COMMUICATION SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYEES IN COMPANIES IN SERBIA

TEREK Edit (RS) - NIKOLIĆ Milan (RS) – SAJFERT Zvonko (RS) - IVIN Dragica (RS)
University of Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Serbia

ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at determining the state of Communication Satisfaction of employees in companies in Serbia, shown through state-owned and private Enterprises. This kind of research shows an additional importance in light of transitional conditions, existence of state and private owned companies, and the recently increasing number of foreign companies operating in Serbia. The survey was conducted using interviews with respondents - middle management, in companies in Serbia. A total of N = 256 questionnaires was collected from 131 company. As an instrument for measuring Communication satisfaction the Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was used.

KEY WORDS: communication satisfaction, state and private owned, companies in Serbia

INTRODUCTION

The aim of communication is to set the communication receiver into action, which should be perceived more comprehensively in terms of creating a situation which could result in taking or giving up the action. The modern approach to a company's communicative activities implies integrating all the forms of communication aimed at achieving a synergic effect in the communication process. Communication is essential for the establishment and implementation of company goals, organizing human and other resources to the most successful and most effective way, then the selection, development and evaluation of the members of the organization, as well as leading, directing, motivating and creating a climate in which people are willing to contribute to the objectives. Even the control is based on the objectives of the communication process.

According to (Clampitt & Downs, 1993) communication satisfaction is believed to be a multidimensional construct as opposed to one-dimensional, because employees are not merely satisfied or dissatisfied with communication but rather express varying degrees of satisfaction regarding distinct categories of communication. According to (Downs & Hazen, 1977) communication satisfaction can be simply defined as how employees feel about communication efforts and different aspects of their communication. Similarly, (Pace & Faules, 1994) suggest that communication satisfaction presents single affective response to the desired outcome that results from the communication that takes place in the organization. Reeding (1972) uses the term communication satisfaction to indicate the overall satisfaction of an employee in his communication environment. Since the development of the CSQ, these factors have been widely used to assess communication satisfaction within organizational contexts (Mount & Back, 1999).

Communication satisfaction has many implications for organizations because it affects many key organizational outcomes. Multiple studies have examined the relationship between communication satisfaction and employee productivity (Clampitt & Downs, 1993; Pincus, 1986), job performance (Pincus, 1986; Tsai, Chuang, & Hsieh, 2009), organization effectiveness (Gray & Laidlaw, 2004), organizational performance (Snyder & Morris, 1984). Communication satisfaction has also been shown to influence employees' level of job satisfaction, commitment, and work motivation (Gregson, 1990; Varona, 1996; Orpen, 1997; Acas, 2005). The level of employees' communication satisfaction will be determined by the actual positive and negative communication events they have encountered in their every day

organizational life. Communication dissatisfaction can cause employees stress, absenteeism, low feedback, burnout and higher staff turnover. (Ahmad, 2006).

Employee communication satisfaction can be understood as the satisfaction of internal communication. According to (Tkalac Vercic, Vercic, & Sriramesh, 2012 internal communication is one of the most pressing areas of public relations and communication management. According to the same tents, internal communication is an interdisciplinary function that combines the elements of human resources management, communication and marketing. According to (Ruck & Welsh, 2012) there is a reliance on measuring satisfaction with the communication process.

Good internal communication is the basis of good relations in every company. Good relations create a positive atmosphere which is the source of positive energy and subsequently that of enthusiasm and creativity. A great deal of research shows that there is a positive relation between successful internal communication and the positive relation of employees towards their company. In the reference (Pincus, Knipp, & Rayfield, 1990) the relationship between the communication climate and job satisfaction was examined. Internal communication serves to avoid uncertainty, gossip and lack of motivation among employees and it has become one of the major factors of a company's comparative advantage. Companies can communicate successfully with their surroundings only if there is good communication and coordination within them. Open and free communication increases employee satisfaction (Burke & Wilcox, 1969). According to (Sprague & Del Brocco, 2002), internal communication influences motivation, productivity, and team work.

METHOD
Survey instruments (measures)
As an instrument for measuring communication satisfaction The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) (Downs & Hazen, 1977) was used, which is one of the most comprehensive survey, because it estimates the direction of the flow of information on formal and informal channels of communication and refers to the various members of the organization and form of communication. The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire has been used in several papers (Akkirman & Harris, 2005; Carriere & Bourque 2009; Zwijze Koning & de Jong, 2007; Gray & Laidlaw, 2004).

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire consists of 40 items covering eight dimensions. Seven dimensions from the (CSQ) were used:
 (1) Organizational perspective;
 (2) Communication with supervisors;
 (3) Communication climate;
 (4) Personal feedback;
 (5) Horizontal and informal communication;
 (6) Media quality;
 (7) Organizational integration;

Responses were measured using a 10-point Likert scale.

Participants and data collection
The subjects were middle-level managers, employees of companies in Serbia. The study included N = 256 respondents from 131 companies. What also is important for this study is that it included 142 men and 114 women. According to the national origin of companies in the sample are represented Serbian enterprises and foreign companies operating in Serbia.

