

## TEACHER-DIRECTOR COMMUNICATION FOR CREATING A FAVORABLE CLIMATE AT WORK AND INCREASING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SCHOOL UNIT

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**ABSTRACT:** *Organizations recognize the importance of employee communication and consider it essential to establishing and maintaining quality working relationships, especially now that service workers outnumber manufacturing workers and research as well as manufacturing processes emphasize greater collaboration and working in team between workers from different functional groups. In addition, a radical change in communication technologies has helped to transform both the work structure and the organization. The purpose of the work is to identify the role of teacher-principal communication in creating a favorable workplace climate and in increasing the performance of the school unit. The data were obtained from 40 teachers and managers of secondary schools in Dâmbovița county. The formulation of the hypotheses was based on previous research that examined the factors that influence employee communication, and the objectives were to identify the role of managerial communication in achieving performance in the school organization; knowing the degree of influence of internal communication on the efficiency of relations between teachers and the director, as well as identifying the degree of influence of the manager's negotiation skills on the favorable climate in the school organization. Thus, the study provides useful knowledge to researchers interested in employee communication and strategic communication practitioners responsible for internal communication.*

**Keywords:** *business communication, business negotiation, school organization*

**JEL Classification:** *M12, D83*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The study of organizational communication claims that in organizations communication goes far beyond training managers to be effective speakers and to have good interpersonal communication skills. In addition, it recognizes that all organizations, not just business organizations, have communication needs and challenges (Banwart, 2020; Sng, 2012).

Although interpersonal and group communication are at a lower level than organizational communication, they are important forms of communication (Barnett, 2003).

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Indeed, the initial focus of organizational communication literature was managers' interpersonal communication skills (especially speaking and writing) (Bennis & Nanus., 2007; Stoll & Fink, 1996). As organizations have become more communication-based, greater attention has been directed toward improving the interpersonal communication skills of all organizational members (Catano, N., Stronge, 2007).

The school participates in the process of change, renewal and reform of the educational system, based on internal, upward, downward and lateral communication (Hong, 2010). Addressing the role of managerial communication in creating a favorable climate in the school and increasing the performance of school units, is seen as an essential factor in achieving the objectives (Kochamba & Murray, 2003).

Managers of school units are people who hold leadership positions in schools that involve coordination, organization, disposition, command and control (König & Pflanzl., 2016; Story, 2010). They are the decision-makers in the school and directly influence the behavior of other people within the respective organization. Teaching staff are managers' subordinates and are managers' interlocutors.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research is to identify the role of teacher-director communication in creating a favorable workplace climate and increasing the performance of school units. The sample is not representative, being made up of 40 people, teachers and principals from secondary schools in Dâmbovița county. The period of the opinion poll was April 2024, and the instrument used to collect the data was the questionnaire. It includes 22 questions: factual (age, gender), opinion (information about feelings, attitudes), motivation (respondents' options) and personal questions.

**Table 1. Research objectives and hypotheses**

Research objectives	Research hypotheses
1. Identifying the role of managerial communication in achieving performance in the school organization	H1: Teachers perceive differently the role of managerial communication in achieving performance in the school organization.
2. Knowing the degree of influence of internal communication on the efficiency of relations between teachers and the director	H2: Internal communication is a priority for the efficiency of relations between teachers and the school principal.
3. Identifying the degree of influence of the manager's negotiation skills on the favorable climate in the school organization.	H3: There is a positive association between the level of negotiation knowledge of the manager and the creation of a favorable climate in the school organization.

Source: developed by the authors

## 3. RESULT

*O1: Identifying the role of managerial communication in achieving performance in the school organization*

To fulfill the first objective, we allocated five items. They present representative information in establishing the role of managerial communication in achieving performance. In proportion to 43% of the respondents believe that in the process of communication they want to be heard, understood and establish a connection with the interlocutor, about half of the

respondents believe that it is important that the message conveys information, decisions, opinions and ideas, while 12% believe that communicating means speaking correctly and beautifully.

The importance assigned to communication in relation to the other activities carried out is very high for three quarters of the respondents, while one third considers it low. Teaching activities constitute the main work carried out by teaching staff, without taking into account other projects and objectives of the school. And the high importance assigned to open and constructive communication between teachers and managers is approved by 67% of the respondents.

Three quarters of teachers and managers answered positively that upward, downward, lateral communication is necessary to achieve school performance.

*O2: Knowing the degree of influence of internal communication on the efficiency of relations between teachers and the director*

Relations between teachers and the director are maintained through communication, and the type considered important and suggestive is verbal communication, accessible to all, fast and with immediate feedback. 65% of the respondents opted for this type, 20% communicate by phone, on WhatsApp groups, by email and 15% use written communication on paper, which they consider the most important, indisputable.

