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An Exploratory Study of the Relationship between Verbal Aggressiveness and Communication Climate

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Abstract: ***The influence of defensive and supportive talk on communication climate provides a strong justification for studying verbal aggression, in order to allow for greater control by those who receive such messages over its destructive impact on relationships. Communication messages that are transmitted verbally as well as nonverbally contribute to the tone of relationships whether the messages are perceived as positive or negative influences how people feel about each other and themselves as they carry out their daily routines. This is a descriptive study that measures two or more relevant variables and assesses the relationship and difference between feedback of verbal aggressiveness and communication climate inventory in the workplace as perceived by the supervisors and employees. Thirty-two supervisors and one-hundred five employees were used as respondents of the study. Descriptive and Inferential statistics such as the Mean, standard deviation, t-test and Analysis of Variance were used to analyze the collected data. The results showed that, there is a significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others. On the other hand, there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the communication climate inventory. There is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents according to sex on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory. Likewise, there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents according to age on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory.***

Keywords: verbal aggressiveness, communication climate inventory

I. INTRODUCTION

Verbal aggressiveness is the predisposition to attack the self-perception of others. Basically, your argument against someone is not based on their ideas or your ideas. It is focused on their self-esteem and your emotions. Say that these two people are arguing, and the argument comes down to a disagreement.

The one on the left is prone to verbal aggressiveness. Rather than support her side with facts, she attacks the character of the other person. Verbal aggressiveness tends to feature things like name-calling, insults, and threats or ultimatums. As you can probably guess, this is generally considered an unproductive style of conflict management.

In a similar fashion to the physical climate of an area, the communication climate of an organization affects the way we live: to whom we talk, whom we like, how we feel, how hard we work, how innovative we are, what we want to accomplish, and how we seem to fit into the organization.

Perceptions of work conditions, supervision, compensation, advancement, relationships with colleagues, organization rules and regulations, decision-making practices, available resources, and ways of motivating organization members all combine to comprise a body of information that builds what we call the organizational communication climate. Climate is viewed as a subjectively experienced quality derived from perceptions of the relatively enduring characteristics of organizations [1] . This study states that the communication climate of an organization is more crucial than the communication skills or techniques in creating an effective organization [2].

Communication messages that are transmitted verbally as well as nonverbally contribute to the tone of relationships whether the messages are perceived as positive or negative influences how people feel about each other and themselves as they carry out their daily routines. Communication climate is a term that refers to this emotional tone of a relationship [3]. In other words, it describes the way people feel about each other as they carry out their daily activities. Climates are found in friendships, families and all other kinds of relationships that have their own social tone [4].

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The influence of defensive and supportive talk on communication climate provides a strong justification for studying verbal aggression, in order to allow for greater control by those who receive such messages over its destructive impact on relationships. The significance of studying defensive communication from both a personal and societal perspective is that verbal aggression has the potential to escalate from differences in opinion too much worse physical acts of violence [5]. Such research can give examples of messages that are both productive and supportive and demonstrate how a particular style of talk can be more likely to build a positive communication climate than others.

Understanding how people can learn to communicate differently and more effectively with others might help provide them with more choice in their behaviour than many of the responses that result from defensiveness. In other words, perhaps those who lack communication skills are more likely to use a defensive type of talk.

The use of such defensive talk might ultimately destroy relationships in contexts such as the family, the workplace, classrooms or even therapeutic settings. Exploring the problematic language of defensiveness along with the potential solution given by Gibb's work can provide interpersonal communication researchers with additional insights regarding how a supportive style of talk creates a positive communication climate, which in turn, can be taught to others in order to limit the effects of verbal aggressiveness [4].

This study will report an exploratory study of the relationship between verbal aggressiveness and communication climate. The study specifically aims to determine the following: (a) the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others in the workplace as perceived by the supervisors and employees; (b) the status of the communication climate inventory in the workplace as perceived by the supervisors and employees; (c) the difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory in the workplace as perceived by the supervisors and employees; (d) the difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory in the workplace according to sex and (e) the significant difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory in the workplace according to age.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Communication Climate of an organization is important because it links the organizational context to the concepts, feelings, and expectations of organization members and helps explain the behaviour of organization members [6]. By knowing something about the climate of an organization, we can better understand what impels organization members to behave in particular ways. Some specialists argue that the concept of "climate" is one of the richest constructs in organization theory, generally, and organizational communication specifically [1]. Organizational Communication Climate has far-reaching explanatory powers and an understanding of it can tell us much about the culture of an organization.

