while working in a team and delivered patients care by encouraging manner has been widely noticed. They have specific job functions related to a specific department, therefore communicate with other nurses who belong to different departments to accomplish overall workplace objectives smoothly. They perform these functions efficiently through two skills; first is to recognize the problems and second is to deal with it in an orderly and appropriate manner. Furthermore, team building enhances good communication, trust, support, and increases productivity and creativity. It motivates the nurses to achieve common goals and building up the climate of cooperation that helps to solve the problems. Consequentially, leads to a high level of job satisfaction and commitment within an organization (Fapohunda, 2013).

Teamwork effectiveness depends on employee's mutual understanding, trust, and commitment with their organization that may be effective, normative, and continuance (Asma & Naqvi, 2013). The result of another study specified a positive linear relationship between teamwork, organization commitment, and organizational performance (Zincirkiran, Emhan, & Yasar, 2015). Organizational commitment is measured as to how individuals identify and get along with their level of engagement within an organization. This reflects their attitude towards the tenacities, goals, and values of the organization as well as their desire to continue working for the organization, moreover, it also demonstrates the level of efforts done by the individual (Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012). Organizational commitment is an emotional attachment of an individual towards an organization that highly influences job performance and efficiency of work (Shafiq & Fatima, 2016). If

employees are more committed to an organization there is less chance that they will leave it and they become part of an organization and work more proficiently (Pascal, Pierre-Sebastien, & Lamontagne, 2011). A study was conducted by Isik, Timuroglu, and Aliyev (2015) to determine the relationship between teamwork and organization trust. The data was gathered from 250 workers. Results revealed a positive significant relationship between openness to innovation, communication, participation-trust towards team and trust in an organization, trust in colleagues, trusting management, and trust in the workplace. Earlier, Pisani (2012) found that a poorly performing team would display lesser scores on interpersonal communication than an excellent performing team. Furthermore, Khameneh (2014) examined the association between effective communication skills and job satisfaction. The results demonstrated a positive relationship between communication skills and job satisfaction of the employee. The study also showed significant gender differences as male employees exhibited more significant result than female employees.

Devendra and Theavarajan (2016) suggested a significant positive linear relationship among interpersonal skills and commitment towards an organization. Moreover, interpersonal skills are important to explain the variation in organizational commitment. Likewise, Anto (2015) found in his study that organizational commitment plays a mediating role and influences the relationship between interpersonal communication and emotional intelligence additionally, which affects employee performance. Furthermore, Raza and Ahmed (2017) conducted a study that demonstrated the positive relationship between satisfaction towards the job and organizational commitment in teachers; interpersonal relationships and management attitudes exhibited a significant role in job satisfaction. Moreover, a higher level of commitment to an organization and thus willingness to continue the job.

Additionally, Zincirkiran et al. (2015) investigated in the health sector the effect of organizational commitment and teamwork on organizational performance. The finding suggested a positive linear relationship between organizational commitment, teamwork, and organizational performance. Similarly, Aube and Rousseau (2005) explored team goal commitment and team efficacy. The result indicated a positive significant relationship between team efficacy and team commitment to a goal.

Similarly, Balay-Odao (2016) conducted a study to explore the association among nurse's work practice setting, organizational responsibility, and work responsibility. The workplace situation had a significant impact on the nurse's work engagement in the emergency

department. Furthermore, the findings also revealed the relationship between the quality of the workplace situation, organizational responsibility, and work engagement. Likewise, Ahmad, Iqbal, Javed, and Hamad (2014) designed a study on bank employees to explore the impact of organizational commitment, performance of employees, and employee satisfaction. The result showed a positive relationship between organizational commitment and the satisfaction of the employee. Similarly, the employee's performance has a positive significant relationship with employee satisfaction. Previous studies in our culture have focused more on other organizations such as banking or teaching sectors as compared to the health care sector.

