

The Impact of Organisational Communication Quality on Employee Satisfaction

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Abstract

Managers in public institutions are increasingly concerned with achieving high quality and effective communication and raising awareness of its importance among members of the institution, with effects on improving: leadership effectiveness; employee motivation and satisfaction; employee trust in the institution and their commitment to both work and the organisation; improving the relationship between managers and subordinates. This requires managers to continually adapt organisational communication strategies, policies and practices to facilitate the achievement of the institution's mission and objectives. The study aims to analyse organisational communication, from an internal perspective, with a view to improving its quality according to the requirements of external and internal stakeholders. At the same time, we aim to identify management practices and factors that can positively influence the quality of communication and employee involvement in the communication process, with effects on increasing employee satisfaction, based on the example of a public institution within the state administration.

Key words: organizational communication, communication management, communication channel, communication effectiveness

J.E.L. classification: M10, M19

1. Introduction

In recent years, researchers and practitioners have become increasingly concerned with communication in different organisations, seen as a defining tool and element for organisational management, in response to growing concern about the problems it raises as it has become increasingly complex and sophisticated. In the view of modern management, all management activities and processes are initiated and carried out to a large extent through communication, and the ability to communicate is seen as a fundamental management competence. Communication “skills occupy an important place among the significant managerial skills of any organisation” (Armstrong, 2014, p.438).

Even though there is a relatively large body of research in this area, knowledge about management communication is not up to expectations. The literature on communication is focused on theoretical and technical aspects of communication and less concerned with empirical studies. As a consequence, there is a lack of understanding and competence in communication management. There are few empirical studies related to organizational communication from an intentional (intraorganizational) perspective that examine managerial perceptions of communication in organizations (Hargie, & Tourish, 2009). As a consequence, we can say that there is a lack of understanding and concern for addressing communication management in

organisations. In addition, most communication research tends to focus on theoretical issues of organisational communication rather than empirical studies (Kinicki, & Williams, 2016). Therefore, a broader view of organisational communication is needed, which involves addressing its role in ensuring the effectiveness of human resource management practices and employee satisfaction as a measure of organisational performance (Cooper, 2005).

Communication in public institutions plays a major role, given that their activity is based on transparency towards the citizen (taxpayer), as a principle of good governance, who finances their existence and functioning through the tax system. It is precisely for this reason that it is important for the work of public institutions to be known, which is why the study of the quality and effectiveness of organisational communication plays an important role, leading to the awareness of managers and other employees in public institutions to pay due attention to the communication that has its mark on the success of these organisations (Robbins, 2016)

2. Literature review

Increasing the volume of information and making the most effective use of it is leading managers to take an interest in developing communication skills. The ability of managers to shape meaning and social reality through communication processes is fundamental to the success of their organisations. Communication can be considered a basic aspect of human existence; no discipline of study is more important to society than communication (Bell & Martin, 2014). Lack of proper communication within an organization can create confusion and cause processes and programs within the organization to fail. According to the literature many authors have tried to formulate a clear, complex definition of the term communication, but nevertheless we can see a broad conceptualization of this concept.

Communication can be seen as the set of processes through which several people relate to each other in order to achieve goals. Technically communication facilitates the exchange of information within an organisation and communication management ensures effective coordination of all internal and external communication flows with all relevant stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2008).

A proper employee feedback system ensures effective, open communication between the institution's leadership and employees, and if employees feel that they are taken into account, listened to, and acknowledged, they will be more loyal to it and more receptive to providing trust. If we refer to the importance of feedback in organisational communication, we can see that there are approaches in the literature that argue that feedback is effective, primarily in verbal communication, but also in written communication that is well thought out, clear and logical, even if their main disadvantage relates to the greater consumption of time (Robbins, 2016).

Redding (1988), considered the founder of the field of organisational communication, argues that all complex organisations, seen as social structures, are characterised by four essential features: interdependence; differentiation of tasks and functions; goal orientation; control. Even though the author does not include communication among the defining characteristics of organizations, he considers that it is found in all four defining characteristics of organizations (Sinding & Waldstrom, 2014).

