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INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS - A STUDY ON COMPANIES OF THE SIBIU CITY AREA

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Abstract:

Having and developing internal communication strategies and procedures has become a mandatory activity in all modern companies, no matter the size. But more than that, the need of employees to consider themselves involved in the communication process and the internal feedback given to the management is considered a must for the development of a positive workplace culture. The current paper aims to understand the perception of employees regarding the internal communication process of their companies. This article presents, from a literature review perspective the concept and importance of internal communication, as well as from a practical point of view the results of a questionnaire based research (part of a larger research) of how the communication process works inside their companies and what their perceptions are about internal communication. Using mostly a Likert scale assessment method of multiple items we found that the respondents have a positive perception on the internal communication process undertaken in their companies, but with certain limitations.

Key words: *internal communication, management, employees, process*

1. Introduction

Strong internal communication is essential for organizational success, aligning employees with strategic goals, promoting collaboration, and fostering a positive workplace culture. In the post-COVID era, its significance has increased, with studies revealing a clear connection between effective internal communication (EIC), stronger financial performance, and improved employee well-being. This involves utilizing a variety of tools and approaches, from traditional face-to-face interactions to advanced digital platforms.

Strategic internal communication enhances not only employee satisfaction and productivity but also organizational identity and external public relations. By aligning employees with the organization's core values and objectives, it enables them to act as advocates and active participants in shaping the workplace culture.

Additionally, integrating traditional communication methods with modern digital tools helps organizations cater to the diverse needs of their workforce more effectively. The current paper aims to understand the perception of employees regarding the general internal communication process of companies of the Sibiu city area, while underlining the importance of a proper internal communication strategy.

2. Literature review

If effective, internal communication can be a critical driver of organizational success. It helps in aligning employees with organizational goals, promotes transparency and fosters collaboration. All in all, it nurtures a positive workplace culture.

The importance of internal communication in nowadays post-covid businesses cannot be overstated, research consistently highlighting that companies with robust internal communication strategies achieve stronger financial outcomes. For instance, a Watson Wyatt study found that organizations with effective internal communication (EIC) practices experienced a 47% higher return to shareholders over a five-year period and Coric, Vokic, and Tkalac Verčič (2020) demonstrated that there is a very high, statistically significant correlation between EIC and life satisfaction.

Several studies underline that the quality of the communication with superiors and the exchange of information with peers positively correlates with some measures of total organizational satisfaction. Also, communication plays a central role in change management. In order to address resistance, alleviate uncertainty, and encourage employees to accept change, researchers recommend that organizations must engage in communication with their employees regarding the necessity for change, the process involved, emphasizing the anticipated effects.

Li et.al. (2021) suggest that in order to overcome the challenges associated with change, communication should be consistent, authentic, and energetic, offering pertinent information, encouraging feedback, and promoting a collective understanding of the change while underscoring its urgency. Considering this, there is no surprise that the 2025 Internal Communication Trends Report that identifies current key challenges and opportunities for organizations concluded that measuring the impact of internal communication remains a top concern, with 62% of professionals struggling to quantify its effectiveness.

Men and Bowen (2017) consider internal communication to be *“the strategic management of internal communication in managing interdependence and building mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and its employees.”* It refers to the exchange of information and ideas within an organization and it consists of formal and casual verbal exchange via channels such as emails, meetings, intranets, and other platforms. Efficient internal communication involves leveraging the right tools, channels, and strategies to reach all employees effectively. As Men (2021) points out, internal communication involves multiple dimensions: hierarchical communication, corporate internal communication and horizontal or peer communication.

Internal communication includes leveraging the proper tools, channels, and techniques to attain all personnel effectively. The key forms of internal communication that organizations use to foster clarity, engagement, and collaboration are: face-to-face

communication, email, platforms for instant messaging tools, mobile tools, intranet, digital hubs, mobile communication, printed communication and feedback tools (surveys).

In 2010 Candace White et. al., conducted a study in order to determine how employees prefer to receive information and the main finding was that they are most satisfied with internal communication when it comes from a variety of sources, formal and informal. Also, the results placed face-to-face communication among the top choice, in spite of the fact that meetings were considered time consuming.

Face-to-face communication remains one of the most effective methods for conveying messages clearly and it is essential to building trust in teams. It also facilitates informal conversations which are important for relationship-building among coworkers. This form of communication is particularly important for leadership communication, allowing immediate feedback and facilitating motivation and inspiration of employees.

Email is still the backbone of internal communication, with 85% of organizations relying on it as their most effective channel (Internal Comms Trends Report 2025). Emails are critical for formal updates, announcements, and sharing documents.

Platforms like Google, Microsoft Teams and Zoom provide real-time communication, enabling project collaboration, and quick decision-making, especially in hybrid and remote work settings. Other centralized platforms such as the intranet are useful for accessing company policies, news and other centralized resources. Digital work hubs offer capability related to more than one application, from messaging to sharing visual content which is particularly effective in simplifying complex information and capturing employee attention in high-traffic data areas.

Surveys and employee feedback platforms remain a critical tool for real-time feedback. These tools enable leaders to gather fast employee opinions, fostering a culture of listening and continuous improvement. A recent study by Edelman (2023) revealed that 78% of employees prefer pulse surveys over annual reviews for voicing their opinions and concerns, highlighting the importance of two-way communication. Printed materials such as newsletters, posters and leaflets are mainly used in companies where employees may lack access to digital tools.

As highlighted by Tkalac Vercic and Vokić, (2017), internal communication is not just about disseminating information but about fostering relationships and engagement among employees. White et al. (2010) underline that the competitive advantage of strategic internal communication comes not only from benefits such as employee satisfaction and productivity, but also from the positive contributions that well-informed employees can make to a company's external public relations efforts. An organization that succeeds in communicating desirable values and goals also may succeed at making employees identify with the organization (White et.al., Morgan et al., 2004).