According to the ownership structure of the sample the state and private companies were represented. The study comprised companies from different business areas. Those companies

were chosen which are competitive on the market, in other words, companies that have long time stable market position and high levels of consumer confidence. Respondents were not leaders or owners of the companies, but they were certainly people in senior management positions in their companies (medium level managers). Therefore, the people who have access to the company's strategy are related to the company and others. It can be said that the respondents were generally the most competent people in their companies. According to the level of education, respondents generally have a B.Sc. and M.Sc degrees. Small businesses (up to 50 employees) were not included in the survey. The reason is that in the smaller companies there is a significant and direct effect of personal characteristics and preferences of the owner or the top management of the company to leadership. In Table 1. the number and structure of the respondents are presented.

Table 1. The number and structure of the respondents

	Distribution of respondents	Frequency	Percent
	Valid questionnaires (N)	256	100
Gender	Male	142	55.5
	Female	114	44.5
National origin of the companies	Serbian companies	173	67.6
	Foreign companies	83	32.4
Ownership Structure	State-owned enterprises	118	46.1
	Private companies	138	53.9

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Data processing was performed through IBM SPSS Statistics 19. In Table 2, the results of descriptive statistics are presented for the dimensions of communication satisfaction. In this table, the names of dimensions, short name (label) for each dimension, the number of respondents, average values for domestic and foreign, as well as for public and private companies are given. We compared the results of the average marks for both domestic and foreign, as well as for public and private companies to evaluate the organizational communication.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Dimensions	Short name	N	Min.	Max.	Average (together)	Average (Serbian)	Average (foreign)	Average (public)	Average (private)
Organizational perspective	CS1	256	1.00	10.00	5.4777	5.3366	6.1073	4.7137	6.1164
Communication with supervisors	CS2	256	1.00	10.00	7.0366	7.0230	7.0976	6.6078	7.3951
Communication climate	CS3	256	1.00	10.00	6.1143	6.0929	6.2098	5.3157	6.7820
Personal feedback	CS4	256	1.00	10.00	6.2357	6.2077	6.3610	5.4941	6.8557
Horizontal and informal	CS5	256	1.00	10.00	6.9598	6.9432	7.0341	6.7588	7.1279

communication									
Media quality	CS6	256	1.00	10.00	6.4143	6.3541	6.6829	5.9255	6.8230
Organizational integration	CS7	256	1.00	10.00	6.1652	6.1158	6.3854	5.5627	6.6689

Based on Table 2. we can see that workers in foreign and private owned companies are more satisfied with communication than workers in state owned and Serbian companies. In a large number of Serbian companies the traditional way of communication is still present between superiors and subordinates, which does not really imply communication. In such companies communication amounts to issuing orders from superiors and giving reports by subordinates. While in foreign companies the process of communication involves the exchange of opinions and ideas between superiors and subordinates (CS 2). In Serbian companies there is still a fear of expressing opinion and ideas because of possible criticism or contempt. In companies with a greater communication satisfaction employees were made clear that any idea is welcome and that all employees are equal interlocutors and thus free communication is promoted and therefore the employees has a sense of belonging and greater motivation for office tasks.

Any internal company newsletter has a chance to become meaningful, interesting and informative at the same time, however, in companies in which the level of communication satisfaction is unsatisfactory texts are boring praises of the company director and of the companies successes, the articles are too long, there are long biographies of managers and long employment rules that workers do not read. In these companies newsletters do not fulfill their role. In other corporations newsletters are carefully and cleverly designed because they play an important role in communication. In recent times electronic newsletters are the fastest, cheapest and most modern form of communication.

Employees in Serbia would be more satisfied if their positions were measured equitable both financial and non-financial also if they would receive feedback on the quality of their work. This personal feedback (CS4) is the lowest ranked in state firms.

The management in Serbian companies should be aware of the importance of employee satisfaction - a satisfied employee is committed to the job, loyal, responsible and productive. Feeling like a valuable member of the team the employee contributes much to the success of the entire company. The first major survey of employee satisfaction in Serbia, which included over 6000 employees and presenting the award for Best Employer, crystallized the factors on which companies in Serbia should work further to create teams that will result in business success. One of the most common causes of dissatisfaction of employees in Serbia is the way in which communication is conducted in companies.

CONCLUSION

Successful communication is the essence of any business transaction, and successful business relationships not only in the local environment, but also on a global level. More and more companies in Serbia recognizes that communication with internal stakeholders - employees and management are equally important to the success of the company as the communication with the market.

Well organized and functional channels of communication within the company will provide a fast and efficient flow of information between employees as every information is very important for business success in today's globalized world. Consequently, many companies already included internal communication in their strategic goals. A well designed internal communications strategy will greatly contribute to the creation of corporate goals. Limitation of this study is that the results are valid for companies in Serbia, but similar results can be extrapolated to other countries, especially in countries in transition.

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