

SOME ASPECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract. *Communication* is a complex process of transmitting and receiving information of an economic, social, cultural, etc. nature through a medium or media, standing at the base of personal and social relationships. *Organizational communication* is an essential subdivision of the communication field, through which managers develop a system for presenting and transmitting information to their employees, but also to other institutions and persons to achieve the proposed mission and objectives. Organizational communication is essential and unavoidable in any institution, and it occurs on two levels: managerial and marketing. *Organizational communication on a managerial level* implies managerial communication, which is a form of interpersonal communication, used by managers to inform, influence, train, motivate, promote, and create the institution's image; *organizational communication on the marketing level* is the process of transmitting and conveying information about products to the consumer. The only way to achieve successful goals and desired results is through well-managed organizational communication at the management and marketing levels. By neglecting it, the education system and young people, in particular, would be harmed. Or, communication in academic institutions is a rather complicated process, because it does not fit a familiar style, but neither is accepted a rigid and hardstyle, typical of complex organizations. Accordingly, it is important for educational institutions to revise their attitude toward the communication process to be able to build an effective and coherent dialogue with employees and beneficiaries.

Keywords: organizational communication, managerial communication, marketing communications, higher education system

Introduction

We live in the age of globalization, with great possibilities, and also numerous impediments. In this context, our achievements, performances, and failures are closely correlated with our ability to communicate. We usually communicate to share information, experiences, and feelings, to get feedback, which would encourage and support us in everything we do. As employees of various institutions and organizations, we must establish effective interpersonal relationships with our managers and colleagues. From this perspective, if organizational communication is

properly understood and implemented, it will only lead to accomplishments and success. Referring to academic institutions, we point out the fact that here communication is a rather complicated process, because it does not fit a familiar style, but neither is accepted a rigid and hardstyle, typical of complex organizations. Accordingly, it is important for universities to revise their attitude toward the communication process in order to be able to build an effective dialogue with employees and beneficiaries.

In accordance with these ideas, the purpose of this article is to define the concepts of *organization* and *communication*, to analyze the main features of *organizational communication* at the managerial and marketing level, and to argue the need for effective communication in educational institutions to fulfill the mission and achieve the proposed goals.

Defining the Concept of Organization

Human activity requires the organization of work. In this context, the organization represents a major component of society, a real constructive force, which contributes to the formation and development of the community. In the specialized literature, we indicate several definitions for the concept of organization:

- the organization is a social system, in which and through which people interact and cooperate for the achievement of common goals;
- the organization is a system of activities, structured around goals and objectives, explicitly formulated by managers, who have well-defined status and roles;
- the organization is a social activity system, which brings together human and material resources, through which it achieves the purpose for which it was created (products, works, services, corresponding to the social order).

Therefore, *the organization* represents a complex, dynamic and open social system, hierarchically structured, which aims to achieve objectives of major importance and obtain planned final results. The university as an organization aims at the initial and continuous professional training of the beneficiaries within the instructional-educational process. The activity of organizations with the status of basic units of the higher education system is regulated by internal, national and international normative acts, which contain mandatory general rules that must be respected in everyday activities.

Defining the Concept of Communication

Communication is a fundamental social process that is complex and crucial to success. Good speaking skills can help us better understand each other, establish constructive dialogues, meet our goals, and achieve desired results. In this context, Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace Prize winner, master of communication, declared:

„I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don't know each other, and they don't know each other because they don't communicate with each other, and they don't communicate with each other because they are separated from each other". From a theoretical perspective, the term communication is of great importance in language, being derived from Latin (*communis* „shared"). Being at the crossroads of socio-human disciplines, he had several meanings:

- „exchange of information between the transmitter and the receiver via a system of symbols and signs;
- the process of transmitting information to the receiver through a channel to produce certain effects on the receiver;
- the process of establishing a communion or identity of reflections, ideas, and conceptions between the transmitter and the receiver of the message through a communication channel" (Spînu, Scheau, p. 105).