Because verbal aggressiveness is associated with positive and negative relational outcomes, respectively, it could be perceived that verbal aggressiveness is related to the respondents' perceptions of workplace climate, workplace apprehension, and state motivation [5].

All have enjoyed relationships with people where it's easy to talk together and understand one another. In these kinds of relationships, an exchange of information and ideas takes place, and virtually everyone is open to listening and discussing projects and issues. Maybe somebody once participated in a project group at school where the members were excited about the subject matter and eager to work together. Everyone made an effort to be friendly and helpful. Accomplished meetings and conversation seemed to flow without effort.

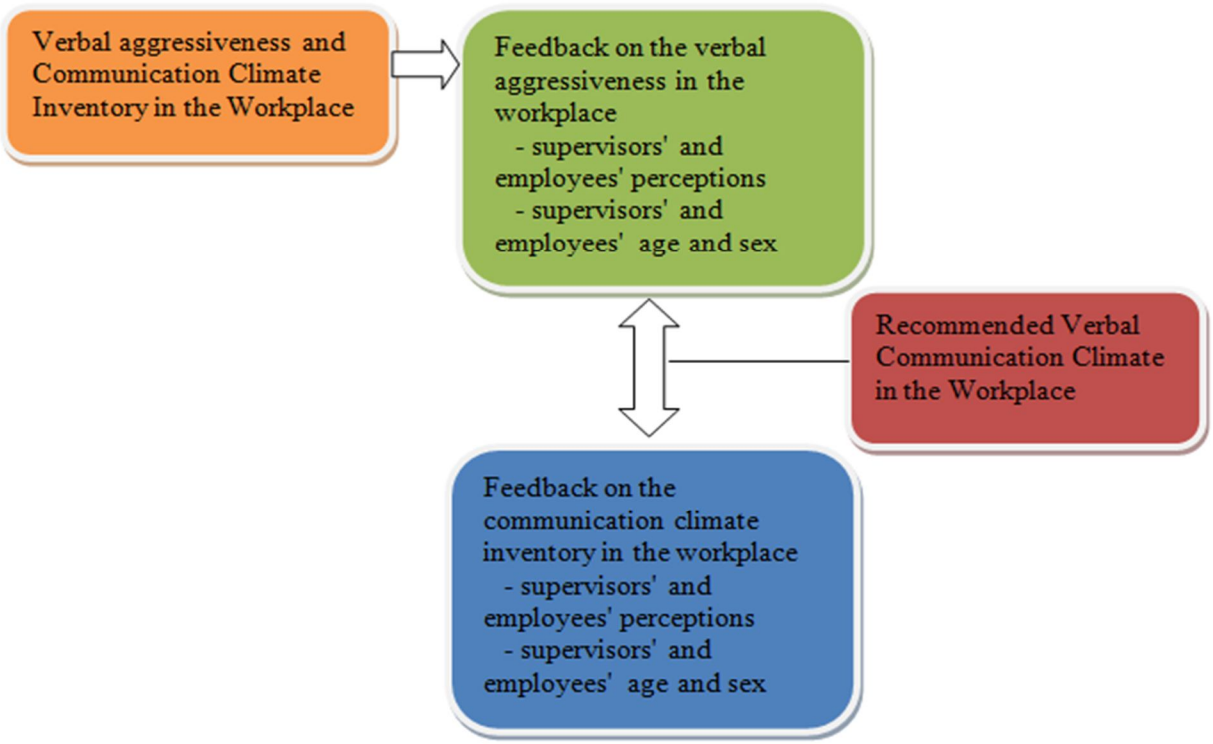
That situation is characterized as good communication climate. Other characteristics of good communication climate would probably include people treating each other with respect by listening without interruption, promptly responding to one another's email messages, and considering each other's viewpoints even when there was honest disagreement [7].

The atmosphere and condition of good communication climate would certainly be benefiting all people within the jurisdiction of a workplace. A company or an institution would be productive and attractive to clients and contemporaries. The employees and workers will be part of the good climate.

