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ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS IN WINEMAKING ENTERPRISES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to analyze the main environmental factors that determine the effectiveness of communications in the winemaking enterprises. The survey of individuals was conducted on-site, and in case of force majeure circumstances, by interviewing by telephone and/or e-mail. The priority method for data collection was the personal interview. The main source of information are the completed questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, other sources of information are the reporting reports of the enterprises, which are visible in the Commercial Register of the Republic of Bulgaria, other related surveys or expert analyses; publications of results of other analyses on the selected topic.

KEYWORDS: communications, efficiency, management style, leadership

JEL: D83, L66, M12

INTRODUCTION

In a turbulent business environment, today's business enterprise is faced with many challenges that it must overcome. In order to achieve effective management of the enterprise, one of the main factors is to establish effective communications between the individual departments, teams and company associates in the business organization. Efficiency requires that managers have sufficient volume and quality of information to be able to make logically justified management decisions (Borisov & Radev, 2020). This is only the first part of the "equation" called "effective communication". It is necessary for the manager to be able to communicate correctly with his colleagues in order to be able to delegate individual tasks and responsibilities to the other members of the work team in a timely and appropriate manner. The ability and skills of the manager to communicate also determine the degree of influence that he can exert on the other people in the organization (Borisov & Petkov, 2024). The accumulated experience in the communication process of the manager also determines his ability to manage conflicts and crises in the organization. In the current work, communication is considered as a continuous process in the business organization, as well as an element of the environment that generates conflicts and the need for negotiation skills to deal with these conflicts. Communication requires a number of skills such as - the ability to listen and filter important information (Nikolov et al., 2013); the ability to negotiate and reveal interests among hostile environments in the business organization (Borisov et al., 2023); the ability to recognize both verbal and non-verbal gestures that people use in the organization when performing their daily tasks (Apostolopoulos et al., 2023)

The purpose of the study is to analyze the main environmental factors that determine the effectiveness of communications in the winemaking enterprises.

Methodology for organizing the survey

Once the main parameters of the environment in which the communication process takes place have been determined, it is necessary to plan and adapt an approach to collecting data on the state of these parameters. The main method used in the research is the questionnaire survey. The main persons surveyed are the managers and company employees in the wine-growing enterprises.

Structure of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is structured in two modules as follows:

- *Module A.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the main characteristics of the surveyed enterprise. These questions collect information about the ownership of the enterprise, the legal form of the enterprise, the main activities it performs as a market unit.
- *Module B.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the state of the internal factors determining the communication process. The collected data aims to identify the critical factors and carry out an objective internal audit and formulate reasoned findings and conclusions that are used in validating the strengths and weaknesses in the communication process.
- *Module C.* The purpose of this module of questions is to collect information about the status of the external factors in which the communication process takes place. The collected data aims to define the main opportunities and obstacles for the effective conduct of the communication process in the external environment.

To form the general population of surveyed wine-growing enterprises, the register of the Viticulture and Winemaking Chamber of Sofia, updated as of 21.07.2023, is used. All registered enterprises at this time form the general population. When forming the statistical sample, the method of the pre-selected principle is used. This principle is the following - the representative sample includes all enterprises that fall as the location in the South-Central Planning Region of the Republic of Bulgaria. These enterprises must have their own vineyards and produce and offer wine on the domestic market.

The formation of the sample. The simple random sampling method was used, with the constituent units being selected through non-returnable selection. The sample size was 52 wine-growing enterprises.

Organization of the survey. The survey was conducted in the period 21.07.2023 – 21.07.2024. The survey of individuals will be conducted on-site, and in case of force majeure circumstances, by interviewing by telephone and/or e-mail. The priority method for data collection will be the personal interview.

Sources of information. The main source of information are the completed questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, other sources of information are the reporting reports of the enterprises, which are visible in the Commercial Register of the Republic of Bulgaria, other related surveys or expert analyses; publications of results of other analyses on the selected topic.

Analysis of the Results

Analysis of the organizational and management structure of enterprises. The organizational and management structure (OMS) is one of the elements that determines the effectiveness of communications in a business organization. As a structure that represents a set of units, departments, connections, hierarchy and a system for delegating tasks, it largely determines the way communications flow in the enterprise. The choice of the OMS by the enterprise management is extremely important, because it determines the future development of

relationships between people in the organization, as well as their motivation to participate in the communication process without distorting it.

