	Original Research Article

Impact of Communication Climate on Nurse's Organizational Career Growth and Empowerment

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Abstract

Communication climate influences quality of work environment as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of an organization. Organizations with positive communication climate have good employee relationships that in turn improve staff empowerment and career growth. *Aim:* The current study aims to determine the impact of communication climate on nurses' organizational career growth and empowerment. *Research design:* Quasi-experimental research design has been carried out. *Setting:* The study conducted in (General medical and surgical departments) at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals. *Sample:* All available nurses working in the designated sites 98. *Tools:* three tools were used, communication climate questionnaire, organizational career growth scale, and conditions of work effectiveness questionnaire II. *Results:* The present study findings that there were highly statistical significance differences of communication climate, organizational career growth, and structural empowerment between the two hospitals X^2 = 16.843, 18.18 and 30.247 respectively & P<0.01. Regarding means and standard deviations it was 54.20±9.35 & 41.39±13.47 for communication climate, 47.02±8.60 & 37.69±10.05 for organizational career growth, and 55.20±9.39 & 41.04±11.60 for structural empowerment at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals respectively. *Conclusion:* The improvement in the communication climate results in higher levels of organizational career growth and structural empowerment. *Recommendations:* Management should develop and maintain communication climate that enables free expression of ideas and exchange of opinions among staff. Managers should encourage nurses' empowerment for effective organizational performance. Nurses' organizational career growth and continuing education are important for improving staff performance and skills.
Keywords: organization, communication climate, career growth, empowerment, nurses.

INTRODUCTION

As organizations get more complex in structure and in the way they function, it becomes necessary to re-evaluate the way organizational communication occurs to ensure that they function effectively [1]. Communication climate refers to the way in which the people involved in a relationship or in specific context feel about and treat each other. Communication climate influences the quality of the work environment, the effectiveness of the organizational functioning and organizational commitment. The organizations with supportive climate are characterized by work participation, free and open exchange of information, and constructive conflict management. Within organizations with defensive climates, the employees keep things to them-selves, work by taking care of their actions and have low morale [2].

The communication climate is a psychological environment with a general socio-emotional feeling that is produced between managers and nurses in a specific work environment. There are two main types of communication climates, namely defensive and supportive communication climates. Once a communication climate is established, the communication climate pattern continues by being either positive or negative. Communication climate can essentially build or destroy human relationships [3].

Communication climate is of paramount importance in an organization as it contributes to the effectiveness and success of an organization. The communication climate influences the atmosphere in

the organization which encourages horizontal, upward and downward communication among the employees. Communication climate functions as a link between individual employees and the organization. The overall climate would give a hint of its employees' beliefs and attitudes towards the organization. It conceptually consists of employees' perceptions of the information flow and the climate in which the communication occurs. There is a positive relationship between the communication climate and the level of commitment of the employees to the organization [4].

An employee career growth helps the organization to grow as employees growth is the organization growth vice-versa [5]. Employee career development is becoming increasingly important. Employees need to seek career opportunities pro-actively within as well as outside of their current organization [6]. Opportunities for career development represent an important benefit provided by the organization. An effective career development process can help in establishing trust between the employee and the organization to reach to the desired organizational outcomes. Managers need to communicate and involve employees in adopting career development plans. So employees will get motivated when they are assigned to programs [7]. Career growth inside the organization is a combination of employees' efforts toward the progress of their career goals and obtaining professional skills in the organization; and the organization's efforts in provision of promotions and salary growth [8, 9].

Employees need to be supported by individual career plans delineating the routes that they can take to advance within an organization. This career progression is usually described in terms of what people are required to know and be able to do to perform a sequence of jobs at increasing levels of responsibility in pre-designated competency qualifications [10]. Many healthcare institutions include continuing professional development programs as a strategy in keeping the best employees to be more knowledgeable and competent. Others considering continuing professional development have included postgraduate education as one of the important aspects of continuing professional development [11].

Nursing resource is an asset and essential component in the hospital services that contribute in defining the image of the hospital. A higher level of empowerment is associated with the lower saturation levels and greater job satisfaction. Empowerment behaviour in leaders can improve nurse job fit and prevent burnout [12]. Empowerment is the nurses' ability to mobilize all necessary resources, both human and material, to support the best care for their patients. Structural empowerment has a positive impact on staff nurses' professional attitude and the quality of care and patient safety on their units. Clear organizational goals and dedicated support for both nurses and nursing unit

managers are essential to maintain an empowered practice environment and thus ensuring optimal care and healthy staff [13, 14]. It is important that all levels of management in the organisational hierarchy actively engage in the process of providing empowering structures. Managers with high access to structural empowerment are more likely to provide subordinates access to structural empowerment [15].