In the last two decades, it has been observed that the concept of management is increasingly integrated into the field of communication in more and more organizations (Cornelissen, 2008). Organizational communication can be seen as a management tool through which all forms of internal and external communication, used consciously, are harmonized as effectively as possible to create a favorable basis for the relationships with employees and teams on which the effectiveness of the organization depends (Hargie & Tourish, 2009). Organizational communication should be approached as a strategic action practiced by professionals within an organization to create and maintain strong internal and external relationships with relevant stakeholders (Hynes, 2016)

All these aspects of organisational communication demonstrate that it is not simply a means of transferring information, but needs to be approached from a broader internal and external perspective, as a complex process through which meaning is given to all the actions of organisational members (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Effective and quality organizational communication has long been credited as a primary factor in achieving high levels of organizational effectiveness (Goodman, 2001). Organizational communication can encompass public relations, citizen relations, employee relations, internal intra-organizational communication (Van Riel & Fombrum, 2007). The proper implementation of organizational communication, from an internal and managerial perspective, can influence an organization's ability to achieve its goals and organizational effectiveness (Young, & Poost, 1993). It can be seen as a key management strategy (Goodman, 2000, p.71). In public institutions, organisational communication management should facilitate the transfer of information and knowledge between relevant stakeholders to ensure organisational quality and effectiveness as a measure of performance.

The success of organisations cannot be conceived without appropriate, realistic and effective strategies and policies, among which those concerning communication play an important role. At the same time, the study of communication in public institutions has focused on organisational communication associated with employee satisfaction, which allows to link the strategies and policies of these organisations and communication management with managerial communication (Armstrong, 2014). More and more experts believe that effective communication is a major success factor in a complex working environment based on trust. Organisational communication from a managerial perspective can be considered a critical core competency critical to organisational success (Bell & Martin, 2014).

3. Research methodology

In order to analyse the quality and effectiveness of communication in the public institution that was the subject of the research (in our case an institution within the Romanian state administration with more than 400 employees), a survey was carried out based on the perception of employees (managers and employees without managerial responsibilities) regarding the effectiveness of communication policies, practices and processes, seen as a management tool, which included the sources of information, the environment and the means of transmitting information. The main objective of the study undertaken was to identify best practices and factors that determine the quality and effectiveness of communication in the public institution, based on a scientific foundation, in order to determine the impact of the quality of organisational communication on employee satisfaction. The research hypothesis aims to test whether there is a significant and positive relationship between the quality of organizational communication and employee satisfaction.

The research carried out is based on a case study, in which the chosen method is the survey with the questionnaire as the main instrument, designed for organizational communication as the main component of the management of the public institution, which is the subject of the research. In order to identify and implement best practices for improving communication effectiveness, we focused on improving organizational communication skills, with reference to the factors that determine the quality of organizational communication, based on the perception of employees who are part of the research sample.

The questionnaire design is focused on the research objectives, and includes items appropriate to the research topic and objectives. Thus, there are dichotomous items with answers of "YES" or "NO" to characterize the general factors that influence the effectiveness of organizational communication in the public institution, to which are added items, which refer to specific factors and practices of communication management, to assess agreement, on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (where: 1 = total disagreement, 5 = total agreement). STATA 18 software was used to process the data. The distribution of questionnaires and their collection was carried out from 01 September 2023 to 31 October 2023 on a sample of 43 people (8 managers and 35 employees).

In order to highlight the relevant sample characteristics and establish the sample profile, qualitative, structural variables were analysed to determine the extent to which they have statistical association relationships. The highlighting of the association, i.e. the statistical relationships between variables was based on a construct on the association relationships between variables, using the bivariate model, Based on the analysis of variance regarding the association of the

structure variables *Gender, Function, Level of education, Length of service in the institution, Age*, we can see that the individual profile of the respondent includes people: female; with the function of employee without managerial position; with university education; with length of service in the institution between 5-10 years and with age between 30-35 years.

The analysis of the main characteristics of communication, from an internal managerial perspective, in the public institution, and the identification of the main links between its dimensions, is based on a construct comprising items, i.e. primary variables, which compose the aggregate variables that express the characteristics of organizational communication, communication management practices and the factors that determine it. The aggregate variables, which are the basis of the construct, are: "*Quality of organizational communication*" (*Cl.cm*); "*Employee satisfaction*" (*Sf.ag*) in the public institution.

In order to perform the statistical analysis of the variables that are the subject of the construct, i.e. to verify the relevance of the information they contain and the correctness of the construct, the reliability analysis was performed, the results of which are included in Table 1.

Table no. 1 Reliability analysis test scale

Variable	Sign	Number of items in the scale	Average interitem covariance	Cronbach's Alpha
Cl.cm	+	15	.3712136	0.8142
Sf.ag	+	11	.3150214	0.8091

Source: Own research. Results provided by STATA 18

In our case, we can see that all the two aggregate variables have a good internal consistency, given that the *Cronbach's Alpha* coefficients, calculated with the statistical software STATA 18, have values greater than 0.80, values that are within the limit of acceptability.