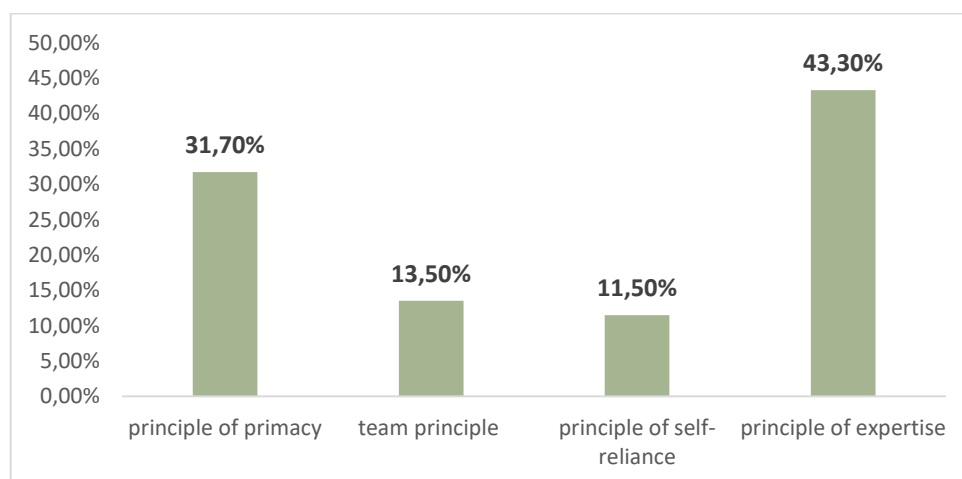
The information collected from the responses received in the questionnaire shows that the owners of wine-growing enterprises most often choose a hybrid form of management system, which allows them to be flexible about changes in the business environment (this is proven by the figure above, 42.3% of the surveyed enterprises state that they use another form that is not mentioned as an option in the questionnaire). The data indicate that the functional structure is also preferred among wine-growing enterprises - 28.8% of the surveyed enterprises state that they use exactly such a management system. These are mainly enterprises that are joint-stock companies and as such have the opportunity to specialize management work in departments and units directly responsible for the implementation of delegated tasks.

Next is the share of enterprises that have chosen the linear structure for managing their activities – 19.2% of the total surveyed enterprises. These are mainly small wine-growing enterprises that do not have a large number of employed personnel. In their case, narrow specialization of management is not possible and necessary, and they strive to take advantage of the advantages of the linear management system.

The choice of a management system also implies a subsequent communication strategy in the studied enterprises. The principles according to which a management system is designed and organized determine, at a later stage, the way of organizing communications in the organization, as well as their effectiveness. Therefore, the next element of analysis is the leading principle for forming a management system in wine-growing enterprises.

Figure 1 presents information on the preferences of wine-growing enterprises when choosing a principle for organizing communications in their departments. It should be noted that only the leading principle is indicated in the graph below.

Figure 1. Guiding principle in organizing communications in wine-growing enterprises.



Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The data show that in the majority of the surveyed enterprises, managers have chosen the principle of expertise when organizing communications among their subordinate colleagues in individual units, departments, and teams – 43.3% of all respondents. The next most important principle according to the surveyed enterprises is the principle of single leadership – 31.7% of all respondents indicated this answer in the questionnaire. It can be summarized that communications are organized in a way that allows experts to be involved to the maximum extent in business communications in enterprises by following the “top-down” approach. In this way, efficiency is achieved both in terms of participation in the communication process and in

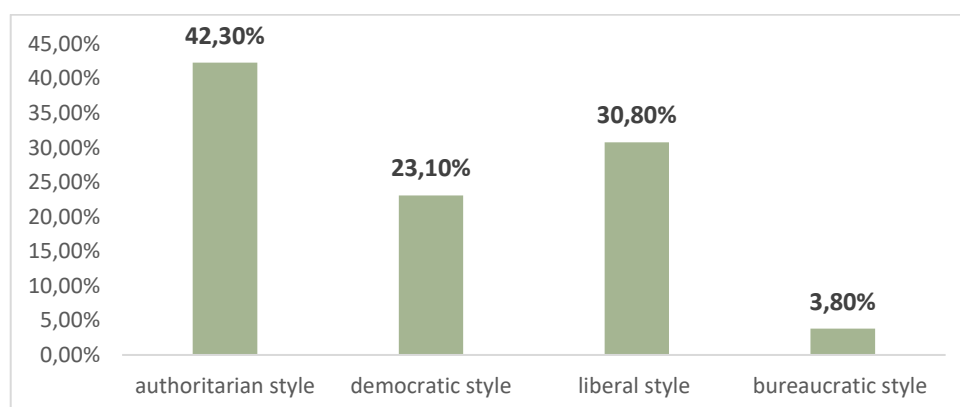
terms of control over the communication process in order to avoid communication distortion and the appearance of noise.