Smooth working activities, camaraderie and other personal relationships will be enhanced and effective. Clients and other customers will be benefited too in forms of quality products and services. The government could be triggered to develop more strategies and mechanisms that would create the atmosphere and condition of good communication climate through seminars and trainings among employees and workers. Communication Climate influences productivity of the organization because climate affects the effort of an organization member.

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Conceptual framework



The 10 indicators of verbal aggressiveness measure how people try to obtain compliance from others. Each statement indicates the extent to which a person feels it's true in the attempts to influence others. On the other hand, 12 indicators of communication climate inventory measure how the supervisor-employee communicates on the job. The framework of the study is the relationship of the feedback on the verbal aggressiveness in the workplace and the feedback on the communication climate inventory as perceived by the supervisors and employees. Moreover, difference of the feedback will be measured in terms of age and sex of the respondents. The result of the study is the recommended verbal communication climate in the workplace.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This is a descriptive study that measures two or more relevant variables and assess a relationship and difference between feedback of verbal aggressiveness and communication climate inventory in the workplace as perceived by the supervisors and employees.

B. Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were supervisors and employees selected from all levels of educational and business sectors using stratified random sampling. Target number of respondents was 200 respondents and the retrieved data were from 137 respondents.

C. Research Instruments

The study adapted the 20-item scale developed by [8] and factor analyzed by [9]. Ten items were written according to the conceptualization of verbal aggressiveness as a trait to attack the self-concept of other people instead of their positions on topics of communication. The rating format was a five point linear scale with “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” endpoints. Communication Climate Inventory developed by [4] was adapted. Thirty-six items were written according to communication climate inventory. The rating format was a five point linear scale with “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree” endpoints.

D. Statistical Treatment of the Data

Descriptive and Inferential statistics such as the Mean, standard deviation, t-test and Analysis of Variance were used to analyze the data.

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IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of the Verbal Aggressiveness to Influence others in the Workplace

How Verbally Aggressive Are You?	Supervisors N=32		Employees N=105	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.	2.00	1.5	3.10	1.6
2. When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften their stubbornness.	2.09	1.47	2.93	1.39
3. When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them to shock them into proper behavior.	2.03	1.18	2.98	1.17
4. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance, I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.	2.22	1.39	2.92	1.46
5. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pressure out of really telling them off.	2.50	1.44	3.00	1.36
6. I like poking fun at people who do things that are stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.	2.25	1.37	2.84	1.2
7. When people do things that are mean or cruel, I attack their character to help correct their behavior.	2.22	1.48	2.96	1.23
8. When I am trying to influence others but nothing seems to work, I yell and scream to get some movement from them.	2.22	1.56	3.01	1.55
9. When I am unable to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive to weaken their positions.	2.34	1.6	2.87	1.32
10. When people refuse to do a task I know is important without good reason, I tell them they are unreasonable.	2.44	1.56	3.15	1.78

From the given results above, considering the supervisor's aggressiveness, table 1 shows that item 5, 'when individuals insult me, I get a lot of pressure out of really telling them off', got the highest mean score of 2.50. This was followed by item 10, 'when people refuse to do a task I know is important without good reason, I tell them they are unreasonable', with a mean score of 2.44. Item 9, 'when I am unable to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive to weaken their positions', got the third highest mean score of 2.34. On the other hand, under employees' aggressiveness, the highest mean score of 3.15 was gotten by item 10, 'when people refuse to do a task I know is important without good reason, I tell them they are unreasonable'. This was seconded by item 1, 'If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character', having a mean score of 3.10. The third highest mean of 3.01 was scored by item 8, 'when I am trying to influence others but nothing seems to work, I yell and scream to get some movement from them'.

While both the supervisors and the employees are equally aggressive, each of them has way of doing it so. The supervisors when insulted get a lot of pressure out of really telling the individuals off. For them, people are unreasonable refusing an important task without any good reason. If supervisors cannot refute the people's position, superiors make them feel defensive. The employees demonstrate aggressiveness in somehow different manner in the workplace. Like the supervisors, employees too are aggressive on people who refuse to do an important task. Employees attack the individual's character in trying to influence them but if it failed to work, the subordinates yell at co-workers. This could only mean that in every organization, verbal aggressiveness if cannot be avoided or at least limited would be affecting the condition of both the situation and workers in the workplace and eventually affecting the organization as well. The communication climate will certainly contribute to the possible results in the organization's operation, either positive or negative.