4. Findings

4.1. Analysis of organisational communication

In order to approach organisational communication at the public institution under analysis from an internal managerial perspective and to identify the factors and best practices that determine it, we first analysed the information from the questionnaire applied to the general factors that determine the quality and effectiveness of organisational communication. Thus, according to the perception of the respondents, after processing the questionnaires the following results:

- All respondents to the questionnaire (100%) highlight the fact that the institution has an internal regulation, which corresponds to its activity profile. It is an important document that guides the members of the institution (managers and non-managerial staff) in the achievement of general and individual specific objectives;
- 93.03% of respondents say that the general and specific objectives of the institution have been communicated to employees. In order to facilitate and monitor their achievement, all managers' decisions are recorded in documents drawn up at the institution level and posted on the internal website for the employees to see;
- in the opinion of 76.75% of the respondents to the questionnaire, the institution has adequate strategies and policies to achieve its objectives, which mainly concern: defining and determining strategic objectives; establishing and reviewing the methods and procedures that are used; establishing how to measure strategic objectives; ensuring sufficient communication channels, etc;
- 69.77% of the respondents to the questionnaire believe that the leadership in the public institution identifies significant risks to the work of the institution and manages them appropriately and effectively;

- 86.05% of the respondents to the questionnaire believe that developing organisational communication skills, primarily in front-line members of the organisation, is a key factor in ensuring the success of the organisation;
- 79.07% of the respondents are of the opinion that the institution monitors and measures organisational performance both at the organisational level and for key processes, including those related to organisational communication, to achieve the overall objectives of the institution;
- in the opinion of 88.38% of the respondents, the public institution has a specialised communication department dealing with the external environment: citizens, media, other institutions and economic and social organisations;
- 69.77% of the respondents to the questionnaire believe that communication strategies and policies are integrated into the institution's strategies and policies, which allows: establishing appropriate sources and types of information; improving the quality of information; optimising information flows at the level of the institution's sub-units;
- the institution, in the opinion of 72.10% of respondents, has sufficient and effective communication channels to ensure that messages are transmitted and received in real time;
- 67.45% of the respondents are of the opinion that the institution pays attention to transparency of information as a basic principle of institutional governance, by posting on the institution's website all information of public interest administered by the institution, in compliance with the law, as well as by posting it on the institution's premises;
- The top 5 common values shared by respondents to the questionnaire, which they consider important for the institution, are: integrity (81.40%); communication (79.07%); citizens first (78.58%); responsibility (74.42%); honesty (72.10%). We note that communication ranks second among the 5 values, which means that 79.07% of respondents consider it very important for the institution's activities.

All these aspects resulting from the public institution in the field of state administration demonstrate that its management has adequate communication management skills and practices that can ensure the quality and effectiveness of organizational communication according to the expectations of relevant internal and external stakeholders.

4.2. Quality of organisational communication

Based on Grunig & Grunig's (1992) assessment that communication is considered the most effective and ethical approach in achieving total quality in organizations, in this study, we aimed to evaluate and analyze the quality of organizational communication, from an internal and managerial perspective, of the public institution, in the field of state administration. For this purpose, primary data were used from the questionnaire used regarding the quality of the communication process represented by the aggregate variable *Cl_cm*. The construct of this variable comprises 15 items/primary variables, and is characterised by a good level of internal consistency and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha 0.8142) Table 1.

Table no. 2 *Cl_cm Sf_ag*, statistics (count mean sd semean cv)

Variable	N	Mean	sd	se(mean)	cv
Cl_cm	43	3.9475	.6827	.0304	.1512
Sf_ag	43	3.9268	.6711	.0409	.1497

Source: Own research. Results provided by STATA 18

The variable *Cl_cm* according to the data presented in Table 2, records a mean of 3.9475, with "sd" (standard deviation) of .6827, considered good, in relation to the variation of responses from the mean. The standard error, "*se(mean)*" has a value of .0304 and shows a good approximation of the mean of the variable to its true value (relative to the statistical population from which the

sample was drawn), and indicates that the true mean will most likely be between 3.7651 ($3.9475 - 0.0304 \times 2$) and 4.0283 ($3.9475 + 0.0304 \times 2$). The coefficient of variation (*cv*), is .1512, which means that the statistical population, has a good degree of homogeneity.