When organizing communications in The principle of independence is also important for wine-growing enterprises – 11.5% of all surveyed enterprises, and the principle of teamwork – 13.5% of all.

The data collected from the field study prove that managers use and apply appropriate principles for organizing communication processes. These principles create conditions for communications to reach their recipients, as well as reduce noise in the communication process.

Analysis of leadership style and leadership type. Another important factor determining the way communications flow in a business organization is the leadership style. Leadership style is defined as a set of personal qualities of the leader that determine the way of communicating with him, as well as the way of communicating with his other colleagues.

Figure 2. Preferred leadership style in the surveyed enterprises.



Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The survey collected information on the characteristics of the leadership style in wine-growing enterprises. The data presented in Figure 2 show that the most preferred leadership style is the authoritarian style – 42.3% of all respondents indicated this style as being practically imposed in their organizations.

The authoritarian leadership style has its advantages, which are highly appreciated in the industry, as evidenced by the fact that almost half of the companies surveyed rely on this style to organize their communications. The main advantages of this style are:

- Decisions are made quickly and easily delegated along the hierarchical ladder of power;
- Costs are saved by not duplicating management functions by different functional managers;
- Control over the communication process is easily formalized, mainly using the principle of single command, which states that the communication process proceeds from top to bottom, i.e. without requesting or exerting communication pressure from the direct superior, the subordinate does not participate in the internal communication flow.

The main disadvantages of implementing the communication process within the authoritarian style are:

- Not all colleagues participate in communications within the organization, which does not provide an opportunity for discussion and obtaining good ideas when solving routine problems;

- Communication can be easily manipulated, especially if there is a "mirror image" effect, namely, the company employee shares an opinion and reports only results that will please his direct supervisor, who is a supporter of the authoritarian style;
- Feedback is not effective and does not reflect completeness if there is a problem in the communication flow.

The next preferred style of communication management is the liberal style. This is evidenced by the graph presented in Figure 2. Of all surveyed enterprises, 30.8% stated that the liberal style is the preferred style for organizing and managing communications in their enterprises. The liberal style was chosen (according to the surveyed managers) because of the advantages it provides when organizing communications in the enterprise, namely:

- Freedom of choice - whether the company employee should join the communication flow. This freedom provides good conditions for motivated participation in communications only if the person considers it important and necessary in performing his routine tasks;
- Ability to share the communication flow with individuals the manager considers important for completing daily tasks.

The lowest share is observed in enterprises that prefer the bureaucratic style of managing communications in the enterprise – 3.8% of the total surveyed enterprises indicate this style as de facto imposed in their structures. The main advantage of this style is that it allows the manager to impose formal control and easily track the information flow in their organization.

Leadership is another factor that has a systematic impact on the communication process in a business organization. Unlike management, which is formalized within the management hierarchy of a business organization, leadership is a phenomenon that is more closely related to the social element in a business organization. Leadership is perceived more as an emotion, a socio-psychological interaction of people in the organization. That is why I believe that leadership is of crucial importance in shaping the communication process in a wine-growing enterprise.

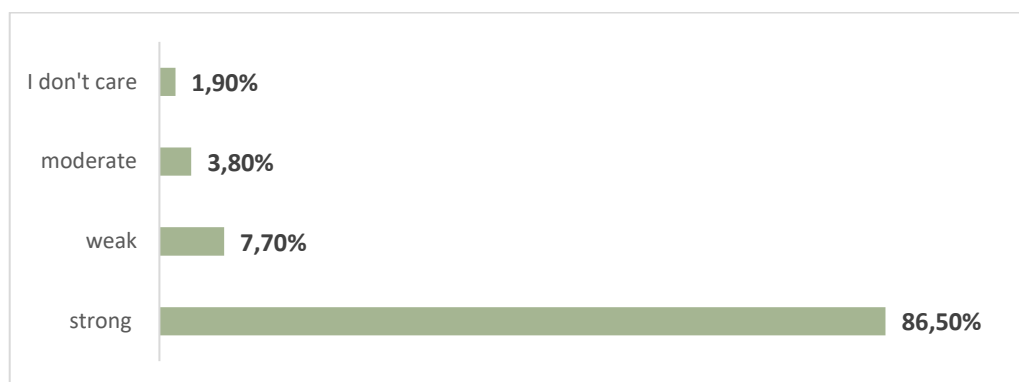
The data show that expert leadership is present and valued in wine-growing enterprises. Of all surveyed enterprises, 75% point out that expert leadership is the factor that determines the motivation of the staff. In 13.46% of the surveyed enterprises, the presence of emotional leadership is observed as a tool for motivating company employees, and in 11.54% charismatic leadership is present. These data prove that company employees and managers who are experts in their field enjoy the greatest trust, and they directly create and participate in the communication process in order to achieve efficiency in pursuing company goals. Winemaking is an activity that requires in-depth and complex knowledge, which also determines the leading role of expert leadership in organizing communications in the wine-growing enterprise.

