The Impact of Communication in Job Satisfaction: an Empirical Investigation within Romanian Companies

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ABSTRACT

Within any organization, communication is vital. Whether it refers to interacting in daily work with colleagues or superiors, reporting activities to managers or just exchanging opinions within teams, communication is the key to the success of any activity. Hence, it is necessary for employees to be aware of the importance of communicating at work and understanding the tasks they are asked to perform. Managers must also be aware of this aspect, as they have to communicate in such a manner that all subordinates understand clearly what they are supposed to do and have access to all information their work requires. This paper aims to analyze the perceptions of Romanian employees on the importance of communicating at work. As past research showed, communication has a significant influence on employees' behaviour at work and their sentiment of satisfaction. We conducted the present study in order to evaluate the extent at which communication influences job satisfaction among Romanian employees.

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1. Introduction

Generally speaking, communication represents the act of exchanging messages, verbal or non-verbal, between individuals. Referring to a company, communication is the process of transmitting information between employees, regardless of their position, between departments within a firm, between management and employees, or between the firm and the exterior (customers, suppliers, regulators, etc.). Frank and Brownell (1989) define employee communication as "the communication transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas or specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs and to coordinate day-to-day activities". By its nature and complexity, the process of communication within a firm is one of the most important aspects management should take into account in order to obtain maximum efficiency in its activity.

Job satisfaction generally refers to the extent of contentment an employee feels about his/her work. Researchers in the field have assigned the term numerous and specific definitions, mainly separating the term into two aspects: affective and cognitive job satisfaction. On one hand, affective job satisfaction is considered to be a subjective measure of satisfaction, consisting of the feelings of an employee relating to his/her job. Cognitive job satisfaction, on the other hand, refers to evaluating satisfaction at work by several objective indicators, such as employee productivity, wage, job compensations, employee fluctuation.

2. Literature review

A large number of researchers have focused their attention on the topic of organizational communication and its link to job satisfaction: Downs (1977); Foehrenbach and Rosenberg (1982); Goldhaber, Porter, Yates and Lesniak (1978); Muchinsky (1977); Pincus (1986, 1988); Ruch and Goodman (1983); Thiry (1977); Walther (1988). Findings of these studies show a strong and positive relationship between these communication within an organization and job satisfaction.

Pincus (1986) highlights the importance of supervisor communication, communication climate, and personal feedback within an organization, as these three dimensions "were found to be most strongly related to both job satisfaction". Continuing research on this topic, Pincus (1988) identifies two major contributors to supervisors' job satisfaction: communication with top management and their ability to influence workplace decisions - not their communication with immediate supervisors.

King, Lahlif, and Hatfield's (1988) research on the discussed topic indicates "a consistently clear and positive pattern of relationships between an employee's perceptions of communications and his or her job satisfaction".

***, ***, Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, Romania. E-mail addresses: epure_dan@yahoo.com (D. Epure), al3xandra_ionescu@yahoo.com (A. Ionescu), cusudorinela@yahoo.com (D. Nancu).
Based on a survey on 388 police officers, Gorenak and Pagon (2006) investigate the influence of organizational communication on job satisfaction referring to communication as a combination of horizontal communication, vertical communication and communication with society. They conclude that overall organizational communication explains 40% of job satisfaction of police officers.

Carrière and Bourque (2009) studied the relationship between internal communication practices, communication satisfaction, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment within the emergency sector. As they show, internal communication practices account for almost 50% of the variation in the communication satisfaction and for approximately 23% of the variation in job satisfaction.

3. Research methodology

As communication and job satisfaction are multidimensional concepts, it is hard to measure the two. For this reason, the research method we used for conducting the present study is based on a survey called "Evaluation of the impact of communication and employee satisfaction within Romanian firms". The survey was conducted among employees of Romanian firms and consisted in completing a 30-statement questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale, aiming to evaluate the perceptions of the employees on several aspects relating to communication and job satisfaction within Romanian firms.

The 17 statements of the questionnaire relating to communication refer to:
- periodicity of discussions between employees and superiors;
- possibility of employees to express an opinion in order to solve a problem;
- willingness of superiors to offer further information about daily work when asked by employees;
- frequency of contacts between employees, on one hand, and customers, suppliers and regulators, on the other hand;
- existence of open discussions within team works;
- relationship between employee and manager.

Job satisfaction was measured through a number of 13 statements. Employees were asked to express their opinion on:
- the extent at which their work contribution is recognized and appreciated;
- possibilities of promotion or attending to training classes;
- job fulfilment relating to wages and compensations;
- working conditions and atmosphere at workplace.

In order to conduct the research, 250 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, a number of 34 contained invalid answers (some statements had no answer, other had more than one answer). Consequently, the sample consisted of a number of 226 respondents. Firstly, respondents answered the questionnaire by assigning a score for each of the 30 statements (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = partially disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = partially agree, 5 = totally agree).