The relationships established between the employees in the school where the respondents work are based on collaborations, which can be one of the strategies used by the manager who is an adept of change, of refreshing the manner of solving conflict situations, thus maximizing personal involvement and accepting the ideas of other members of the organization. It is emphasized the presence in this school organization of some teachers who hide certain fears under the auspices of competition (30%), which indeed leads to performance, but in this type of activities collaboration is imperative (30% of respondents). A percentage of 20% of the participants in the study believe that relations between employees are sympathetic, and 10% are in conflict with their colleagues.

Regarding the attitude of a teacher in the relationship with the school manager, 63% are respectful towards him, 27% have a friendly attitude, and for 10% of the teachers surveyed, the managers must find ways to approach their employees with a sober attitude. Teachers' perceptions of their relationship with the manager are also motivated by the manager's attitude towards them. They believe that the manager discriminates between them, treats them with superiority and is often indisposed.

The manager's qualities perceived by the respondents are: intelligence (55%), authority (30%) and indulgence (15%). The teaching staff recognize the manager's quality of getting close to people, that through the manner of leading and managing all the activities and the situations that these activities generate, he creates a bridge between the members of the organization, a sure way to increase the performance of the school unit, but his authority and indulgence are also appreciated.

The relationship with the manager is relatively satisfactory, the score obtained for this item was 2.6 out of a total of 3 points. Thus, 62% of the teaching staff consider that it is a satisfactory relationship, aware that all the barriers that prevent the growth of performance can be removed through communication, respect and collaboration, there are other ways generated by their own way of dealing with situations, everyone's mentality, personal motivation, etc. It is observed that the dissatisfied people are in the minority, representing 1%, which makes the undecided, i.e. 14%, adopt a different attitude to improve and improve the relationship with the manager, because more than half of the activities are carried out with the help of the relations of collaboration and teamwork.

Regarding the degree of involvement of teaching staff in the activities proposed by the manager, 25% of them state that they are actively involved, while the same percentage remains indifferent. The percentage of 25% reflects the teaching staff involved in the activity of the school organization, with a spirit of initiative, eager to identify solutions that contribute to raising the efficiency of the organization, to creating an optimal work climate for achieving performance. The manager must identify managerial strategies that motivate the teaching staff who want or consider themselves to be far from the life of the organization because they want to feel that they belong to this organization, but encounter internal or external communication obstacles, which must be overcome and with management help. A percentage of 30% of teachers come up with innovative ideas to increase performance, and 20% do not want to get involved due to the fragmentation of departments in several schools.

The control carried out by the manager of the school institution regarding the performance of work tasks is carried out properly, and 43% of the teaching staff believe that they are treated correctly. Teaching staff are honest people who care about etiquette, respect for moral values and are aware that without compliance with norms and rules there would be no performance. That's why the manager is the model meant to reach an increasingly high level of performance of the school unit by maintaining a favorable workplace climate.

Regarding the attitude towards compliance with the rules and procedures in carrying out job-specific activities, half of the respondents declare themselves satisfied, they do not find them too difficult or difficult to comply with, while 30% think they hinder them in their activities, and 20% are dissatisfied with these impositions.

*O3: Identifying the degree of influence of the manager's negotiation skills on the favorable climate in the school organization.*

The negotiation capacity of the manager in the school is perceived by the respondents as good, the obtained score of 3.95 reflects the manager's ability to hold discussions, negotiate and find the best solutions in achieving the objectives together with the partners with whom they enter into contact, namely: the town hall, the county council, the family, cultural institutions, the police, health units, the church, NGOs, etc.

Regarding the respondents' perception of the correlation between the principal's negotiation skills with teachers and the favorable climate in the organization in which they work, 45% of the respondents believe that, in creating and maintaining a favorable climate in the school, the qualities of a good negotiator are reflected of the manager, while 37% believe that knowledge does not matter in negotiation in the teacher-director relationship.

Many see the communication with the manager as one-sided, 40% of the respondents, that is, the manager draws the tasks and the teaching staff executes them. Therefore, some express their dissatisfaction, but they are unjustified dissatisfaction, because they are not open to express their opinions in front of the management, although the manager is willing to dialogue. Also, 3% state that sometimes there is effective communication between the manager and teachers, but the fact is omitted that the understanding of the manager is manifested in any situation encountered in the environment of the school organization, contributing to the smooth running of the activity.

40% of teachers consider themselves wronged by the manager, and 25% of those questioned are aware that there are often things that do not require much attention and must be overlooked, especially as they can be unclear/minor situations from the cause of problems generated by petty quarrels between students, and the directors intervene more or less objectively. There are few teachers who wait for the manager to come up with new ways of solving the situations encountered in the organization, with the aim of increasing the efficiency of the activity carried out.