Leadership, unlike management, is based on the trust and sympathy that the company employee feels and they are the main motivational factors determining the follow-up of the leader's behavior. That is why it is important for the formal leader, who is the manager, to have leadership qualities and skills that guarantee him full motivation to pursue the company's goals by his colleagues. The assessment of the leader's effectiveness is determined by how much he cares about the people in the organization. Of course, leaders who fully focus their attention and efforts on being in good relations with their colleagues can easily lose the trust of the company's owners, since the latter are interested in the profits and returns that the leader can achieve in his management. This requires the leader to also focus on the production and financial results of the company's activities. Very often, in practice, the leader is between a rock and a hard place and must balance the interests of the company's owners and those of the

company's employees as well as loyal customers. This creates conditions to distort the communication process and again create conditions for noise in the communication environment. The next question in the questionnaire aims to collect information about the leader's concern for the staff and for achieving the organization's goals.

Figure 3 presents information on the concern of managers for people in the organization. The trend is clearly outlined that managers are very concerned about the personnel in the enterprise. According to them, experienced and qualified personnel are the most valuable asset of the company, and the future development of the business model depends on it. According to 86.5% of the surveyed managers, their concern for personnel is very pronounced and they use a wide range of means to satisfy the needs of their subordinates. Only 7.7% of the surveyed managers show little concern for personnel. Managers emphasize that it is not people who are the most important in the production process, but the wishes of the company's owners, as well as the ability to demonstrate good management of personnel costs.

Figure 3. Managers' concern about their relationships with other colleagues in the company.



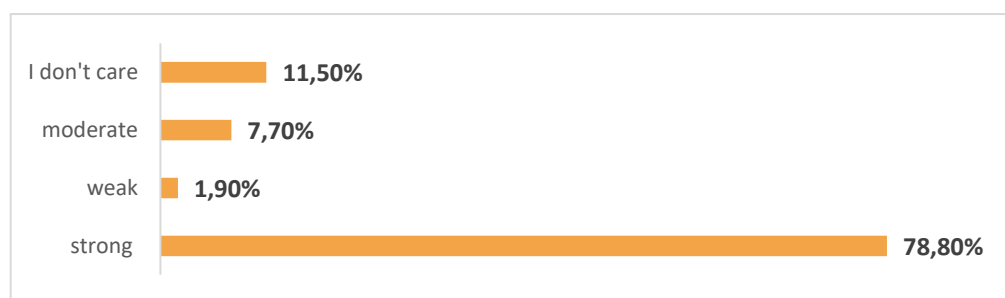
Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

1.9% of the surveyed managers show a lack of attention to the condition and needs of the staff. These managers point out that the staff is one of the least important priorities for the development of the company's business. They are mainly concerned about the overall development of the business, relying on an external company to monitor and systematically exercise concern for the staff in the enterprise.

Of course, the answers to the question reflect the managers' opinions very subjectively. The doctoral student is perceived as an external factor; whose presence distorts the results obtained from the survey. Therefore, the next question aims to control the opportunism displayed by the respondents by measuring their concern for the goals and development of the organization.

Figure 4 presents information on managers' concern for the development of the organization. From the information presented in this way, it is clear that the majority of managers (78.8% of all surveyed managers) are highly concerned about the development of the organization. The high share of responses received here proves that the respondents are either "cheating" or have not properly understood the question included in the survey. Nevertheless, it can be summarized and concluded that managers make an effort and diligence in their daily work to be concerned both about the people in the organization and about the results of the functioning of the organization itself.

Figure 4. Managers' concern for the development of the organization.



Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

A higher proportion of responses marked as “not interested” is noted – 11.5% of the total responses received to the survey question. This may be a good indicator of honesty and directness in sharing opinions on the researched problem in the survey.