Medical-Surgical Nursing requires specialized knowledge and clinical skills to manage actual or potential health problems. It is the single largest nursing specialty. Nurses' at that specialty care for adult patients who are acutely ill with a wide variety of medical issues or are recovering from surgery. They provide care 24 hours 7 days a week and have more direct contact with patients. They should possess the basic clinical knowledge and skills. Utilize leadership skills to enhance client outcomes. Communicate effectively with the client, family, significant other(s), and other health care professionals. They should have high-level critical-thinking skills, vast clinical knowledge, and stay calm under pressure. Engage in ongoing professional development through participation in continuing education and certification [16].

Significance of the Study
The researchers observed that nurses verbalize some words imply negative communication climate which eventually affects nurses' career growth and empowerment. Communication climate according to studies affect work performance, work productivity, leadership, organizational goals identification and empowerment. Institutions must conduct seminars, workshops and other activities which can foster positive and supportive communication climates. A supportive communication climate is although enhance through an open-door policy through listening to subordinates, and making them feel a sense of personal worth [17, 18]. So the impact of communication climate on nurses' organizational career growth and empowerment need to be identified clearly.

Aim of the Study
The aim of this study is to determine the impact of communication climate on nurses' organizational career growth and empowerment.

Research hypothesis
Positive communication climate will result in higher levels of nurses' organizational career growth and empowerment.

Subjects and Method
Research Design
Quasi experimental research design carried out to conduct this study.

Setting
The study conducted in general medical and

surgical departments at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals. Medical department includes: males unit, females unit and intermediate ICU. Surgical department includes: preoperative unit, post-operative unit, recovery and operating room. The two hospitals provide cost free service.

Sample

The current study included all available nurses working in designated sites and willing to participate 108 nurses. The actual study sample included 98 nurses and the pilot study included 10 nurses who excluded from the actual study.

Tools

First Tool: Communication climate questionnaire adapted from other study [19] consists of two parts. Part one nurse's personal characteristics, it includes name, age, sex, marital status, education, experience, department and hospital. Part two consists of an 18-item index scale. Statements in brief include staff/superior participation in relation to: creativity (1 item), opinions (3 items), support in problems and problem solving (4 items), organizational goals (1item), feelings and values (1 item), decisions (2 items), support to staff (1 item), power or status (1 item), leadership (3 items), and confidence and trust (1 item).

Scoring based on a five-point Likert scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The total scores developed by the current study authors based on the scores of the five-point Likert scale. Participants had 18-36 considered having negative communication climate; participants had 37-54 considered having average communication climate; while participants 55 - 90 considered having positive communication climate.

Second Tool: Organizational Career Growth Scale (CGS) consists of a 15- item index scale [20]. The questionnaire was divided into four dimensions: the speed of professional ability improving (4 items), the speed in realize one's career objective (4 items), the speed of promotion (4 items), and the speed in salary increase (3 items). Scoring based on a five-point Likert scale ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The total scores developed by the current study authors based on the scores of the five-point Likert scale. Participants had 15 - 30 considered having low organizational career growth opportunities; participants had 31 – 45 considered having medium organizational career growth opportunities; while participants had 46 - 75 considered having high organizational career growth opportunities.

Third Tool: Conditions of Work Effectiveness Questionnaire II measures the concept of structural empowerment adopted from other study [21]. The questionnaire was divided into six subscales. The first four subscales measure the access to: opportunity (3 items), information (3 items), support (3 items), and resources (3 items). The fifth measures job activities include innovation (3 items), flexibility and visibility (4 items). The sixths subscale measures organization relationships with physicians, peers, managers and other professionals e.g., physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and dieticians.

Scoring system the six subscales based on a five-point Likert scale l none 2-3 some and finally 4 - 5 a lot. Higher scores represent stronger access to opportunity, information, support and resources. Moreover higher scores for fifth subscale represent job activities that give higher formal or position power. Higher scores for the sixths represent higher informal power. The total scores as suggested by the current study author based on the scores of the five-point Likert scale. Scores from 19 to 38 are describe low levels of empowerment, 39 to 57 moderate levels of empowerment, and 58 to 95 high levels of empowerment.