To this question, 25% claim that they have a two-way communication, which gives them a sense of security and confidence in their own initiatives at work, 8% state that they have no idea, that is, they are not concerned with this side of the organization in which they are also. 7% admit that the manager initiates the communication, and 15% represent those teaching staff who consider themselves quite involved in the process of increasing the efficiency of the activity, favoring a suitable climate for the expression of personal opinions.

With regard to the manager's negotiation skills and his ability to keep the teacher-manager relationship active, more than half of the respondents' state that the manager has these capabilities, but teaching staff are also involved.

#### *O4: Establishing the profile of the respondents*

It is noted, following the processing of the data, that the staff in the reference schools is relatively young, only 18% belong to the over 50 age segment, dominating the two age segments, 30-40 years (30%) and 40-50 years (32%). This aspect influences the degree of involvement in achieving the objectives proposed by the school, the professional development of teaching staff, collaboration with colleagues and the school manager, facilitates upward and downward communication. The gender of the staff in the analyzed schools is predominantly female, in proportion to 67%, being characterized by communication skills, negotiation, patience, empathy, etc.

#### **4. VALIDATION OF ASSUMPTIONS**

1. Teachers perceive differently the role of managerial communication in achieving performance in the school organization - valid

Teachers' different experiences and teaching styles can influence how they perceive the importance of managerial communication. Depending on the personality and approach of each teacher, communication can be seen as an essential tool for collaboration and performance improvement, or, on the contrary, as a factor that can inhibit individual creativity and initiative. This diversity of perspectives underlines the need for clear, open communication adapted to the specific needs of each frame in the school organization.

2. Internal communication is a priority for the efficiency of relations between teachers and the school director – valid

Effective internal communication contributes to building a collaborative and respectful work environment, essential for the success of the school organization. By establishing open channels of communication, both teachers and the principal can better collaborate, resolve conflicts, and share ideas, which leads to better team cohesion and, implicitly, improved educational performance. In addition, transparent communication fosters a climate of trust, which is crucial for teacher motivation.

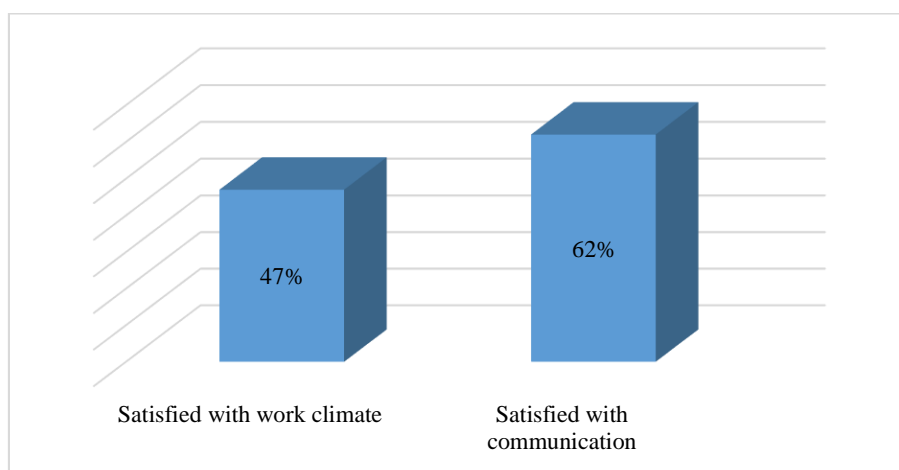
3. There is a positive association between the level of negotiation knowledge of the manager and the creation of a favorable climate in the school organization – valid

A manager well trained in negotiation techniques can significantly contribute to mediating conflicts, facilitating dialogue and finding solutions acceptable to all parties involved. Negotiation skills help the manager to ensure a positive organizational climate where teachers feel valued and listened to. They lead to the improvement of interpersonal relations in the school, to the increase of professional satisfaction and, finally, to the optimization of the educational process.

Moreover, some correlations can be made that highlight important particularities that define the school organization:

1. The correlation between the climate in the organization and the communication with the school manager highlights the fact that 47% of the staff are satisfied with the work climate, which is reflected in the percentage of 62% who are satisfied with the communication with the school manager. We have to take into account that some of the cadres come to the school once a week and some of them only have one hour of teaching in the school. It is worth appreciating the fact that the manager takes care of creating an optimal work environment, thus aiming to increase the performance of the school unit, but also to stimulate the motivation of teaching staff for involvement in the organization that they must feel close to them, that they belong to it (Figure 1).