The survey itself can be considered an experiment that proves how effective communication is within and outside the researched wine-growing enterprises. From the personal interviews with managers and company associates, as well as discussions, the following conclusions are drawn regarding the barriers to effective communication:

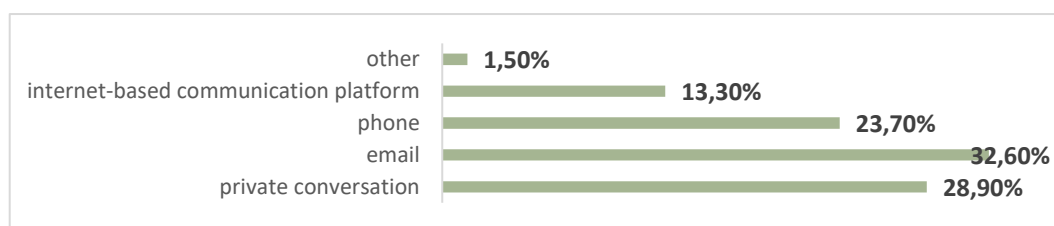
- Very often, managers find themselves in situations that do not allow them to be very concerned about their company employees, which is why they prefer not to enter into direct communication with other colleagues very often. This is explained by the fact that these individuals prefer to avoid conflict by postponing a business meeting or avoiding the problematic topic;
- The communication flow is filtered (or prioritized) by different individuals who are placed in a position to be responsible for incoming and outgoing communication to save the manager's time in the communication process or to completely relieve him of it to perform other more important tasks;
- The communication flow is deliberately distorted by interested parties to achieve their personal goals - different from those of the company.

Analysis of communication tools and barriers to overcome. The next series of questions in the questionnaire aims to collect information about the preferred type of communication tools used in wine-growing enterprises, as well as to analyze the main barriers to achieving effective communication.

Information on the means of communication used in the 52 surveyed wine-growing enterprises is shown in the figure below. The data show that the most frequent and preferred means of official communication in enterprises is email correspondence – 32.6% of respondents indicate this means of communication.

Next comes personal conversation as the preferred communication tool in the surveyed companies – 28.9% of total respondents (see fig. 5).

Figure 5. Means of communication in the surveyed enterprises.



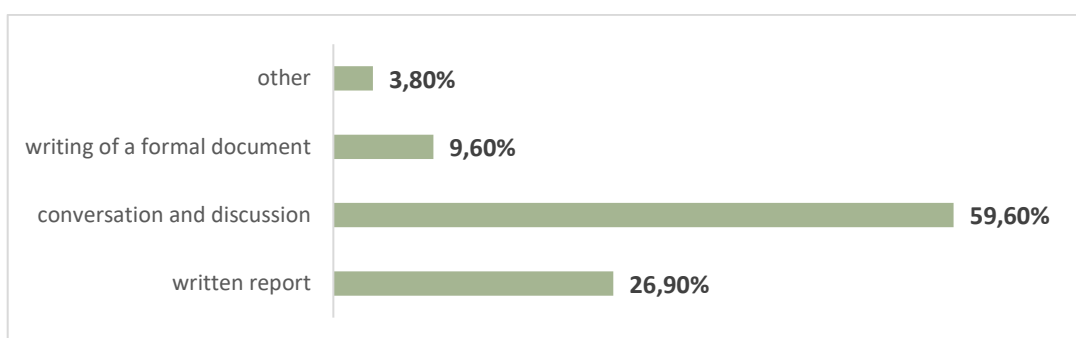
Source: Own survey among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

In third place is the telephone conversation as the preferred means of communication - 23.7% of all respondents.

The internet-based communication platform is next, as the preferred means of business communication – 13.3% of the total managers surveyed stated that they prefer it. After the end of the Covid pandemic, these platforms became established and continue to be used, saving both costs and time for communication. Very often, the surveyed managers stated that these platforms and their use enable them to communicate without going on long business trips and wasting time when conducting business transactions with international partners. Of all the respondents, several stated that they use a different means than those mentioned in the questionnaire – 1.5% of the total respondents.

Providing feedback to colleagues who are included in a team for the performance of a specific assigned task is the subject of analysis with the next question included in the survey. The following figure 6 presents the information received regarding the method of providing feedback.

Figure 6. Ways to provide feedback to others on the team.



Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

The data show that most often feedback is provided through a conversation or inclusion in a certain discussion (operation, meeting, council, etc.), more than half of the respondents share this opinion - 59.6%. Next in preference is the preparation of a written report/account as a means of receiving feedback - 26.9% of the total respondents use this means in their daily work.

Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that live contact is important in communicating in wine-growing enterprises!

The assessment of the effectiveness of feedback was measured with the next question included in the survey. According to the data, managers are satisfied with the way feedback is implemented, and they believe that it is effective – 61.5% of the total respondents indicate this as a fact. Next is the group of managers who do not agree that the effectiveness of feedback is a fact in their organization – 34.6% indicate this.