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Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of the Communication Climate Inventory in the Workplace

Communication Climate Inventory	Supervisors N=32		Employees N=105	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1. As a supervisor I criticize the work of my subordinates without allowing them to explain. My supervisor criticizes my work without allowing me to explain.	2.31	1.38	3.12	1.32
2. As a supervisor I allow my subordinate as much creativity as possible in their job. My supervisor allows me as much creativity as possible in my job.	3.59	1.29	3.45	1.2
3. As a supervisor I always judge the actions of my subordinates. My supervisor always judges the actions of his or her subordinates.	2.87	1.24	3.23	1.31
4. As a supervisor I allow flexibility on the job. My supervisor allows flexibility on the job.	3.59	1.32	3.56	1.1
5. As a supervisor I criticize the work of my subordinates in the presence of others. My supervisor criticizes my work in the presence of others.	2.78	1.45	3.26	1.08
6. As a supervisor I am willing to try new ideas and to accept other points of view. My supervisor is willing to try new ideas and to accept other points of view.	3.84	1.3	3.44	1.29
7. As a supervisor I believe that I must control how my subordinates do their work. My supervisor believes that he or she must control how I do my work.	3.25	1.24	3.59	1.25
8. As a supervisor I understand the problems that my subordinates encounter in their job. My supervisor understands the problems that I encounter in my job.	3.66	1.29	3.63	1.1
9. As a supervisor I am always trying to change other people's attitudes and behaviors to suit my own. My supervisor is always trying to change other people's attitudes and behaviors to suit his or her own.	2.62	1.18	3.37	0.92
10. As a supervisor I respect the feelings and values of my subordinates. My supervisor respects my feelings and values.	3.50	1.46	3.77	1.07
11. As a supervisor I always need to be in charge of the situation. My supervisor always needs to be in charge of the situation.	3.16	1.37	3.56	1.16
12. As a supervisor I listen to the problems of my subordinates with interest. My supervisor listens to my problems with interest.	3.50	1.41	3.82	1.16

It could be gleaned from the table, item 6, 'As a supervisor I am willing to try new ideas and to accept other points of view', got the highest mean score of 3.84. This was followed by the next highest, item 8, 'As a supervisor I understand the problems that my subordinates encounter in their job', with a mean score of 3.66. Items 2, 'As a supervisor I allow my subordinate as much creativity as possible in their job', and 4, 'As a supervisor I allow flexibility on the job', got the next highest mean score of 3.59. This simply implies that the supervisor is open to his subordinates giving them the chances of suggesting other points of view and being creative as possible in the job. It is also good to note that the supervisor understands the problems encountered by the subordinates in their job.

The employees on the other hand have item 12, 'My supervisor listens to my problems with interest', to have the highest mean score of 3.82; while item 10, 'My supervisor respects my feelings and values', got the mean score of 3.77 being the second highest. The next highest, with the mean score of 3.63 is item 8, 'My supervisor understands the problems that I encounter in my job'. The mean scores and items chosen and used to show the different angles of the supervisor's openness to the subordinates are really very noticeable. This was revealed in the three (3) highest items selected by the subordinates. Supervisors were perceived demonstrating interest in listening to the subordinates' problems; showing respect to the values and feelings; and understanding the subordinates' problems encountered in the job. Generally, the very good attitudes displayed by both the supervisors and the employees, give a very positive implication that there is a nice working atmosphere taking place in the workplace and that everybody is working harmoniously.

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Table 3. Significant difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory in the workplace

Variables	Respondents	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Verbal aggressiveness to influence others in the workplace	supervisors	32	2.23	0.75	.005*	Statistically significant
	employees	105	2.98			
Communication climate inventory in the workplace	supervisors	32	3.22	0.26	.139	Statistically not significant
	employees	104	3.48			

* Difference is significant at 0.05 level.