Various definitions of communication have been established over the years. They have been classified under two categories: „the first sees communication as a process through which A transmits a message to B, a message that has an effect on him; the second interprets communication as a negotiation and exchange of meanings or a process in which messages, culturally determined persons and reality interact" (Spînu, Scheau, p. 105).

The most effective tools in analysing the communication process are the semiotics and the pragmatics.

–From a *semiotic perspective*, communication is the most important means of transmitting messages using a system of signs or codes. In this context, John Fiske, an American philosopher, and historian, argued: „any communication involves signs and codes: signs are artifacts or acts that refer to something other than themselves – are significant constructs; codes are the systems in which the signs are organized and which determine how the signs are linked to each other". In other words, „signs are systems that transmit information about reality, and the codes represent the organization of signs and the ways of correlating between them. So, communication involves assigning meaning to signs, and codes contribute to the perception of meaning. Also, it is important to realize that two main types of meanings are distinguished in the communication process: denotative (which refers to the objective, descriptive, and dictionary meaning of terms) and connotative (which refers to the emotional dimension of the meaning of the terms)". In communication is essential for the speaker to perceive the denotative or connotative meaning of words in relation to the motivations, existing problems, and the context of the communication (such as the social one).

–*Pragmatics* is generally considered to be the study of the ability of speakers to communicate more than that which is explicitly stated. As Mey writes: Pragmatics

is essentially about the users of language in a real-life situation, and about the conditions that enable those users to employ linguistic techniques and materials effectively and appropriately (Faber, p.62).

Therefore, communication is a complex process of transmitting and receiving information of an economic, social, cultural, etc. nature through a medium or media, standing at the base of personal and social relationships. To better understand the concept of communication, it must be analysed from a semiotic and pragmatic perspective. From a semiotic perspective, communication involves signs and code systems and their functions, but from a pragmatic perspective, communication refers to the relationships between signs. At the same time, in communication, the connotative and denotative meaning of the words should not be neglected. Misunderstandings and conflicts can often be caused by them.

Organisational Communication in University

1. Theoretical Framework

Communication is important not only for private life but also for successful work because it is often oriented toward clear goals and defined outcomes. Particularly, organizational communication focuses on the place of communication in an organizational setup and has been defined by various scholars as a process where an organization sends, receives, encodes, and decodes messages among its internal and external public (Anita, p. 914).

Organizational communication is an essential subdivision of the communication field, a complex system vital and inevitable in any institution, helping managers and employees to dialogue with each other, receive and send necessary goal-oriented message on their tasks, share their experience, solve problems, and finally create beneficial working relationships.

Of course, the characteristics of organizational communication are in correlation with the status of the institution. In higher education institutions communication is effective when the objectives are correctly formulated. According to Nicki Stanton, the objectives of communication are: to be heard, to be understood, and to be accepted to provoke either a reaction or a change of attitude (Stanton, p. 11). In this context, the objectives of organizational communication in higher educational institutions derive from the general ones, reflecting aspects related to the planning, organization, coordination, and control of the institution. According to Alex Mucchielli, these are: „1. information/ transmission of information; 2. positioning (you communicate the desired identity, the image you want in the communication situation, you interpret a role, etc.); 3. facilitating adherence to the common values of its organization and cooperation with other organizations on this basis; 4. mobilization to achieve internal coherence, collective identity and attempt to enrol in a wider current; 5. evaluation, either relational (sympathy/ antipathy for fixing the

nature of the relation with the interlocutors) or normative (cannot be communicated outside a minimum system of shared rules)” (Grunberg, p. 15).

The functions of organizational communication in a university derive from the stipulated objectives. These are *informing* (employees must be informed about the objectives of the organization and the tasks which have to be performed by each individual), *training* and *education* (which have to be in dominant positions), *stimulation* and *control of work* (through communication we emphasize and support innovative ideas for the organization, we check the correctness of the accomplishment of the proposed tasks, etc.), *maintaining of working climate* (communication helps you maintain an effective organizational climate and positive thinking), and *integration* (effectively organized communication will help transform a group of individuals into a team).