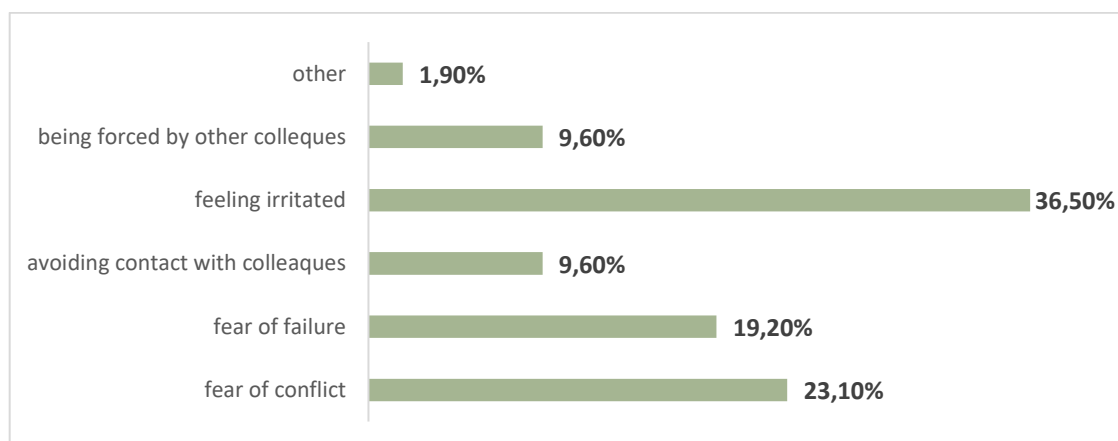
And only 3.8% of surveyed managers declare that they cannot assess whether feedback in their companies is effective.

The next question in the survey aims to collect information about the reasons in the organization that underlie the filtering of information in the communication process from the perspective of executive staff.

According to the data presented in Figure 7, the main reasons for information filtering and feedback distortion in the wine-growing enterprises are:

- Feelings of irritation and fear of punishment from their immediate supervisor. Of all 52 company employees interviewed, 36.5% stated that fear was a primary motivator for filtering information or presenting it incorrectly to their immediate supervisor;
- The fear of conflicts is also one of the significant factors that causes company employees to filter information in the process of communication with other colleagues – 23.1% of total respondents;
- The fear of failure in performing delegated tasks is also a tangible factor causing information filtering in enterprises – 19.2% of respondents share this as a reason;
- Avoiding conflicts, as well as pressure from colleagues, are also factors that prompt employees to filter information and distort the feedback that the manager receives in the winemaking enterprise, respectively, according to the data obtained, 9.6% of respondents indicated these reasons.

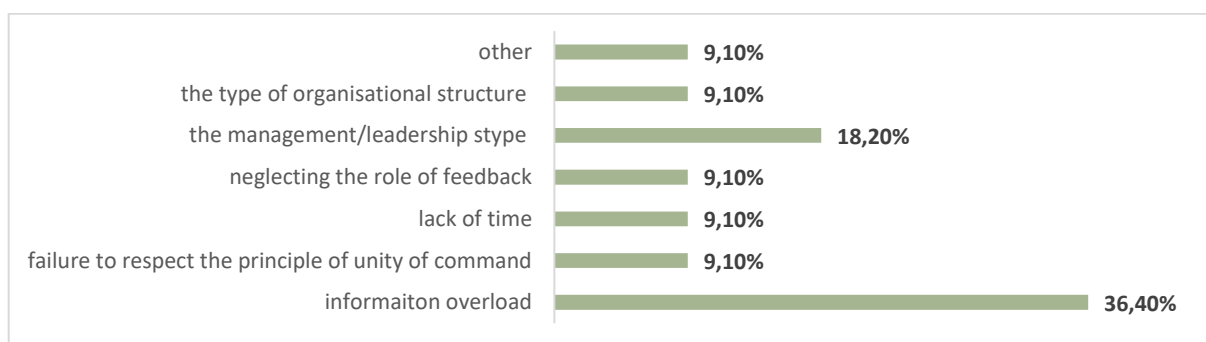
Figure 7. Reasons for filtering information in the communication process.



Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

Many factors can prevent the communication process in an organization from being effective. The following question aims to gather information on what exactly these are when wine-growing enterprises.

Figure 8. Factors that are barriers to effectiveness in the communication process.