In Pakistani culture, hospital sector plays an integral role in providing appropriate health care services. However, they also have a diverse culture as compared to other organizations. Through interpersonal communication, nurses strengthen their commitment to the organization. Moreover, the self-efficacy of employees also plays a detrimental role in commitment and teamwork respectively. Good interpersonal communication skills and teamwork effectiveness of employees lead to a good environment and commitment in an organization which is the key predictor of success and productivity. If nurses are not having a strong bond with the organization, they won't be able to deliver a good quality of care to the patient, or in other words quality of life of patients will not be improved.

According to the study, the only way to determine that is to improve the self-efficacy of health care staff (Khan, Shahzad, Karim, & Amin, 2015). Moreover, studies have also revealed that work environment and engagement are predictive of organizational commitment among health care professionals (Rohail et al., 2017). Previous literature has focused that organizational commitment is determined by job satisfaction which is a composite of multiple factors (Abbas, Mudassar, Gul, & Madni, 2013; Alam & Mohammad, 2009). Though, the existing literature has studied job satisfaction in terms of pay, work, promotion, supervision, and work environment (Khan & Khan, 2011). Similarly, in one such study job satisfaction was being studied while considering organizational commitment as one unit rather than considering its separate components (Khan & Jan, 2015). However, the key role played by teamwork and interpersonal communication in determining organizational commitment is not being focused in our culture which is the subject matter of this study. Moreover, organizational commitment is a composite of three different factors; affective, continuance, and normative commitment and they play different roles (Ismail, Mashkuri, Sulaiman, & Hock, 2011; Khan, Nawaz, & Khan, 2013). To understand them fully it's

important to study their role separately as being considered in the current study.

Previous studies demonstrated a positive relationship between interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness as well as interpersonal communication and organization commitment. Teamwork effectiveness may play a mediating role between interpersonal communication and organization commitment. Further, it was also seen if employees work in a team, their interpersonal communication enhances and they are more committed with their organization, the result further revealed a positive significant correlation between employee's commitment and team efficacy (Asma & Naqvi, 2013; Gao, 2011; Isik et al., 2015; Pisani, 2012; Nazari et al., 2011). Furthermore, the results have verified a positive relationship between team goal commitment and the efficacy of the team (Aube & Rousseau, 2005). Conversely, the relationship between communication and commitment was relatively weaker (Zeffane, Tipu, & Ryan, 2011). Besides, literature also showed that social-emotional oriented communication among subordinates and supervisors are a positive predictor of affective commitment; whereas work-oriented communication is a robust positive predictor of normative and affective commitment.

In any medical units' nurses play a vital role. Through positive interpersonal communication, teamwork effectiveness of nurses will also increase which ultimately strengthens their commitment to the organization. Through teamwork, they provide the best care to the patients. Effectiveness of teamwork is a very important factor in making an important decision in the health care delivery system. Moreover, the healthcare environment, nursing staff communication, and teamwork determine the success of an organization as they enhance patient care and outcomes (Intepeler et al., 2019). If nurses have good interpersonal communication skills, they can effectively convey their message with colleagues, manager, subordinates, patients, and their family which sequentially makes them more committed towards the organization (Nazari et al., 2011). In light of previous studies and empirical and theoretical guidelines following hypotheses were formulated.

Hypotheses

1. Interpersonal communication (assertiveness, responsiveness) is linked with teamwork effectiveness and organization commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) in nurses.

2. Interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness are likely to predict organizational commitment.

Method

A correlation research design was used in this study as the objectives of the study were to explore assertions between study variables.

Sample

The sample consisted of 150 female nurses (calculated from G-power estimation of sample size) age ranged from 25 to 55 years ($M = 27.37$, $SD = 6.42$.) Participants were recruited from two public hospitals of Lahore by employing a purposive sampling technique. Only those nurses were included in the study who had been employed in the current hospital for minimum of one-year duration after completion of their graduation. This inclusion criterion was established as previous literature has demonstrated that 12 months are required for the person to reach their optimal productivity due to adjustment to organizational culture (Kevin, 2012). Further, to avoid any confounding factor, participants with any physical disability and referred for any counseling services were also excluded from the sample. Nursing staff under training or doing a job in more than one organization were also excluded from the study.