METHODS

Current study conducted throughout many stages includes: the review of literature. Translation of data collection tools into Arabic. A jury to ensure content validity of three professors of Nursing Administration reviewed the study tools.

Pilot study: conducted on 10 nurses randomly selected from medical and surgical departments at Sohag University Hospital, to quantify the needed time to fill in the study questionnaires it was 15 minutes approximately and to test tools clarity and applicability.

Reliability for the study questionnaires was done using Cronbach's alpha test result: 0.822 for personal characteristics, 0.931 for communication climate, 0.858 for career growth and 0.614 for empowerment. Data were collected through March 2019.

Ethical considerations

Graduate Studies and Research Committee faculty of nursing Sohag University approved the research proposal. Official permissions to carry out the study from the heads of designated sites were done. Explanation of the study nature and aim were done for nurses. Nurses' consent then obtained from those who were accepted to participate in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured.

Statistical Design

The collected data were coded entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 for windows. The collected data presented using frequencies & percentages, means and standard deviations, multiple regression model and Chi-square test. Tests of significance were considered as follows: insignificant $P \geq 0.05$; significant $P < 0.05$ and

highly significant P<0.01.

RESULTS

Table-1: Frequencies and percentages distribution of nurse's according to personal characteristics (n = 98 nurses) 49 for each hospital

Personal characteristics	Qena University Hospital		Sohag University Hospital		X^2	P-value
	N	%	N	%		
Sex:						
- Male	8	16.3	10	20.4	0.272	0.602
- Female	41	**83.7**	39	**79.6**		
Age						
- <30	46	**93.9**	43	**87.8**	1.101	0.294
- 30 – 40	3	6.1	6	12.2		
Mean ± SD	**26.27±2.47**		**27.24±3.67**			
Marital Status						
- Single	26	**53.1**	18	36.7	3.983	0.137
- Married	22	44.9	31	**63.3**		
- Divorced	1	2.0	0	0.0		
Educational Qualification						
- BCs/Higher	0	0.0	2	4.1	**8.503**	**0.014***
- Clinical institute of nursing	10	20.4	21	42.9		
- Secondary school of nursing	39	**79.6**	26	**53.0**		
Years of Experience:						
- < 3 years	8	16.3	11	22.4	3.366	0.186
- 3 - <10 years	37	**75.5**	29	**59.2**		
- 10 - <20 years	4	8.2	9	18.4		
Department						
- Medical	26	**53.1**	24	49.0	0.163	0.686
- Surgical	23	46.9	25	**51.0**		

* P. Value is significant at P<0.05

Table-1 Illustrates that, the highest percentages of nurses at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals 79.6% and 53.0% had secondary school of nursing, 83.7% and 79.6% females, 93.9% and 87.8% aged less than 30 years old. In addition the highest percentages of Sohag University hospital study sample 51.0% working at surgical department and 63.3% of them were married. While the highest percentages of Qena University hospital study sample were single 53.1% working at medical department. The means and standard deviations of age were 26.27±2.47 & 27.24±3.67 for study sample at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals respectively. Moreover there was statistical significance difference of educational qualification between the two hospitals X^2 = 8.503 & P<0.05.

Table-2: Frequencies and percentages distribution of nurse's levels of communication climate, organizational career growth and structural empowerment (n = 98 nurses) 49 for each hospital

Items	Level	Qena University Hospital		Sohag University Hospital		X^2	P-value
		N	%	N	%		
Communication Climate	Negative	2	4.1	15	30.6	**16.843**	**0.000****
	Medium	23	46.9	25	**51.0**		
	Positive	24	**49.0**	9	18.4		
	Mean ± SD	**54.20±9.35**		**41.39±13.47**			
Organizational Career Growth	Low	0	0.0	13	26.5	**18.18**	**0.000****
	Medium	23	46.9	24	**49.0**		
	High	26	**53.1**	12	24.5		
	Mean ± SD	**47.02±8.60**		**37.69±10.05**			
Structural Empowerment	Low	2	4.1	22	44.9	**30.247**	**0.000****
	Medium	26	**53.1**	24	**49.0**		
	High	21	42.8	3	6.1		
	Mean ± SD	**55.20±9.39**		**41.04±11.60**			

** P. Value is highly significant at P<0.01

Table-2 Shows that at Qena University Hospital the highest percentages of the study sample 49.0% had positive communication climate, 53.1% of them had high opportunity to organizational career growth, and 53.1% had medium level of structural empowerment. Meanwhile at Sohag University Hospital the highest percentages of study the sample had medium levels of communication climate 51.0%, opportunity to organizational career growth 49.0%, and structural empowerment 49.0%.