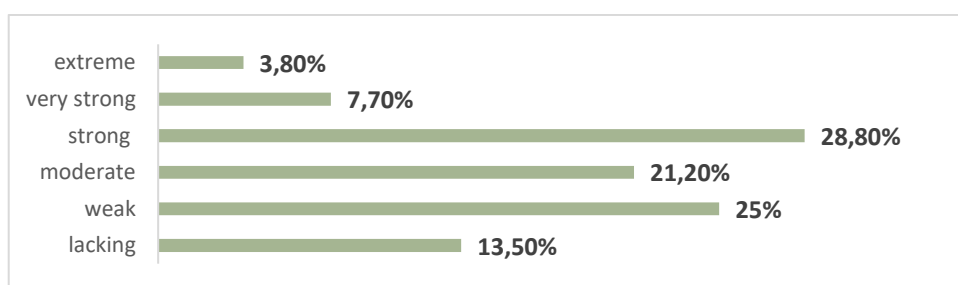
Source: Own study among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

Figure 8 provides information on the main factors that are barriers to the communication process in the 52 companies surveyed. The data show that the main reason for inefficiency in the communication process is the factor - "information overload" - 36.4% of all surveyed managers stated that they suffer from this factor, it is the main reason for inefficiency. The next most important factor is the factor - "leadership style" - 18.2% of all surveyed identified this factor as a reason for inefficiency in the communication process. If we return to the results of the analysis of managers' preferences regarding the imposed leadership style, we will see that the most preferred was the one based on the authoritarian principle. Therefore, it can be concluded that **authoritarianism in management and information overload are the main obstacles to the effectiveness of communications in winemaking enterprises.**

Considering the above finding, the attitude and assessment of the staff regarding the information overload to which they are exposed in the wine-growing enterprise was studied.

Information regarding the studied element is presented in Figure 9. The data show that staff assess that information overload is highly pronounced and significantly affects the communication process and its effectiveness – 28.8% of all respondents state this as a fact in their organizations.

Figure 9. Assessment of staff regarding their exposure to information overload.



Source: Own survey among 52 companies, 2023-2024.

There is also a significant proportion of those who say that information overload is a mild phenomenon in their organizations – 25% of the total respondents. Of all respondents, 21.2% indicate that information overload is moderate, another 3.8% indicate that the overload is extreme. Another 13.5% state that there is no information overload in their organizations.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the communication process. The effectiveness of the ongoing communication process needs to be measured through the effectiveness of the outcome of this process. Of course, it should be noted that the communication process is primarily a socio-psychological interaction between company employees, and as such a process it is necessary to measure the assessment of the staff, to what extent they are satisfied with the communications in the enterprise. This assessment should be integrated with the assessment of the effectiveness of the communication process in the enterprise.

This approach was used in the development of the next series of questions included in the questionnaire. Through them, we aim to assess the effects that arise from the communication process as well as to subjectively measure the degree of communication satisfaction of the staff.

The effectiveness expressed as staff satisfaction in the communication process is primarily determined by the type of communication network that is implemented in the organization, which is why the following graph presents information about the types of communication networks in the surveyed enterprises. According to the data presented in Figure 10, enterprises mainly prefer to use a hybrid communication network in their departments and structures – 55.8% of respondents indicated this type.

Figure 10. Types of communication networks in wine-growing enterprises.



Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

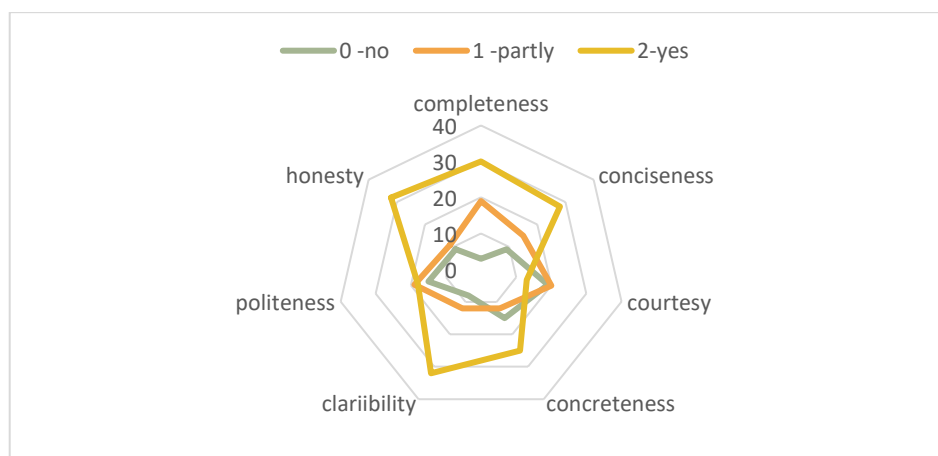
The next most preferred type is the chain communication network – 36.5% of all surveyed managers stated that it is available in their companies. With these two types of communication networks, there is an opportunity to involve a larger part of the available staff in the communication process. This allows for broad involvement in the performance of daily tasks, as well as the pursuit of company goals. The main disadvantage is that this type of communication network can easily expose staff to information overload, as was found in the course of the analysis.