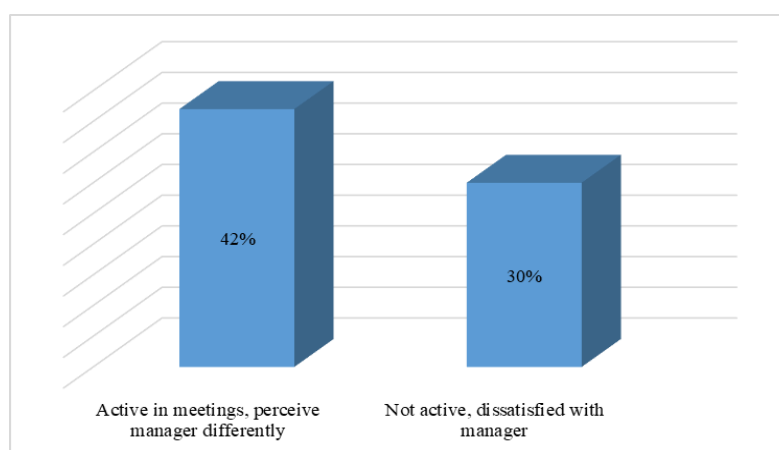
**Figure 1. Correlation between work climate and communication with manager**



Source: developed by the authors

2. Another correlation is the one that is created between the way of involvement in school meetings and their degree of dissatisfaction regarding the attitude of the manager of the school where they work. 42% of the staff say that they feel the differences made by the manager between their colleagues, but they are actively involved in the meetings. Another percentage of 30% does not get involved in the meetings, but these are the ones who are dissatisfied for other reasons with the manager's attitude, stating that they perceive him as tired, sad, absent or bored (Figure 2).

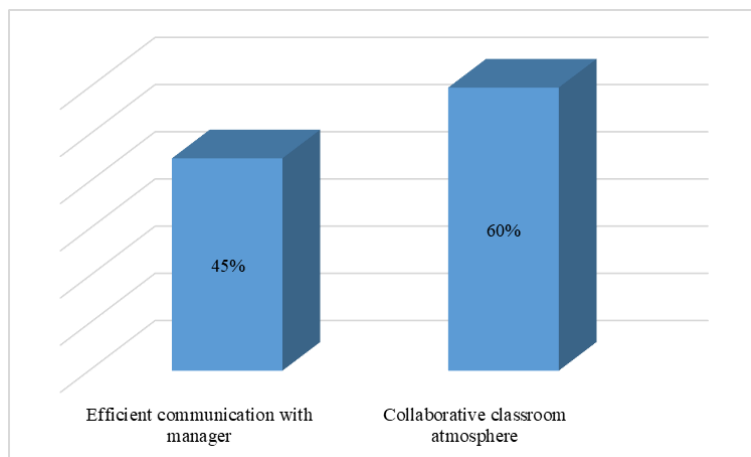
**Figure 2. Participation in meetings vs. perception of manager**



Source: developed by the authors

Another suggestive correlation is the one between the results obtained for the question "Do you think there is effective communication between the manager and the teachers?" and the results regarding the atmosphere during class hours. 45% of the teaching staff believe that there is effective communication between them and the manager, which is reflected in the percentage of 60% of teachers who feel that the atmosphere during class hours is one of collaboration, which emanates appreciation and respect from both sides, teachers and students (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Communication efficiency vs. classroom atmosphere**



Source: developed by the authors

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Communication is an important aspect in increasing the performance of the school unit, and every manager wants the organization he leads to assert itself in the life of society. The results of the organization reflect the degree in which the communication process is carried out, its quality and the degree of appreciation of the employees, their motivation and involvement in achieving the objectives proposed by the organization.

The communication method chosen by each teaching staff may or may not be consistent with the manager's type of communication, a fact that is reflected in the efficiency of the school unit's activity. The particularities of the way of communication reflect the imprint of beliefs, skills, habits, goals, personal education. Cases are identified in which the need to improve both the means of communication and the preferred manner is felt. The manager must be receptive to any change in order to channel the efforts of all employees to increase the efficiency of the activity carried out in the organization.

Therefore, communication and continuous training courses must be approved and followed in order to deepen knowledge and identify the most effective communication tools that have the purpose of obtaining the performance of the activity carried out by the members of the organization. It is also recommended to participate as much as possible in short work sessions for the best possible planning of both the results and the ways of fulfilling work tasks, the creation of an environment favorable to collaboration and communication that gives a positive and constructive meaning to the spirit of competition that should not be missed by the teaching staff focused on increasing the efficiency of their activity.

It is very important for the manager to send the messages to the organization's employees in a timely manner, giving them a reasonable period of time to complete their work tasks. It is recommended to periodically inform the teaching staff about the achievements and

non-achievements recorded by the organization, the mutual provision of feedback that influences the quality of the communication process but also the execution of the activities that must be carried out.

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