In order to obtain the scores used in our analysis, we sum up the scores of each response and divide it by the number of respondents (weighted average). As a result, our database consisted of a number of 30 statements that were assigned an average score. These scores were used to obtain the average score for the two studied variables: communication and job satisfaction. Consequently, we were able to analyze correlations between variables as above defined, and could extract several conclusions regarding the influence of the first on the latter one, within Romanian firms.

Present study was performed in order to assess the following hypothesis:

**H1: There is a positive correlation between communication within firm and job satisfaction in Romanian companies.**

The above hypothesis was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient, as it offers information about intensity and sense of the relationship between communication and job satisfaction.

4. Respondent profile

The first part of the questionnaire included several questions that enabled us to structure respondent profile by several criteria, such as age, sex, education, position and seniority of personnel, but also by firm size and branch.

Analysis of the valid questionnaires showed that the majority of the respondents were men, respectively 62.4% of the total respondents. Among respondents, 21.2% have less than 30 years old, 23.7% have ages between 30 and 40 years old, 37.4% have ages between 40 and 50 years old and 17.7% have more than 50 years old.

Taking into account the level of education, we concluded that 12.4% of the respondents are high school graduates, 55.8% are college graduates, 26.9% have a masters degree and only 4.9% have a Ph.D. degree.

Given the position within firm, the great majority (91.6%) of respondents have executive jobs. Respondents having base-management positions account for 4.8% of the total respondents, while only 3.6% have top-management positions. Consequently, we may note that findings of the present research emphasize
the perceptions of the average Romanian employee on communication and job satisfaction, rather than the management view on the two variables.

In terms of seniority, 13.8% of the total respondents are employed for less than a year, 19.4% have seniority between 1 and 5 years, 30.6% have seniority between 5 and 10 years, 21.2% have seniority between 10 and 20 years, and 14.9% are employed for more than 20 years.

Considering number of employees of the firm, respondents of our survey are grouped as follows: 31.4% work in companies with less than 9 employees, 24.7% work in companies with a number of employees between 10 and 49, 28.1% work in companies with a number of employees between 50 and 249, and 15.8% work in companies with more than 249 employees. As a result, we noted that majority of the firms included in the research are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Grouping firms by branch, we found that 41.2% of the respondents are employed in firms within industrial sector, 34.1% are employed in firms within services sector, and 24.7% are employed in financial sector (banks, assurance companies).

Summarizing, the average respondent within our survey is man, graduated college and works on an executive position for 5 to 10 years in an industrial small and medium enterprise.

5. Research results

Valid questionnaires were used to create the database used in our research. Analysis was conducted by the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS). Scores obtained for the two analyzed variables are shown in tables below (Table no.1 and no.2).

Within our sample, perceived communication was obtained through analysis of six dimensions: communication within group, communication between departments, management and employee communication, communication climate, frequency of contacts between employees and customers, suppliers, regulators and information sharing - Table no.1. Average score for perceived communication is a relatively low one (2.90) in Romanian companies. This is because of the lack of communication between management and employee - average score 2.21, and between departments - average score 2.43. Still, the average score obtained for communication climate indicates that this is another negative aspect. Findings of our research confirm reality: communication is a sore point within Romanian companies, and solutions of improving it must be sought in order to increase companies' effectiveness.

Table 1. Dimensions of communication variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived communication within organization</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication within group (D1)</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication between departments (D2)</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and employee communication (D3)</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication climate (D4)</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of contacts between employees and customers, suppliers, regulators, etc. (D5)</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information sharing (D6)</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication variable - TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors' own processing

Perceived job satisfaction was measured by the use of six dimensions, respectively working conditions, promotion opportunities, frequency of trainings, wage and compensations schemes, employee fluctuation and importance of work within organization (Table no.2).

Table 2. Dimensions of job satisfaction variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived job satisfaction</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working conditions</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion opportunities</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of trainings</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage and compensation schemes</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee fluctuation</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of work within organization</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job satisfaction variable - TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.77</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors' own processing

The obtained score within Romanian companies is low - average score 2.77. Negative aspects influencing job satisfaction are related to employee fluctuation, wages and compensation schemes, but also to frequency of trainings.

Average scores were used to highlight the relationship between the observed variables. Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.621 indicates a strong and positive relationship between communication and job
satisfaction within Romanian companies. Consequently, research hypothesis is validated, respectively there is a positive correlation between communication and job satisfaction within Romanian companies.

6. Conclusions

Communication is a crucial factor affecting the company itself. Whether horizontal or vertical, formal or informal, internal or external, communication is responsible for the success of a company.

Findings of the present study confirm the importance of communication within a company and its impact on employee job satisfaction. As a result, we may say that in Romanian companies job satisfaction is strongly affected by communication: the more individuals communicate within companies, the more satisfied they feel with their job. Moreover, present research shows that both communication and job satisfaction within Romanian companies need to be improved, as they register relatively low scores.

Still, future research could add useful information to present findings, as we are aware of the fact that conducted research is likely to be affected by subjectiveness and sample dimensions.

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