A parametric statistical test particularly the t-test was used to test the comparison on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory in the workplace according to supervisors and employees. The table shows the test of significance conducted and compares the responses of supervisors and employees on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others. The supervisors responses "undecided" and the employees' responses "agree" on the verbal aggressiveness to influence others with a paired difference of 0.75. Moreover, the comparison yielded p-values (.005) which as lesser than $\alpha = .05$ (two tailed). It clearly shows that there is a statistically significant difference on the responses of the supervisors and employees on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others. Hence, rejects the null hypothesis and accepts the alternative hypothesis - there is a significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others.

On the other hand, the test of significance conducted compares the responses of supervisors and employees on the communication climate inventory, both supervisors and employees have the same responses "agree" on the communication climate inventory with a paired difference of 0.26. Moreover, the comparison yielded p-values (.139) was greater than $\alpha = .05$ (two tailed). It clearly shows that there was no significant difference on the responses of the supervisors and employees on the communication climate inventory. Hence, accepts the null hypothesis - there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the communication climate inventory.

Table 4. Significant difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory in the workplace according to sex.

Variables	sex	N	Mean	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)	Description
Verbal aggressiveness to influence others in the workplace	Male	78	2.84	0.09	.700	Statistically not significant
	female	59	2.75			
Communication climate inventory in the workplace	Male	78	3.50	0.19	.193	Statistically not significant
	female	59	3.31			

A parametric statistical test particularly the t-test was used to test the comparison on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory in the workplace according to sex. The table shows the test of significance conducted and compares the responses of males and females on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory. Both males and females have the same responses "agree" on the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory with a paired difference of 0.09 and 0.19, respectively. Moreover, the comparison yielded p-values (.700) on verbal aggressiveness and p-values (.193) on communication climate inventory which were greater than $\alpha = .05$ (two tailed). It clearly shows that there was no significant difference on the responses of the males and females on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory. Hence, accepts the null hypothesis - there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents according to sex on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory.

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Table 5. Significant difference on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory in the workplace according to age

Variables	ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Description
Verbal aggressiveness to influence others in the workplace	Between Groups	4.490	4	1.122	.632	.640	Statistically not significant
	Within Groups	234.289	132	1.775			
	Total	238.779	136				
Communication climate inventory in the workplace	Between Groups	5.232	4	1.308	1.893	.115	Statistically not significant
	Within Groups	90.504	131	.691			
	Total	95.736	135				

A parametric statistical test particularly the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the comparison on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory in the workplace according to age. The table shows the test of significance conducted and compares the responses when grouped according to age on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory. The respondents have the same responses “agree” on the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and communication climate inventory with a F-values of 0.632 and 1.893, respectively. Moreover, the comparison yielded p-values (.640) on verbal aggressiveness and p-values (.115) on communication climate inventory which were greater than $\alpha = .05$ (two tailed). It clearly shows that there was no significant difference on the responses when grouped according to age on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory. Hence, accepts the null hypothesis - there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents according to age on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory.

V. CONSLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A. Conclusions

Based from the results and discussion, the following are the conclusions of the study. Both the supervisors and the employees are equally aggressive; each of them has way of doing it so.

The supervisors when insulted get a lot of pressure out of really telling the individuals off. For them, people are unreasonable refusing an important task without any good reason. As perceived by the employees, the supervisors demonstrate interest in listening to employees' problems; showing respect to employees' values and feelings; and understanding the subordinates’ problems encountered in the job.

There is a significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others. on the other hand, there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents on the status of the communication climate inventory. Furthermore, there is no significant difference on the responses of the group of respondents according to sex and age on the status of the verbal aggressiveness to influence others and the communication climate inventory.

B. Recommendations

This portion of the study presents the following recommendations based from the conclusions drawn from the results and discussion. The administration should be very selective and careful in hiring key positions in the company, like the managerial and supervisor seats. The administration should design a program for seminars, trainings and workshops for both the supervisors/managers and the employees regarding leadership, interpersonal relationship, ethics, and values to improve or at least lessen if not controlled and where attendance is a must.