Therefore, if organizational communication will be carried out in accordance with the institution's functions and objectives, it will contribute to exerting influence on employees, increasing the effectiveness, productivity, and success of teamwork. Or, the success of an organization is the result of the effort made by each individual.

In order to achieve their proposed objectives, organizations can involve structured communication between different levels of the organization, such as *intrapersonal communication* (which refers to thoughts, feelings, and how we see ourselves), *interpersonal communication* (when the information is transmitted from one person to another, fulfilling four objectives: influencing other people, expressing emotions or feelings, sharing information, strengthening the validity of the channel used), *intra-organizational communication* (the transmission of information is made between groups or units of the same organization) and *extra-organizational communication* (when the information is transmitted by an organization to the environment to which it belongs (advertising campaign, recruitment campaign, etc.)) (Prodan, p. 12). Multilevel communication will help us to effectively solve complex problems and achieve the expected results of the educational organization.

By referring to the typology of organisational communication in university, we make a distinction between different types of communication, like:

- *verbal communication* (expressed through articulated language, using words) and *non-verbal communication* (conveyed through gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and body orientation, etc.);
- *formal communication* (when information flows through official oral/ written, direct/ indirect, bilateral/ multilateral communication channels) and *informal communication* (the message is transmitted spontaneously through informal communication channels);
- *external communication* (addressed to individuals who are not members of the organization, and to legal entities, who may

influence the activity of the institution) and *internal communication* (addressed to employees of the organization).

At the same time, organisational communication can take place on two levels:

- management level;
- marketing level.

2. Organizational communication on managerial level

Organizational communication on a managerial level implies the application of managerial communication, which is a form of interpersonal communication, used by managers to inform, influence, train, motivate, promote, and create the institution's image. Any manager, in addition to having excellent personal and professional experience, must communicate effectively with the team and the beneficiaries.

Within a higher education institution, the manager is the person who must possess skills and knowledge of planning, organizing, and conducting teamwork, being responsible for the success or failure achieved. The manager will achieve the desired results if he possesses the oratorical talent and leadership skills, will be aware of the importance and place of time and human resources management, will be able to manage the knowledge and possibilities of employees, will show good training in the specialized field, and skills in the field of management, psychology, marketing, etc.

Special attention must be paid to managerial communication, which involves a dialogue between the manager and the employees; the purpose being to inform and influence the opinion of the employees while assuming moral and legal responsibility. In higher education institutions, managerial communication functions are closely connected to the manager's functions (forecasting, planning, implementation, coordination, evaluation, etc.):

- in the forecasting process, management communication will focus on establishing the probability of events and actions, depending on the hypotheses submitted;
- in the planning process, managerial communication will contribute to the elaboration of the institution's purpose and objectives, to the identification of efficient working methods, to the enunciation of the necessary activities and resources, and the elaboration of backup plans;
- in the process of organizing teamwork, managerial communication will help to distribute activities according to the pre-established criteria, will contribute to the allocation of material and financial resources per activity, and will support teamwork;
- in the implementation and coordination process, management communication will contribute to the smooth running of planned activities, decision-making, and monitoring;

– in the process of evaluating teamwork, managerial communication will help establish performance indicators, and performance standards (quality, procedures, costs, time frame, etc.), establishing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation scheme for the achievements.

The quality of management communication is highly dependent on the type of manager. In the specialist literature, the following types of frames are distinguished:

- the negative type (which shows a lack of interest both in his work and in relationships with others);
- the bureaucrat (who doesn't care about the execution of tasks or human contact);
- the altruistic type (who is focused only on relationships, human contacts);
- the type of promoter (which also deals with connections with people and work efficiency);
- the autocratic type (who places the tasks of the moment in front of all other considerations) (Gâf-Deac, p. 153).

The manager should apply the democratic style in management and communication because it would allow him to obtain good results in the achievement of the proposed tasks, and also the satisfaction of the team members. The barriers that managers face in communicating in education organizations are determined by the following factors:

- inability to predict trends in education;
- errors in scheduling and assigning work;
- lack of effective communication to implement tasks;
- failure to provide feedback;
- manipulation by misinformation;
- neglecting organizational matters etc.