Next, we will characterize the 15 primary variables that make up the *Cl_cm* variable. A survey was used for the analysis, which facilitated the assessment of respondents' perceptions of communication quality characteristics, given the representativeness of the sample. According to the analysis of the primary variables composing the aggregate variable *Cl_cm*, with the help of the main indicators of descriptive statistics (mean score, mean standard deviation, standard error, coefficient of variation) we can see that the following factors contributed to the quality of communication in the public institution of the state administration, with the mean scores recorded:

- managers of the institution provide employees with genuine communication opportunities and channels appropriate to the content, delivery methods, confidentiality and other institution-specific factors to express their opinions and influence decisions that directly affect them (3.9824);
- communication, in the institution, is an effective tool for informing the manager directly about problems identified in the workplace, (4.0382);
- communication, in the institution, is an important support for ensuring trust in the relationship with the managers of the institution, (4.0533)
- managers and other non-managerial staff facilitate the provision of timely and accurate information to citizens, (4.0805);
- communication with employees of the institution is seen as an important support when there are problems within the institution, (4.0267);
- communication with direct boss/manager creates a sense of security and trust, (4.0114);
- employees, in dealing with managers and other colleagues, provide fair and honest feedback, (3.9608);
- communication in the institution meets the requirements of employees for the effective conduct of work/work, (3.8817);
- communication processes in the institution stimulate the involvement of employees for the smooth running of the institution, (3.9162);
- satisfaction with the quality of communication in the organization is perceived positively (3.9549);
- the managers of the institution are concerned with continuously improving the quality of communication according to the requirements and expectations of its members, (3.9081);
- there is fair and honest communication between managers and employees that goes both ways (manager-employee, employee-manager), (3.8943).
- the information provided corresponds to employees' needs, i.e. their capacity and ability to facilitate the achievement of the institution's general objectives and the employees' individually specific objectives (4.0331);
- information is communicated to the right decision-makers in real time, is correctly understood and has credibility (3.9235);
- The ability to communicate is considered a core management competency (3.8738);

As we can see the means of the 15 primary variables range from 3.8738 to 4.0805 and the mean standard deviation has acceptable values ranging from .5743 to .9774. Also the standard error and the coefficients of variation show acceptable values, which demonstrates the correctness of the construct of this variable, as well as the relevance of the analysis performed.

If we analyse the primary variables that are part of the *Cl_cm* variable, we can see that the effort of the institution's managers to ensure the quality of managerial communication is best perceived in the following directions:

- providing genuine communication opportunities and channels for employees;
- makes it easier for employees to obtain accurate and timely information from citizens;
- communication is considered an effective management tool providing the necessary information to perform the tasks in the workplace;

- communication must effectively contribute to the achievement of organizational objectives;
- developing the knowledge and skills necessary for members of the institution to facilitate effective communication at all levels of the organization in order to achieve the objectives and mission.

4.3. Employee satisfaction

In general, it is approached as a committed attitude towards his workplace, respectively as "a positive feeling towards the job resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics" (Robbins, Judge, 2013:424).

Employees in public institutions interact with citizens. Since managers in these establishments should be concerned with the level of trust and satisfaction of citizens in their organisation, employee satisfaction will be linked to positive employee outcomes, and will be assessed based on the perception of questionnaire respondents. Employee satisfaction, represented by the variable *Sf_ag*, is composed of 11 primary variables. It has a good internal consistency at a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.8091 (Table 1). According to the data presented in Table 2 the *Sf_ag* variable has a mean of 3.9268, with a standard deviation "sd" of .6711 and a standard error of .1497, which demonstrates the correctness of its construct. At the same time, the analysis of the structure of the variable *Sf_ag*, through the indicators of descriptive statistics shows the relevance of the primary variables that compose it.

The primary variables that make up the aggregate variable *Sf_ag*, with corresponding mean scores based on the perception of the questionnaire respondents are as follows: employee is satisfied with communication in relation to colleagues, (3.9615); communication in the institution meets the requirements of the employees for carrying out the work/job, (3.9042); the granting of rewards in the institution is based on correct criteria, (3.8207); the employee is satisfied with the appreciation of the direct manager, (3.8465); the quality of communication in the institution positively influences the employees' commitment to work and institution, (3.9742); organisational communication in the institution is simple and effective, (3.9674); communication and feedback stimulates the employee in achieving individual specific and overall goals of the institution, (3.9677); rewards for performance are fair and in line with the employee's personal aspirations, (3.8724); practices and procedures regarding the communication process facilitate the accomplishment of work tasks, (3.9958); relationships between functional areas in terms of communication and control are appropriate and effective, (3.9239); communication of managers of the institution with employees is honest and fair, (3.9502).