Instruments

Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). The scale consists of 20 personalities characteristic with two subscales which are Assertiveness (consisted of 9 items) and Responsiveness (consisted of 10 items). It is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “*strongly agree*” to “*strongly disagree*”. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability estimates for the measures of responsiveness and assertiveness in the present study were observed to be above .80. A higher score on assertiveness subscale depicts dominancy, strong personality and person can defend on belief. The low score on this scale tells about low assertiveness and not having a strong personality, etc. A higher score on responsiveness subscale tells about high responsive behavior during communication.

Teamwork Effectiveness Self-Assessment Scale (Sterling & Selesnick, 1988). The scale consists of 11 items and assesses teamwork effectiveness problems related to decision making,

problem-solving and conflict resolution, etc. Total scores of less than 40 may indicate teamwork effectiveness problems. Items of the scale include such as: "Team problem-solving processes and methods are appropriate and effective, Team members make good use of the time they spend together" etc. The reliability coefficient of the scale was reported by different studies which ranged from .79-.85 (Devin & Farbood, 2017; Garivani, Devin, & Farbood, 2016).

Organizational Commitment Scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Consists of 18 items having three subscales, Affective (6 items), Continuance (6 items), and Normative (6 items). If the person has a strong affective commitment, he or she remains committed to an organization and never wants to leave the organization. The sample item includes "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization". The higher score demonstrates high normative commitment and continuance commitment. Whereas low score indicated low commitment. Moreover, a higher score on the normative commitment subscale tells about individual commitment to the organization because he thought it is one's obligation to remain with an organization. After all, it takes it as his obligation. Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for the measure of Affective, Continuance, and Normative in the present study are above .60.

Procedure

Considering the ethical requirement of the study research proposal was reviewed by the research ethics committee. Moreover, permission was sought from authors of scales along with consent was taken from different hospitals of Lahore for data collection purposes. The data was collected individually after taking written consent from participants.

Results

The data of this research was analyzed in three steps. In the first step by employing Cronbach alpha reliability analysis of all the scales were computed and in the second step, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to find out the relationships between interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness, between interpersonal communication and organizational commitment and between demographic variables and organizational commitment. In the third step, multiple hierarchical regression was applied to explore the prediction of interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness from organizational commitment.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha and Descriptive Statistics of Socio-Communicative Orientation Scale, Teamwork Effectiveness Self-Assessment Scale, and Organizational Commitment Scale (N=150)

Measures	k	α	M	SD	Range of Score		
					Actual	Potential	Skewness
Interpersonal Communication							
Assertiveness	9	.72	36.25	5.08	9-45	17-45	-.67
Responsiveness	10	.84	43.68	4.93	10-50	16-50	-1.46
Teamwork Effectiveness	11	.87	46.53	6.54	11-55	18-55	-1.07
Organizational commitment							
Affective Commitment	6	.68	32.96	6.03	6-42	18-42	-.43
Continuance commitment	6	.68	28.26	7.01	6-42	12-41	-.67
Normative commitment	6	.60	30.86	6.10	6-42	15-42	-.68

Table 1 demonstrates descriptive characteristics (i.e., mean, standard deviations, alpha coefficients, ranges, skewness and kurtosis) of study variables. Alpha coefficients are satisfactory and above the minimum level of .60 (Griethuijsen, et. al., 2014). In addition, the values of kurtosis and skewness fall between the range -2 and +2 illustrating normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010).

