

Communication Skills and Quality of Life – A Study on Help Desk Employees

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Abstract

The help desk employees of a hospital ensure that patients and visitors of a hospital have a good experience during their service. Their communication skills and quality of life largely affect their performance. The aim of the present investigation was to study the communication skills and quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata. Accordingly, a group of 60 employees (30 male and 30 female) were selected as sample in this investigation. A General Information Schedule, Communication Skills Questionnaire and Quality of Life Scale were used as tools. The findings reveal that male group has better communication skills than that of the female group, but no significant difference was observed in case of quality of life. Not only this, the more the duration of service, the less is the communication skills and quality of life also. To create more healthy and congenial work environment considering the importance of communication skills and quality of life, measures may be taken by providing proper hands down training to the employees. Communication skills can be improved by practicing active listening and watching one's body language. Besides this, quality of life can also be improved by supporting healthy life styles.

Key words : Communication skills, quality of life and help desk employees

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Introduction

Human resource development is the framework for helping the employees to develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge and abilities. The focus of all aspects of human resource development is on developing the most superior workforce so that the organization and individual employees can accomplish their work goals in service to customers. A person who has good communication skills is able to effectively deliver message to people. It is essential for success of any organization. Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. On the other hand, the quality of life refers to the general well-being of individuals and societies. Physical being includes aspects of physical health, personal hygiene, nutrition, exercise etc. On the

other hand, psychological being includes the person's psychological health and adjustment, cognitions, feelings, self-control etc. Quality of life is the degree to which a person enjoys the important possibilities of his/her life. Hospital is a health care institution providing patient treatment by specialized staff and equipment. Communication skills and quality of life are two important factors which are relevant in any type of hospital setting. Rezvani (2013) found there is direct relationship between the good communication skills of the managers and employees job performance level. Dehaghani et al (2012) showed that the interpersonal communication skills training program increased job satisfaction which is necessary for the employees. Cimete et al. (2003) determine the positive correlation between job satisfaction and quality of life of nurses. It was also found that job satisfaction and quality of life scores of

nurses showed a significant difference according to their age, economic level marital status, duration of service and position at work. Besides this, relationship between personal values and individual quality of life has also been revealed from the research findings conducted by Fegg et al (2005). Considering the above, the present investigation has been designed to study the communication skills and quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata.

Objectives :

1. To study the communication skills of the help desk employees engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata.
2. To study the quality of life of the help desk employees engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata
3. To study whether there is any gender difference of help desk employees engaged in private hospitals regarding communication skills and quality of life or not.
4. To study whether duration of service of the help desk employees engaged in private hospitals create any impact on communication skills and quality of life or not.

Hypotheses :

Hypothesis – I : Communication skills of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with gender difference.

Hypothesis – II : Quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with gender difference.

Hypothesis – III : Communication skills of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is

differentially associated with duration of service.

Hypothesis – II : Quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with duration of service.

Sample and Study Area :

A group of 60 employees (30 male and 30 female) engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata were selected as sample in this investigation. They are between the ages 25 to 44 years and their duration of service is below and above ten years but minimum service period is at least two years.

Tools Used :

1. **General Information Schedule :** It consists of items like name, address, age, gender, educational qualification, duration of service etc.
2. **Communication Skills Questionnaire (Burton, 1990) :** It consists of eighteen statements answerable in a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree where high score indicates good communication skills and vice-versa. There are three domains in this questionnaire, viz., feedback skills, listening skills and articulation skills. The odd-even split-half reliability is 0.79.
3. **Quality of life Scale (Dubey and Dwivedi, 1986) :** It consists of twenty statements answerable in a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree where high score indicates good quality of life and vice-versa. The odd-even split-half reliability was found to be 0.87.

Administration, Scoring and Statistical Treatment :

A General Information Schedule, Communication Skills Questionnaire and Quality of Life Scale were administered to the

selected group of subjects by giving proper instruction. Data were collected and properly scrutinized. Scoring was done with the help of standard scoring key. Tabulation was done for each group and for each test separately. For general information schedule, frequency and percentages were calculated. For other two questionnaires, mean and S.D. were calculated. Comparisons were made by applying t-test.

Results and Interpretation :

The general characteristic data inserted in Table – 1 reveal the characteristic features of the subjects, under study.

