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INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AS A WAY TO MANAGE STAFF SATISFACTION

ABSTRACT

Communication in organizations is essential to be competitive in a global world that is constantly changing. Internal communication in particular can be a very effective and useful strategic tool to improve organizational effectiveness through employee motivation and satisfaction. The analysis shows that internal communication in organizations directly influences job satisfaction and also indirectly, through workplace motivation, giving workplace motivation a mediating role. Therefore, it is important for organizations to invest in effective internal communication strategies to promote employee motivation and satisfaction, recognizing motivation as a key mediator in the relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction.

KEYWORDS: Staff, Staff-satisfaction, Communication, Strategic tools

JEL: J01, J17, J28

INTRODUCTION

Organizations communicate daily. It is a factor that distinguishes a group of random people from an organization, i.e. it is the process of communication that helps find common purpose, agree on goals, and work purposefully to achieve those goals within a corporate culture (Yeomans & FitzPatric, 2017). In this sense, internal communication can influence the creation of a positive organizational climate, conducive to achieving positive results and pursuing organizational goals.

The purpose of the study is to investigate to what extent internal communication explains the job satisfaction of its employees. In accordance with the contribution of some authors (Chitrao 2014; Downs & Hazen 1977; Jacobs et al. 2016), internal communication is considered to be a tool of capital importance in organizations, since it is through it that employees strive to achieve organizational goals and goals and ultimately the main goal, profit and overall progress of the organization. Less effective communication can lead to misunderstandings, lack of information, lower productivity and higher employee turnover. On the other hand, internal communication can influence the creation of a positive organizational climate conducive to achieving positive results and pursuing organizational goals (Chitrao, 2014).

A number of studies reveal that effective and positive internal communication promotes employee motivation (Chikazhe & Nyakunuwa, 2022; Petkovi´c & Rapaji´c, 2021; Zivrbule, 2015). Other research shows that job satisfaction increases when employees are motivated (Ali & Anwar 2021; Machova, 2022; Uroševi´c & Miliji´c, 2012; Sari, 2022). In this sense, the proposed research aims to analyze the influence of internal communication in organizations on job satisfaction, assuming that motivation has a measurable effect between internal communication and job satisfaction.

The innovative element of the proposed study is related to the fact that motivation is introduced as a mediating element between internal communication and job satisfaction. The article deals only with the direct two-way relationship of some of these variables: employee motivation; internal communication; and job satisfaction.

1. COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

The concept of organizational communication is characterized by diversity, with wide-ranging definitions reflecting a wide range of approaches and perspectives. In this sense, Robbins & Judge (2017) define communication as the transfer and understanding of meaning, playing important roles in management, feedback, emotional sharing, persuasion and information exchange. Although there are different types of communication in organizations, it can be confirmed that internal communication is developing and becoming more important, especially in the areas of strategic public relations, strategic communication and corporate communication. This is not only a problem for multinational or large organizations, but for all companies in all sectors of activity (Yeomans & FitzPatric, 2017).

Internal communication can be understood as a two-way exchange of information, ideas and feelings that leads to dialogue and positive action at all levels of the organization (Chitrao, 2014). Most research considers internal communication as a complex multidimensional construct composed of different segments, such as horizontal and vertical communication, communication climate or informal communication (Borovec & Balgac, 2017). Both Karanges (2014) and Verˇciˇc et al. (2012) consider internal communication as a process that provides employees with information about their individual roles as well as the overall goals and objectives of the organization. In the same context, Yeomans & FitzPatric (2017) point out that internal communication is closely related to the organization's need to effectively communicate information about important changes so that the "internal public" can understand its role in the bigger picture. Along with this, Borca & Baesu (2014) argued that it is important for organizations to understand that communication with employees is a critical success factor because the main purpose of organizational communication should be to inform employees about the organization's goals and policies and to help them understand their merits.

2. INFLUENCE RELATED TO THE ORGANIZATION

The employee-organizational relationship refers to the extent to which an organization and its employees trust each other, agree on who has the legitimate power to influence, feel satisfaction with each other, and are committed to each other. A good relationship between an employee and an organization is mutually beneficial. Therefore, organizational characteristics such as mission quality perception, management philosophy, psychological ethical climate

(Moslehpour et al., 2022), psychological empowerment (Cruz et al., 2022), job autonomy, and work-life balance (Wu & Zhou, 2020), influence employee satisfaction.

3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance corresponds to the absence of conflict between professional and personal responsibilities, with a symmetrical amount of time and effort devoted to each (Turliuc & Buliga, 2014). Consequently, when organizations provide work-life balance, employee performance and job satisfaction increase (Krishnan et al., 2018; Lamane-Harin et al., 2021). When there is conflict, the level of employee satisfaction obviously decreases (Vong & Tang, 2017). In some service industries, work-family imbalance is exacerbated due to irregular working hours and, therefore, fewer hours devoted to personal life (Lin et al., 2014, 2015).