Therefore, a successful educational leader will have to possess professional skills, invest in a professional development program, and apply a democratic managerial style. The manager must be an example to his subordinates by being able to communicate effectively, convincingly, and safely, while also applying the right strategies to overcome obstacles. If a manager is confident in what they say and do, they can achieve the desired results in their work.

3. Organizational communication on marketing level

Educational institutions provide educational products and services. In this context, educational marketing will contribute to building a successful image of a higher education institution through transformation, renovation, and connecting to market and society requirements. Educational marketing typically includes product (educational service), price (fees, scholarships, etc.), placement (location, access, transportation), and promotion (advertising, public relations). They are often called the four P, which corresponds to the four C's customer: the call, its cost, convenience in purchasing, and communication (Giurgiu).

Consequently, the university's marketing service must perform the following tasks:

- to carry out an analytical study of the labour market, of the contractors, of the competitors, of the conditions in which the educational process takes place;
- to develop new models and educational standards, improving quality management in education and university competitiveness;
- to implement partnerships that would create professional opportunities for college graduates, would improve the pricing policy for educational and research services;
- to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relations with all participants in the education services market and the labour market (Пеckова, p. 136).

In order to be successful in the marketing activity, a successful action plan must be developed and carried out, which would involve formulating existing problems, evaluating human and material resources, planning events, executing and analysing results, and formulating conclusions and recommendations.

An important component of educational marketing is communication. Generally speaking, marketing communication (also known as marcom) is the process of transmitting and conveying information about products to the consumer. The notion of marketing communication was introduced into the literature at the turn of the century XX, with the evolution of the science of marketing. It contributes to the creation, promotion, and maintenance on the market of the image of an organization, respectively of the products and services offered.

The consumer is the primary target of communication, and marketing communications aim to influence their behaviour. To achieve this goal, we can highlight the following objectives of marketing communications:

- notification - informing the audience about the existence of certain goods and services, explaining their purpose;
- persuasion - the formation of a favourable attitude of the consumer to the organization and its brands;
- image creation - the formation of the image of the organization associated with the consumer differentiation of brands of the product;
- reinforcement - retention of regular consumers (Амирова).

The primary forms of marketing communication are:

- advertising (this information is communicated to the consumer, designed to promote goods, services, and attract attention to a particular product);
- promotion of sales (a set of measures aimed at promoting products and promoting sales);
- personal sale (establishing personal contact with potential buyers to sell products);
- public relations (a complex activity that aims to interact with the public to manage their opinion about the company or products);

- branding (the activity involves developing product brands, promoting them, and promoting their prestige);
- sponsorship (is a marketing tool that enables a business to support an event or project).

By comparing what happens to businesses and what happens to educational institutions, some particular aspects of the use of communication in educational marketing can be formulated:

- „educational institutions place more emphasis, compared to enterprises, on personalized relationships than on mass communication;
- education institutions use less expensive forms of communication than companies;
- educational institutions avoid communication with a too obvious commercial character” (Mitran, 103).

So, well-structured organizational communication will contribute to the success of the higher education institution. Well-managed organizational communication at the management and marketing levels will help to achieve the goals and the desired results. The education system in general and young people, in particular, would be harmed by neglecting it.

Conclusions

Communication is a complex process of transmitting and receiving information of an economic, social, cultural, etc. nature, which would be the basis of personal and social relationships. Organizational communication is an essential component of communication, through which managers develop a system for presenting and transmitting information to their employees, but also to other institutions and persons to achieve the proposed mission and objectives. Organizational communication is vital, and inevitable in any educational institution and it takes place on two levels: management and marketing. Organizational communication on a managerial level implies the application of managerial communication, which is a form of interpersonal communication, used by managers to inform, influence, train, motivate, promote, and create the institution’s image. Organizational communication on the marketing level is the process of transmitting and conveying information about products to the consumer. Well-managed organizational communication at the management and marketing levels will help to achieve the goals and the desired results and will contribute to future success. Or, the education system in general and young people, in particular, would be harmed by neglecting it.

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