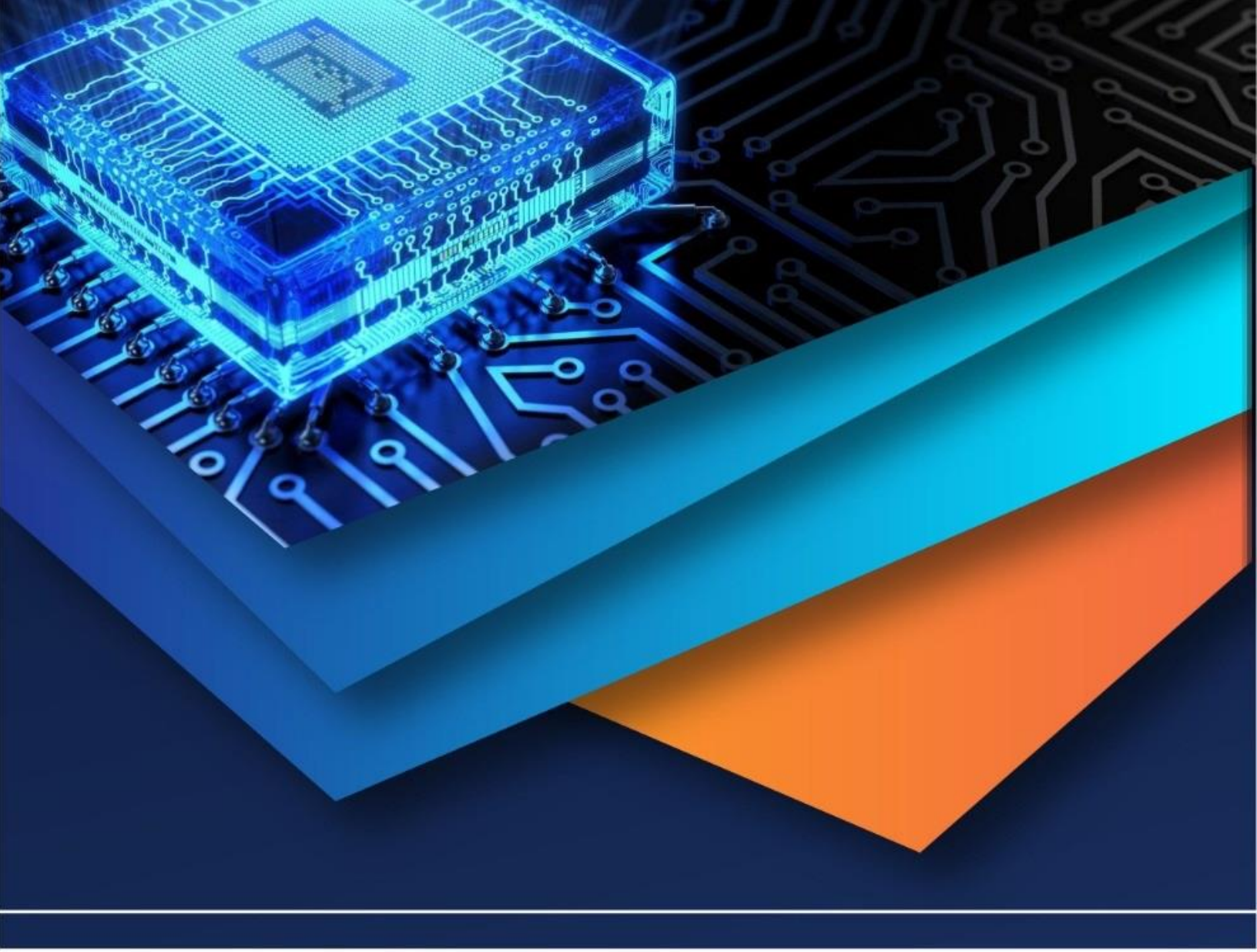
Employees should not abuse the respect and understanding demonstrated by the supervisors to maintain the quiet, peaceful and harmonious relationship in the workplace. There should be a proper monitoring procedure to watch and supervise the employees’ misconduct and unpleasant behaviour in the workplace. In the case where the supervisors and the employees have different outlook or perception in the workplace regarding work or individual, a well planned program design should be created independently to improve the relationship and the working condition and eventually promote effective and productive outcomes and lessen the aggressiveness of the employees and the supervisors. To sustain the communication climate harmonious and conducive and maintain the employees working, there should be a clear policy on incentives, recognition and promotion and somehow making everybody less aggressive.

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