Table 2

Inter-Correlation Between Interpersonal Communication, Teamwork Effectiveness, and Organizational Commitment (N=150)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Assertiveness	-	.64***	.44***	.29***	.23**	.24**
2. Responsiveness		-	.51***	.35***	.14	.29***
3. Teamwork effectiveness			-	.42***	.01	.22*
4. Affective commitment				-	.05	.41***
5. Continuance commitment					-	.30***
6. Normative commitment						-

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

The result of correlation (Table 2) showed that assertiveness was positively significantly correlated with responsiveness, teamwork effectiveness, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Responsiveness was also positively significantly correlated with teamwork effectiveness, affective commitment, and normative commitment, and non-significantly

correlated with continuance commitment. Teamwork effectiveness positively significantly correlated with affective commitment and normative commitment and nonsignificantly correlated with continuance commitment. The affective commitment was non-significant correlated with continuance commitment and positively significantly correlated with normative commitment. The result further showed that continuance commitment was positively significantly correlated with normative commitment.

Table 3

Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Organizational Commitment for Nurses (N = 150)

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model3	
	Affective commitment		Continuance commitment		Normative commitment	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
	B	β	B	β	B	β
Constant	.197	.290	.072	.210	.08	.386
Age	.129	.131	.220	.221	.140	.140
Number Of Children	.290*	.301*	.09	.030	.222*	.242*
Previous Work Experience	.110	.161	-.201*	-.34**	.018	.018
Current Work Experience	-.223*	-.342*	.09	.198	-.190	-.190
Family Monthly Income	.121	.136	.101	.133	-.089	-.089
Responsiveness		.408**		.095		.490**
Assertiveness		.385**		.088		.207**
R^2	.187	.351	.068	.072	.112	.294
ΔR^2	.190*	.358	.053	.021	.098	.298**
ΔF	6.73**	8.36**	.691	.541	2.28	9.97**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Results in Table 3 reveal that after controlling demographical variables (age, number of children, work experience after graduation, work experience in current hospital and family monthly income) in step 1 and adding main variables responsiveness and assertiveness in step 2. Affective commitment predicted significantly ($R^2 = 0.35$) explain 35% of variance $F(7,33) = 8.36$, $p < .01$. Continuance commitment could not be predicted. The result further revealed that normative commitment was predicted by assertiveness significantly ($R^2 = .294$) explain 29% of variance $F(7, 33) = 9.97$, $p < .01$. The model moderating predicted normative commitment and strongly predicted affective commitment. Among demographics like number of children was positive and work experience in the current hospital was

a negative predictor of affective commitment. Work experience after graduation was a negative predictor of continuance commitment and the number of children was a positive predictor of normative commitment.

Discussion

The major objective of the present study was to explore the relationship between interpersonal communication, teamwork effectiveness, and organizational commitment in nurses and to determine the impact of interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness on organizational commitment. The result of the current study illustrates that interpersonal communication (assertiveness and responsiveness) was positively and significantly correlated with teamwork effectiveness and all component of organizational commitment (Devendra & Theavaranjan, 2016). Further, there was a positive significant relationship between interpersonal communication and organizational commitment. Furthermore, the previous literature (Pisani, 2012; Intepeler et al., 2019) also supports the result that there is a significantly positive relationship between interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness.

The result further indicates that teamwork effectiveness is positively correlated with organizational commitment (affective and normative) except with continuance commitment. Previous researches provide sound support to this result that (Miedaner, Kuntz, Enke, Roth, & Nitzsche, 2018), the support given by team leaders and colleagues directly affects organizational commitment particularly in staff directly associated with a medical field such as nurses. The result of the present study shows that affective commitment is not significantly correlated with continuance commitment; whereas continuance commitment only significantly correlated with normative commitment. The reason may be that interpersonal communication and teamwork effectiveness is part of a personality trait. Nurses perceive that they must show responsiveness and do work in a team in their hospital environment which is a primal feature of our culture. In a collectivistic culture of Pakistan, materialistic things have the least priority in comparison with teamwork. That's why nurses show less continuance commitment. Previous researches showed that affective commitment is directly related to an employee's commitment to an organization when they start working in any organization. Moreover, normative commitment also plays an important role which increases the level of involvement in work-related activities (Cohen, 2007;

Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Nurses continue their job for money if they show obligation within their organization.