Table -1 : General characteristic features of the help desk employees engaged in private hospital at Kolkata

General characteristics	Male (N = 30)		Female(N = 30)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Age in years				
25 to 34 years	15	50.00	15	50.00
35 to 44 years	15	50.00	15	50.00
Edu. Qua.				
Graduate	18	60.00	14	48.00
Post-graduate	12	40.00	16	52.00
Duration of service				
Below 10 years	15	50.00	15	50.00
Above 10 years	15	50.00	15	50.00

Data inserted in Table – 2 reveals the comparative picture between the male and female group of employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata in terms of communication skills. From the mean score it can be said that feedback, listening, articulation and overall communication skill is comparatively better among the male group of employees than that of the female group of employees. Analysis of data further reveals that the male group of help desk employees of the private hospitals at Kolkata tends to use technical jargon when talking to experts as compared to the female group of employees. When comparison was made between the male and female group of employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals, significant difference was observed. Thus, the Hypothesis – I which states, “Communication skills of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with gender difference” – is accepted in this investigation.

Table – 2 : Comparison between the male and female group of employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata in terms of Communication Skills

Comm. Skill	Male, N=30		Female, N=30		t -value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Feedback	21.33	3.30	18.51	2.46	3.29*
Listening	20.80	3.71	17.40	3.63	3.65*
Articulation	22.50	2.83	18.40	4.46	4.31*
Overall	64.43	7.00	53.70	9.61	4.90*

Score range : Feedback 6 – 30, Listening 6 – 30, Articulation 6 – 30, Overall 18 – 90

High score indicates good communication skills and vice-versa.

*** $p < 0.01$**

Comparison was also made between the male and female group of employees engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata in terms of quality of life, no significant difference was observed. From the mean score it can be said that there seems to be indication of moderate level of quality of life as expressed by both male and female group of employees engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata. Thus, the **Hypothesis – II** which postulates, “**Quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with gender difference**” – is rejected in this investigation.

Table – 3 : Comparison between the male and female group of employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata in terms of Quality of life

	Male			Female			t - value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
QOL	30	65.13	5.09	30	63.16	6.29	1.45*

Score range : 20 – 100

High score indicates good quality of life and vice-versa.

*** Difference is insignificant**

Data inserted in Table – 4 reveals the comparative picture between the two groups of employees engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata whose duration of service is below and above ten years in terms of communication skills, significant difference was observed in case of listening, articulation and overall communication skills, but no significant difference was observed for feedback skills. From the mean score it can be said that the more the duration of service period, the less is the communication skills as revealed in this investigation. Thus, the **Hypothesis – III** which states, “**Communication skills of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with duration of service**” – is accepted for listening, articulation and overall communication skills and is rejected for feedback skill.

Table – 4 : Comparison between the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata whose duration of service is below and above ten years in terms of Communication Skills

Comm. Skill	Below 10 yrs		Above 10 yrs		t-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Feedback	20.43	2.94	19.45	3.01	1.28*
Listening	20.11	2.13	18.64	3.22	2.10**
Articulation	22.55	2.11	21.23	2.63	2.20**
Overall	64.16	2.10	62.44	2.55	2.80**

Score range : Feedback 6 – 30, Listening 6 – 30, Articulation 6 – 30, Overall 18 – 90

High score indicates good communication skills and vice-versa.

*** Difference is insignificant, ** $p < 0.05$**

Comparison was also made between the two groups of employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata whose duration of service is below and above ten years in terms of quality of life, no significant difference was observed. Here also, quality of life as expressed by the two groups is moderate. Thus, the **Hypothesis – IV** which states, “**Quality of life of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata is differentially associated with duration of service**” – is rejected in this investigation.

Table – 5 : Comparison between the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata whose duration of service is below and above ten years in terms of quality of life

	Below	ten	years	Above	ten	years	t - value
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	
QOL	30	63.25	4.11	30	61.50	3.22	1.00*

Score range : 20 – 100

High score indicates good quality of life and vice-versa.

*** Difference is insignificant**

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY ARE AS FOLLOWS :

- Feedback, listening, articulation and overall communication skill is comparatively better among the male group of employees than that of the female group of employees of help desk at Kolkata. Significant difference was observed in this regard.
- Indication of moderate level of quality of life as expressed by both male and female group of employees. No significant difference was observed in this context.
- The more the duration of service period, the less is the communication skills. Listening, articulation and overall communication skills differ

significantly in connection with duration of service. No significant difference was observed in case of feedback skill.

- Although statistically no significant difference was observed, but quality of life is comparatively better as expressed by the employees whose service period is below ten than that of the above ten years.

Concluding Remarks

Employees working at help desk at hospitals serve a very important work which is a dire need for patients and others. On the other hand, effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to transmit. Besides this, quality of life is used to evaluate

the general well-being of individuals and societies. Considering the strength and weaknesses, communication skills training may be arranged to improve the communication skill of the employees of help desk engaged in private hospitals at Kolkata. There is also need to improve the quality of life as it plays a key role in the success of the employees and for the smooth running of the private hospitals in the long run.

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