

Assessing Communication within Local Organizations

Nancu Dorinela
Popovici Veronica
Horga Maria Gabriela

"Ovidius" University of Constanta, Faculty of Economic Sciences
cusudorinelayahoo.com

Abstract

This work aims at disseminating the research findings on the extent to which Romanian companies encourage communication within organizations, at all hierarchical levels, both vertically and horizontally. In this direction we have conducted an extensive research based on questionnaire. The work instrument comprised a section of questions used to assess the communication within the organizations where the respondents work. We have questioned around 300 employees from all hierarchical levels. In a forthcoming paper, we will present the impact that the promotion and development of communication between employees and leaders have on organizational performance.

Key words: communication, inter-departmental communication, workplace, feedback, employees

J.E.L. Classification: D22

1. Introduction

A successful management of an organization requires a partnership between all the stakeholders of a company. This partnership is maintained within an environment dominated by a high level of respect and trust, characterized by low bureaucracy and by the decentralization of power, where the barriers between the management and the executive teams are eliminated. Also, the partnership should benefit from effective communication at all hierarchical levels, work teams with high autonomy, intense collaboration among team members for learning, research and innovation, a consistent and motivating rewards system and significant investments in resources, especially in intangible ones. This organization of the management system, based on partnership, leads to business performance – through dedicated employees, satisfied customers and financial performance. (Pfeffer, J., 2010, p.65)

Communication plays a crucial role within the organization, as it can prevent various problems and the dissatisfaction among employees. Poor communication, difficulties in carrying out one's duties and the low level of trust and cohesion between team members finally trigger a decrease in productivity.

The information flow within the organization provides several benefits: it increases people's sense of responsibility; the employee's trust in the organization's management is intensifying and the hierarchical structures are no longer seen as "barriers" between the executive and management structures (Collins J., 2007, p.86). These last two results will cause a sense of partnership and a desire for involvement among the employees, who will use this information in order to enhance organizational performance.

2. Research methodology

The table below reveals the section from the doctoral research that analyzes the communication process within Romanian organizations. In this part of the research we aimed at identifying the extent to which Romanian employees are respected by the management, the extent to which they

are involved in the decision making process and the extent to which they communicate and receive information, both from colleagues and bosses.

Table no. 1 Assessing communication within Romanian organizations

AFIRMATION	Average of the statements
3. Top managers respect employees and trust them, and the employees are involved in the process of decision-making within the organization.	0.886792
8. You are provided with information (brochures, posters, websites, etc.) that let you know what is happening within the organization.	0.886792
9. You communicate openly and honestly with both subordinates and hierarchical heads within the organization.	1.018868
10. Communication between departments within the organization is difficult. .	-0.16981
11. Within your organization, employees' opinions are heard and evaluated, regardless of their position in the organization hierarchy	0.320755
12. Employees receive feed-back for their performance	0.54717
THE SCORE OF THE COMMUNICATION VARIABLE	0.581761

Source: own processing

The statements from the above table contributed to the calculation of the variable "communication", which refers to the development of a behavior pattern within the organization focused on the communication at all hierarchical levels: i.e. upper, lower, interdepartmental.

3. Research results

The highest score was achieved by statement 9, which referred to the communication between subordinates and superiors, respectively 1.018; the lowest score was obtained by statement 10, referring to inter-departmental communication, i.e. 0.169. Although, at the first sight, these two scores would seem contradictory, a deeper analysis reveals that the two results actually indicate the obvious presence of a vertical hierarchical structure within the respondents' organizations. The management assigns tasks, the employees carry them out; however, because of this rigidity, the communication and collaboration between employees is hampered. The two results indicate communication problems within local organizations. The employees are more concerned to comply with their superiors' requests and they are also focused on fulfilling the assigned tasks than to involve themselves in inter-departmental collaboration, which would lead to the high functionality of their organizations. It is obvious that Romanian organizations are still far from the flat structure specific to the knowledge-based organization.

The positive scores obtained by statements 3 and 11 show that the employees feel respected at their workplace; it also reveals a shy but significant opening of Romanian leaders to listening to their employees. The management respects its employees, giving them the right to express an opinion, but their ideas are implemented to a small extent.