Nurses show responsiveness as a personal characteristic within their workplace because it is part of their job. Because of this prediction between responsiveness and affective commitment is less. 16% prediction may be that nurses experience responsiveness characteristics in a daily routine that's why they may be emotionally attached within their workplace. Assertive nurses known about their values and have the confidence to defend on their right they know about their obligation or value of their organization. If nurses more compete with each other it's mean that they work hard for their organization because of this, there is 29% prediction between assertiveness and normative commitment. Robbins, Judge, and Capmbell (2010) showed that employees have to increase normative commitment because they do not want to leave their workplace and they think that their friends think poorly about them for leaving a job. They show normative commitment within their organization. The study of Wang (2011) indicated that social-emotional communication was a positive predictor of affective commitment within employees; whereas work-oriented communication was found to be a strong positive predictor of normative and affective commitment. This demonstrates that affective commitment is considered as the desired facet valued in an organization for associated benefits and thus reinforced by different methods employed by managers to communicate to their subordinates. The affective component of commitment reinforces the employees to communicate with each other because of this employee gain benefits due to this component (Arnold & Davey, 1999; Somers & Birnbaum, 2000; Suliman & Iles, 2000). Prediction between interpersonal communication and continuance commitments was not observed in the present study which rejects the hypothesis only for continuance commitment. To support this result previous meta-analysis showed that compared with other components affective commitment is strongly associated with work-related outcomes (Meyer et al., 2002).

It is concluded that there is an optimistic association between interpersonal communication (assertiveness and responsiveness), teamwork effectiveness, and organizational commitment. Whereas, there is no association between responsiveness and continuance commitment and it can only be linked with affective commitment. The findings of this study reveal that the responsiveness component of interpersonal communication will predict affective commitment. Whereas, assertiveness will predict normative commitment. The model predicted, affective commitment is strongly and normative

commitment is moderately predictive. Moreover, affective commitment plays a significant role in organizational commitment and job satisfaction as the person feels more responsive towards the work organization. Similar findings were seen in previous research conducted by Yao and Wang (2007). They demonstrated based on their study that affective commitment was an imperative predictor for organizational satisfaction whereas the normative commitment was the utmost predictor regarding employees' job-changing behavior. Throughout the analysis, it is clear that only a continuance component of organizational commitment is weaker in the analysis that rejects the hypothesis of prediction in the present study. Current study findings can also be justified from an interesting theoretical aspect of gender as our study catered only the female nurses. In collectivists' cultures like Pakistan, women are tending to be more kind and caring, therefore demonstrate more affective and normative organizational commitment (Jena, 2015). Further, women are more likely to be motivated by organizational factors and illustrate interpersonal communication and team effectiveness.

Limitations and Suggestions

As public hospitals were included so the results are limited to the particular setting. Besides, this study sample was collected from a few hospitals so it is not enough to generalize it across the country due to diversity among the target population. To have a clearer picture regarding study variables data should be collected from other cities. In the study sample size were small, for further research sample size could be increased. Male nurses were not included in this study, so to get a clear picture of these variables male nurses should be included in future research. In future research data can be gathered from two groups comprising of married and unmarried nurses to study the effect of the marital status among variables. In this research, purposive sampling was used. To increase the efficacy of the findings random sampling should be used. As confidentiality was assured to the participants but there are some social desirability factors, which can affect the findings of the results, it should be kept in mind for future study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of interpersonal communication in determining teamwork effectiveness and organizational commitment in nurses. Findings from the

currents study demonstrated that interpersonal communication was positively associated with teamwork effectiveness and organizational commitment. Contrary, team effectiveness was partially linked with organizational commitment. Furthermore, findings also illustrated that interpersonal communication that is assertiveness and responsiveness, predicted organizational commitment (affective commitment and normative commitment). The outcome of the current study revealed that interpersonal communication may play a leading role in developing organization commitment, therefore, efforts should be made to improve and enhance the interpersonal communication skills of nurses in Pakistan.

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