4. INFLUENCE RELATED TO LEADERS

Leadership is the process by which an individual influence a group of people to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2016, p. 6). Leadership influences employee satisfaction (Baquero et al., 2019). When leaders support their subordinates' performance, the latter respond positively through their commitment to work (Rowold et al., 2014). Sageer et al. (2012) indicated that more democratic leadership styles promote better relationships and mutual respect, while authoritarian leadership generates lower levels of satisfaction.

Research often categorizes leadership styles according to their focus—either on people and relationships to maximize employee potential through creativity and innovation—transformational leadership—or on tasks that encourage exchange and results-based rewards—transactional leadership. Transformational leadership promotes procedural justice, while transactional leadership promotes distributive justice (Pillai et al., 1999), but both types of justice increase employee trust. According to Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005), trust is a critical mediator of social exchange that provides job satisfaction.

5. TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transactional leadership is associated with an exchange between leaders and subordinates in which managers reward or punish employees for performance and expect greater productivity and loyalty in return (Naidu & Van der Walt, 2005). These leaders demonstrate less involvement in employee relations because for them it is simply an exchange process whose sole purpose is to influence the performance of their employees. This focus on organizational goals and on punishments or rewards can negatively affect employee engagement and satisfaction (Saleem, 2015).

6. TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership moves from inspiration and commitment to organizational values and goals (Bass, 1985). It is a process of motivating the performance of subordinates based on values. Charisma and influence are two key characteristics of such leaders. The literature shows that there is a strong relationship between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction. A leader can improve both team performance and individual performance by fostering feelings of reciprocity and high levels of personal investment and involvement in the workplace. In particular, employees understand their work better, feel more secure, and have better access to resources (Burch & Guarana, 2014).

7. INFLUENCE RELATED TO RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COLLEAGUES

Work climate and relationships among coworkers are an important source of satisfaction and involve working together among groups of interdependent individuals pursuing common goals or outcomes. Social interaction develops a sense of belonging and knowledge sharing, which improves collaboration and employee satisfaction. Social support occurs in three ways – from colleagues, supervisors, and the organization – and all of them have a positive effect on employee satisfaction (Brown et al., 2014).

Social support among colleagues

Employees spend more time with their colleagues than with their families. Strong supportive relationships among people working together enable employees to cope with the stress of their work and family responsibilities. Feeling supported by colleagues enriches work functions and leads to increased levels of participation and satisfaction. Lack of team support, however, is reflected in reduced identification with work and stronger feelings of alienation from work and greater feelings of demotivation (Charoensukmongkol et al., 2016).

8. INFLUENCE RELATED TO COMMUNICATION

Communication allows employees to share information, build relationships, and internalize organizational culture and values while building mutually beneficial relationships with their organizations. The framework of social relationships and communication that employees establish contributes to a sense of satisfaction and reciprocity with the organization. Following the three influences considered, communication also works at three levels: organization, leader and colleagues.

9. COMMUNICATION WITH THE ORGANIZATION

As stated above, organizational communication involves the flow of messages through a network of interdependent relationships that includes people's attitudes, feelings, and skills. The relationship between employees and the organization becomes stronger through an effective communication system and employees achieve high levels of satisfaction. There is a positive relationship between symmetrical communication and the quality of the employee-organization relationship. Organizational communication contributes to a sense of community and facilitates social exchange and trust between the parties involved in the relationship (Blau, 1964).

10. COMMUNICATION WITH THE LEADER

Effective communication with the leader requires employees to feel valued and experience a higher level of satisfaction. Employees value a symmetrical communication system and experience greater satisfaction when they are heard and appreciated (Men & Yue, 2019). The way a leader communicates affects employees' attitudes and feelings toward the leader. Leaders who show empathy, compassion, understanding and sincerity in their communication inspire greater joy and pride in employees.

11. COMMUNICATION WITH COLLEAGUES

Communication with colleagues combined with strong group dynamics influences the effectiveness of teamwork. This is an important dimension of social relations because it influences the sharing of ideas, fosters relationships of cooperation and trust between team

members, develops better articulation of functions and breaks down barriers inherent in change processes. Employees value frequent, open, respectful, sympathetic relationships with their colleagues and experience greater satisfaction because they share similar feelings about tasks in the work environment. In the service sector, the trend towards specialization and division of labor requires an effective communication system and structured group dynamics to achieve organizational goals (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2018).

12. EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Employee motivation has been studied by numerous authors over the years and, although all agree on its importance in work, there is no consensus definition of the concept, as it is complex and difficult to understand. Motivation can be defined as the attitude of leaders and employees towards work situations in their organizational environment: those who have a positive attitude towards their work situation will show high motivation and vice versa. The work situation in question includes working relationships, facilities, organizational climate, leadership policies, and working standards or conditions (Ampauleng et al. 2023). It can also be considered a psychological process that provides goals and direction for employee behavior or an internal drive to achieve job satisfaction. Pasaribu et al. (2022) view motivation as a set of energetic forces that originate from within and outside the employee and influence work-related effort and determine its direction, intensity, and persistence.