From the analysis of the primary variables, presented above, it appears that the most important factors that contributed positively to employees' perceptions of job satisfaction relate to: communication in relation to colleagues; communication in the institution meets employees' requirements to perform job tasks; quality of communication influences employees' engagement in work; effective definition and communication of tasks and responsibilities to employees.

The issues that raised problems in ensuring organisational quality and employee satisfaction relate to the following aspects: ensuring alignment between rewards for performance and the employee's personal aspirations; how the direct manager values the employee; ensuring the effectiveness of relationships between functional areas in terms of communication and control, and establishing appropriate and fair criteria for awarding rewards.

4.4. Statistical links between the variables *Sf_ag* and *Cl_cm*

In order to analyze the statistical relationships between the variables *Cl_cm*, the dependent variable *Sf_ag*, we first determine the association relationships (correlations) between these two variables using correlation coefficients. Based on the data provided by STATA 18 software, we can see that the strength of the relationship between these two variables can be characterized as very strong and positive (correlation *Cl_cm Sf_ag* - 0.8279).

To determine the magnitude of the impact between the independent variable *Cl_cm*, and the dependent variable *Sf_ag*, regression analysis *was* performed. The results are summarised in Table

To determine the impact of the independent variable *Cl_cm*, on the dependent variable *Sf_ag*, we performed regression analysis using the econometric model provided by STATA 18.

Table no. 3 Impact of the independent variable *Cl_cm* on the dependent variable *Sf_ag*

Independent variable	N	Prob > F	R-squared	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t
<i>Cl_cm</i>	43	0.0000	0.8437	.7926519	.0338595	23.41	0.004

Source: Own research. Results provided by STATA 18

Following the regression analysis we can see from the results provided by the econometric model (Table 3) that the independent variable *Cl_cm* has a significant impact on the dependent variable *Sf_ag*. We can thus see that the variable *Cl_cm* explains 84.37% of the variation in the variable *Sf_ag*, which is supported by the significance value of the "F" statistic, Prob > F = 0.0000 < 0.05. The regression coefficient of the independent variable *Cl_cm* is non-zero and positive at P>|t|=0.000 (< 0.05), which shows that this variable has a significant and positive impact on the *Sf_ag* variable. It thus follows that for a one unit increase in the *Cl_cm* variable, the *Sf_ag* variable will increase by .7926519 units;

These values provided by the econometric model used for the regression analysis express the fact that the variation of the variable *Cl_cm* largely explains the variation of the variable *Sf_ag* (R-squared is 0.8437). This means that the quality of organisational communication is a good predictor of increased employee job satisfaction.

5. Conclusions

The empirical study provides evidence on the impact of organisational communication on employee satisfaction as a measure of the performance of a public institution in the field of state administration. Although research on the direct influence of communication on organizational performance has focused on a wide range of communication variables, our study focused on assessing the quality of organizational communication from an internal managerial perspective at the public institution under investigation. From this perspective, the results of our study legitimize the opinions of well-known specialists, published in the literature, who identify a positive relationship between organizational communication management and performance, at the individual, group or organizational level (Cornelissen, 2008). This conclusion, is also verified in our study, which demonstrates that communication quality has a significant and positive impact on employee satisfaction.

Managers of the public institution, which is the subject of the study, need to be concerned with both the quality of organisational communication and the effectiveness of communication management, sources of information and ways of transmitting it in order to develop and implement effective organisational communication programmes.

To measure and analyse the quality of organisational communication from an internal organisational perspective and employee satisfaction, based on the perception of the respondents, the questionnaire was used as a basic tool, taking into account both the characteristics of the public institution and those of the human resource management and organisational communication process

Based on the respondents' assessment of the quality of communication, we find that the issues that need to be on managers' attention to ensure the quality of organizational communication and improve employee satisfaction relate to:

- participation of managers and other employees in training programmes to acquire appropriate general and specific organisational communication skills;
- promoting open internal communication to encourage exchange of views and facilitate internal collaboration and dialogue, to which we can add trust, satisfaction and commitment;
- promotion of an appropriate organisational communication policy to improve the psychosocial climate within the institution in order to ensure employee satisfaction; confidence in the future; appropriate stimulation and motivation;
- identification and implementation of appropriate communication management practices, with its organisational communication component, in which an important role is played by communication strategies and policies, organisational culture based on a common value system shared by all members of the organisation, and appropriate human resource management practices;
- conducting an audit of organisational communication, highlighting communication barriers and other issues that may negatively affect its quality, in order to find the most appropriate solutions to improve its quality and effectiveness.

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