The next question in the survey reflected the opinion of the staff on how effective the chosen communication network is in their company. **The data indicate that the majority of respondents are of the opinion that the communication network is effective – 63.5% of the total respondents.** There is a significant proportion of those who cannot assess how effective the network is – 23.10%.

Communications in wine-growing enterprises directly affect both the effectiveness of delegation and the motivational process. That is why the study of the basic principles underlying the organization of the communication process is the subject of analysis in the next stage of the dissertation research. According to the data obtained, the following principles are most widely used in the studied enterprises:

- **Clarity** according to the information received, more than half of the enterprises strive to comply with this principle of organization (see Fig. 11);
- **Brevity** of the communication message sent, managers in the surveyed companies follow this principle in order to achieve efficiency in the communication flow;
- **Correctness** of the submitted message/message in the communication channel. The majority of enterprises observe this principle.

Figure 11. Principles governing the communication process in enterprises.



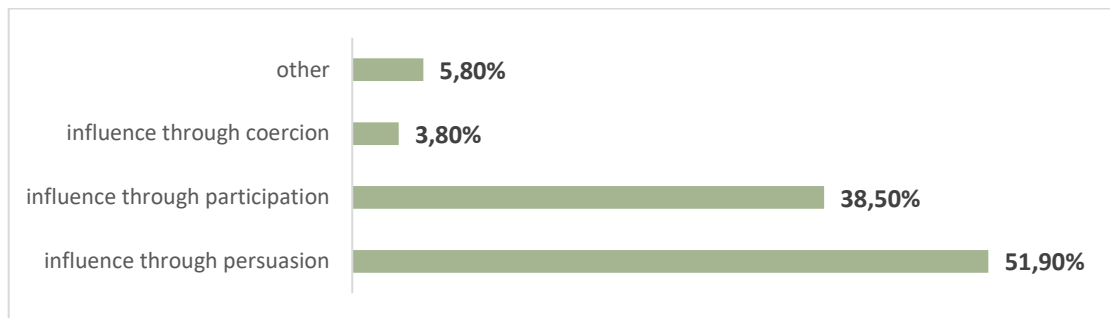
Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

The following principles for organizing communications in the surveyed enterprises are the least popular:

- Showing respect /confidentiality/ when employees participate in the communication process;
- Courtesy when participating in company communications.

The next element, subject to analysis, is the influence of managers in enterprises and the ways they use to include staff in the communication process. The following figure 12 presents the data from the conducted study.

Figure 12. Influence of managers on staff to be included in the communication process.



Source: Own study among 52 enterprises, 2023-2024.

From the data shown in Figure 12, it is clear that more than half of the respondents – 51.9% – are included in the communication process as a result of a conversation with their immediate supervisor, who has convinced them that it is vital for them to be included in the communication process and to follow the information received in order to perform their daily tasks. Another 38.5% state that their inclusion in the communication process is carried out through direct participation, as they are in positions whose job descriptions require them to communicate with their colleagues at all times.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the analysis of the main factors determining the way of organizing business communications in wine-growing enterprises, the following conclusions can be formulated:

- Owners of wine-growing enterprises most often choose a hybrid form of management, which allows them to be flexible in relation to changes in the business environment. The data show that the functional structure is also preferred among wine-growing enterprises. These are mainly enterprises that are joint-stock companies and as such have the opportunity to specialize management work in departments and units directly responsible for the implementation of delegated tasks;
- In the majority of the surveyed companies, managers have chosen the principle of expertise when organizing communications among their subordinate colleagues in individual units, departments and teams. The next most important principle according to the surveyed companies is the principle of unity of command.
- It can be summarized that communications are organized in a way that allows experts to be maximally involved in business communications in enterprises by following a "top-down" approach. In this way, efficiency is achieved both in terms of participation in the communication process and in terms of control over the communication process in order to avoid communication distortion and the appearance of noise.

- Managers use and apply appropriate principles to organize communication processes in their enterprises. These principles create conditions for communications to reach the addressees, as well as to reduce noise in the communication process.
- The most preferred leadership style is the authoritarian style. This leadership style has its advantages that are highly appreciated in the industry, as evidenced by the fact that almost half of the surveyed companies rely on this style to organize their communications.
- Expert leadership is present and valued in wine-growing enterprises. Of all surveyed enterprises, 75% point out that expert leadership is the factor that determines staff motivation.
- It can be summarized and concluded that managers make an effort and diligence in their daily work to be concerned both about the people in the organization and about the results of the functioning of the organization itself.

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