In a knowledge-based organization, the barriers between the executive and the management structures are removed and the two structures cooperate in order to achieve their targeted organizational performance (Glyn, W., 2010, e-books). We believe that the Romanian organization will progress towards the knowledge-based organization because the employees are informed about what is happening at their workplace and receive feedback, either by the recognition of their performant results or by constructive criticism, in order to overcome the problems and the obstacles encountered; these are supported by the positive scores obtained by statements 8 and 12.

The score of the variable "communication" is **0.581**, i.e. above the neutral level, and it represents the summarizing score of the investigated statements. The score obtained by Romanian companies is located at an acceptable level, but we realize that the Romanian leaders' intervention is required, especially in improving inter-departmental communication and removing the barriers between the management and the executive.

Table no.2 Descriptive statistical analysis of the variable "communication"

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
A3	-1	2	0.886792	0.966186	-0.53159	-0.66465
A8	-2	2	0.886792	1.225291	-0.71427	-0.71244
A9	-2	2	1.018868	1.09182	-1.09123	0.507326
A10	-2	2	-0.16981	1.195193	0.063673	-1.02674
A11	-2	2	0.320755	1.043657	-0.37071	-0.76377
A12	-2	2	0.54717	1.327687	-0.59053	-0.79533

Source: own processing

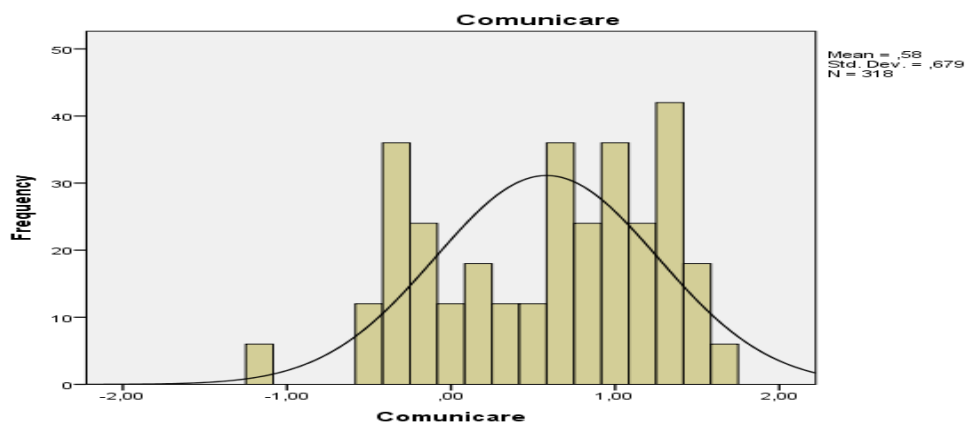
In the table above, we detailed the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the variable "communication". The first two columns show the minimum or the maximum scores achieved by the statements on the analyzed variable. It is noteworthy that, except statement 3, which obtained values between -1 and +2, the remaining statements obtained both minimum and maximum scores from our respondents.

The third column of the table shows the average obtained by weighting the 318 responses to the score given by each respondent to the respective statement. This average contributed to the score of **0,581 obtained by the variable "communication"**.

All series present a negative asymmetry (or left), due to the skewness coefficient <0, except the statement on inter-departmental communication, where the coefficient is positive. The left asymmetry occurs when the variable values lower than the average have high frequencies.

The data series present a platykurtic distribution, evidenced by the negative kurtosis coefficient, except the statement on hierarchical communication, where the kurtosis is positive, which means that the data series has a tail higher than that of a normal distribution.

Figure no. 1 Histogramm of the variable communication



Source: own processing

4. Conclusions

The statements on the variable "*communication*" indicate the extent to which the information is transmitted from management to subordinates, as well as the superiors' transparency and their openness to employees; moreover, it shows the extent to which the employees can transmit information to higher levels and to which the leaders listen to them; it also provides information on the status of inter-departmental communication.

The timely sharing of information is a key aspect in relation to the fast and efficient fulfillment of tasks by employees. If this information is not timely, the employees experience difficulties in their work and their morale is affected. However, when employees are briefed on what is happening within the organization, they realize faster their responsibility in connection to the success or failure of their company, thus being motivated to concentrate their efforts in a common direction, namely towards enhancing organizational performance.

Encouraging communication within the organization at all hierarchical levels, both vertically and horizontally, triggers benefits both for employers, employees and the organization. When the leaders of an organization communicate with their employees, they begin to earn their trust and the adherents feel included in the organization and realize that the management trust them.

5. References

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