13. JOB SATISFACTION

As a multifaceted phenomenon subject to different definitions and perspectives, there is no single definition of job satisfaction. Some authors (Ampauleng et al. 2023) consider that job satisfaction is a positive feeling about work results based on the assessment of its characteristics. It can be measured by indicators such as increased job security in a group, satisfaction with superiors, and satisfaction with work, salary, and career opportunities (Ampauleng et al. 2023). Armstrong (2006) believes that job satisfaction can be seen as a person's positive feeling about their work and can be positively satisfied when expectations are in line with reality. For Pasaribu et al. (2022), job satisfaction is a feeling of support by employees towards their work or an employee's attitude towards work situations such as cooperation between employees, rewards received and problems related to physical and psychological factors. Due to the wealth of definitions that these authors provide for job satisfaction, for the present study, the positive feeling proposed by Armstrong, which can be measured by the indicators proposed by Ampauleng et al., will be considered for this construct. (2023) and Pasaribu et al. (2022).

14. THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION IN EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION

Nowadays, according to Chitrao (2014), internal communication is as important as external communication from an organization's point of view and is often a tool used to motivate employees. This author's research confirms that internal communication is critical to motivating employees, leading them to perform better. He also points out that it is essential for organizations to develop an internal communication strategy that motivates employees to develop professionally and makes them feel valued. Therefore, internal communication can be

a motivational factor for employees, leading to greater customer engagement and personal satisfaction (Verˇciˇc et al., 2012).

Motoi's (2017) study revealed that employee motivation is enhanced by good organizational communication and that there is a direct relationship between internal communication and organizational members' satisfaction with communication. If employees feel that the internal communication of the organization is effective, they will be motivated to perform better and develop the team spirit that is essential for the smooth functioning of the organization. Therefore, there is a direct and positive relationship between organizational communication and employee motivation.

Various studies have shown that organizational communication is positively related to job satisfaction. Bakar & Mustaffa (2013) argued that organizational communication can increase job satisfaction because information flow, communication climate, message characteristics, communication structure, group relationships, and mutual respect can inspire employee job satisfaction. The analysis by Kulachai et al. (2018) also show that this positive relationship between internal communication and job satisfaction is consistent with the results of previous studies.

Chitrao (2014) indicated that satisfaction with internal communication has a positive correlation with job satisfaction, leading to greater organizational identification and commitment and satisfaction with work relationships. For an organization to improve its performance, it must first establish effective internal communication processes that drive job satisfaction. Thus, knowing that job satisfaction is one of the factors that most influence employee performance and that this is improved by effective internal communication, it is important to create the conditions for this internal communication to be improved, so that it meets the needs of the organization and the people who work there (Kulachai et al., 2018).

The relationship between employee motivation and their level of job satisfaction has been examined in recent years by a number of researchers, all of whom have concluded that motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction. Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) consider that creating job satisfaction is a serious challenge for organizations as it implies continuous employee motivation and influence on the corporate culture, which must be well adapted and accepted by all employees. Their study showed that motivation is a drive to increase job satisfaction and quality and has a significant psychological impact on company strategy. According to the study by Ampauleng et al. (2023), job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, meaning that the higher the job satisfaction, the more motivated the employees. Being more satisfied with their work and environment, they will also be more motivated to improve their skills, increasing their performance within the work process and, therefore, their satisfaction (da Cruz Carvalho et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

In the dynamic 21st century, managers must look for ways to attract and retain good employees, where employee satisfaction stands out with its key role. One of the serious challenges for all organizations in this qualitatively new is to manage and retain employees of different

generations, with different needs, personal and work interests, often even from different countries, to work together and achieve satisfaction with the same leadership or management approach. Therefore, it is extremely important to realize that in an environment of open communication, interaction, discussion and consultation between employees are possible, thus facilitating knowledge sharing and organizational empowerment. Thus, employers can improve their communication skills and employees can enjoy more fruitful horizontal and vertical communication within the organization, leading to greater job satisfaction.

Regular improvements in internal communication make employees more effective and increase the likelihood that they will approach work with dedication and passion. Feeling that their contribution is valued increases motivation and the desire for continuous progress. Satisfied employees create a desirable work environment and increase a company's competitive advantage, which should be the common mission of all businesses. The communication skills of managers and employees need to be continuously improved, as the ability to communicate effectively is indispensable in the hospitality business. Understanding communication skills is fundamental to personal and social development through constant interaction with the environment. Therefore, organizations in the hospitality industry can facilitate internal communication using various Internet platforms, applications and other communication technologies. Facilitating upward communication, employees will share confidential and operational information with leaders and colleagues.

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