There were highly statistical significance differences of communication climate, organizational career growth, and structural empowerment between the two hospitals $X^2 = 16.843$, 18.18 and 30.247 respectively & $P<0.01$. Regarding means and standard deviations it was 54.20±9.35 & 41.39±13.47 for communication climate, 47.02±8.60 & 37.69±10.05 for organizational career growth, and 55.20±9.39 & 41.04±11.60 for structural empowerment at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals respectively.

Table-3: Best fitting multiple linear regression models for study sample communication climate

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T-test	P-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	46.640	13.612	-----	3.426	0.001**
Sex	-2.957	2.194	-0.087	-1.348	0.181
Age	-1.359	3.326	-0.030	-0.409	0.684
Educational Qualification	-7.439	1.719	-0.294	**-4.326**	**0.000****
Marital status	0.445	1.740	0.017	0.256	0.799
Years of Experience	2.899	1.756	0.125	1.650	0.102
Department	-0.061	0.332	-0.012	-0.183	0.855
Hospital	-5.845	2.063	-0.222	**-2.833**	**0.006****
Organizational Career Growth	0.601	0.097	0.475	**6.207**	**0.000****
Structural Empowerment	0.272	0.082	0.261	**3.316**	**0.001****

** P. Value is highly significant at $P<0.01$

Table-3 Depicts that the best fitting multiple linear regression models for study sample communication climate was highly significant in relation to educational qualification T-test= -4.326, P<0.01, hospital T-test= -2.833, P<0.01, organizational career growth T-test= 6.207, P<0.01and structural empowerment T-test= 3.316, P<0.01.

DISCUSSION

Employee motivation and performance are very significant factors in any organization. Top management will be able to come down to the level of their employees for effective communication and exchange of ideas and suggestions that may be of great influence on employee empowerment. Career progression is also a pathway that will create more promotion opportunities to the employees hence another source of motivation. When employees realize that there are available sources for promotion, they will work hard to perform better in order to get promoted. This may also positively influence the overall performance of the employees in the organization. Good communication often translates to strong bonds between employer and employees. Management needs to apply good management by improving the employer ability to effectively communicate, motivate and encourage performance behavior [22]. This study was conducted with the aim is to determine the impact of communication climate on nurses' organizational career growth and empowerment at Qena and Sohag University Hospitals.

The findings of the present study clarified that the highest percentages of the study sample at Qena University Hospital had positive communication climate, high opportunity to organizational career growth, and medium level of structural empowerment. While Sohag University Hospital study sample highest percentages were for medium levels of the three study variables communication climate, opportunity to organizational career growth, and structural empowerment. There were highly statistical significance differences of the three study variables between the two hospitals. In addition there were statistical significance differences between communication climate and educational qualification, career growth and structural empowerment. This might be due to nurse manager relationship that adopts support, democracy, and more consideration for nurses needs in prevails one hospital while that deteriorates in the other hospital. So the improvement in the communication climate results in higher levels of organizational career growth and structural empowerment, as shown in the study sample between the two hospitals. Finally that answers the study hypothesis.

This results supported by other studies indicated that there is a significant perception differences between employees of the two hospitals' communication climate and organizational performances. One hospital practice more positive supportive communication climate compared to the other hospital [19]. Nurses working in a tertiary institution experienced positive communication climate [18]. Professional nurses in public hospitals perceive

their own communication behavior as supportive [3]. The level of career growth was higher for young nurses and for nurses with wok seniority under one year [23]. The most nursing faculty members' had moderate level of structural empowerment [24]. Nurses experienced high level of structural empowerment which further leads to high commitment [25].

CONCLUSION
The current study concluded that there were statistical significance differences between communication climate and educational qualification, career growth and structural empowerment. The improvement in the communication climate results in higher levels of organizational career growth and structural empowerment, as shown in the study results.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Hospital management should provide communication climate that enables free expression of ideas and exchange of opinions among staff. Moreover participation in decision making, teamwork and empowerment of nurses should be maintained for effective organizational performance.
- On-going staff development programmes and continuing education are important for improving staff performance, skills and creative thinking that to maintain career growth.

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LIMITATION
The major limitation faced the authors is the lack of research articles that studies the relationship between communication climate, organizational career growth and empowerment for nurses.

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