Linjuan Men (2021) points out that employees today are not just information recipients but active participants in shaping the organization's internal culture and goals and digital platforms facilitate employees to feel empowered to contribute with ideas. Studies show that engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their organizations, demonstrating the power of effective internal messaging. In this respect, internal communication and internal marketing are deeply interconnected, both aiming to align employees with the organization's mission, values, and goals. While internal

communication focuses on the flow of information within an organization, internal marketing seeks to promote the organization's brand, culture, and objectives to employees, fostering engagement and advocacy.

Organizations must undertake a mixture of communication forms to cope with the diverse needs of their workforce. Combining conventional methods like face-to-face meetings with present day equipment as those presented, ensures information reaches every employee effectively, fostering engagement and alignment. In order to be effective, the communication form needs to be considered appropriate and acceptable by internal stakeholders; employee's expectations on communication media significantly influencing their evaluations of internal communication (Welch, 2012).

No matter the form, organizations need to emphasize a two-way communication, where employees actively contribute to the dialogue, co-creating meaning with leadership. In today's fast-paced business environment, characterized by remote teams, digital transformation, and increasing employee expectations, internal communication has evolved into a strategic necessity.

3. Methodology

The current paper aims to underlie the importance of internal communications within the Sibiu city and surrounding area, by presenting the perception of more than 400 employees of such companies on the internal communication process of their companies. We have undertaken a quantitative research based on a questionnaire applied to an availability sample of 441 employees from various positions and experience levels in their respective organisations.

Even though the research undertaken is a larger one, that covers aspects related to human resources management, internal marketing, internal communication and job satisfaction, in the current paper we are presenting a section of the research that deals with internal communication.

The main objectives of the research cover the following aspects:

- O₁ - Determining the employees perception in relation to the way internal communication is undertaken within the company.
- O₂ - Understanding the perception regarding the degree of continuous information towards the employees from the management team.
- O₃ - Identifying how the internal communication process is developing within the company.
- O₄ - Determining the level of perception from the employees regarding the access to information in order for them to perform their jobs efficiently.

The overall questionnaire was divided into two main sections, one that covers the specific questions and one that presents the respondents profile. In order to have a better understanding of the topic a number of 40 items were developed, of which we will underline in this article a number of 11 items, that were analysed using mainly a 5 step Likert scale (where the 1 – strongly agree to 5 – totally agree).

While we had a number of 441 valid questionnaires, a total of 529 questionnaires were received, but 88 of them were considered invalid, which resulted in a response rate of 83.3%. The research was done online, using Google Forms, and the collected data was analysed with IBM SPSS Statistics v.23.

4. Results

4.1. Respondents profile

As stated before, a total number of 441 of valid questionnaires were analysed and following the evaluation of the socio-demographic information of the respondents, the main respondent profile shows the following.

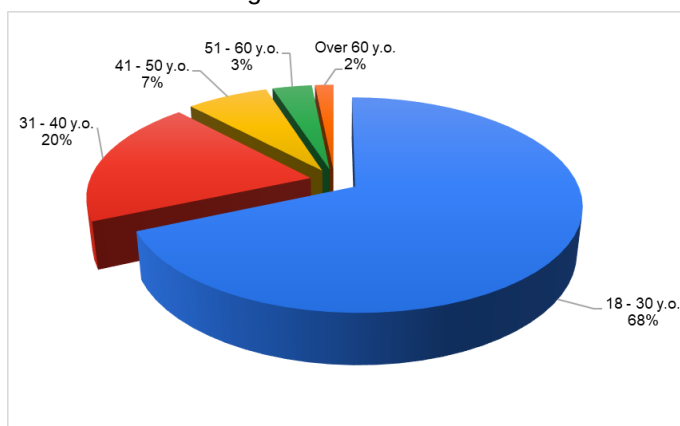


Figure 1. Age distribution of respondents
(authors' computation)

Figure 1 shows that the great majority of the respondents (68%) are aged 18 to 30 years old, followed by 20% of the respondents aged 31 to 40 years old, 7% of the respondents are aged 41 to 50 years old and those aged 51 years old and above represent a total of 5%. Figure 2 show the distribution of the respondents according to gender and place of residence (urban or rural areas). The results also show that 58% of respondents are female and 42% of them are male, with the great majority of the individuals living in an urban environment (86%).

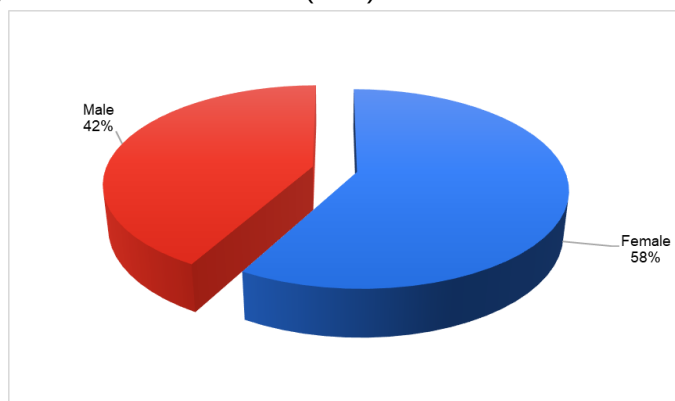


Figure 2. Gender distribution of respondents
(authors' computation)

Another aspect that gave a deeper understanding of the respondents' profile was the last level of education graduated by the respondents as seen in Figure 3. As we can see, the results show that 52% of respondents have a Bachelor's degree, 25% of the individuals have a Master's degree, while 20% of the participants have a High School Diploma. PhD holders are 2% and 1% of the respondents have a Professional School Diploma.

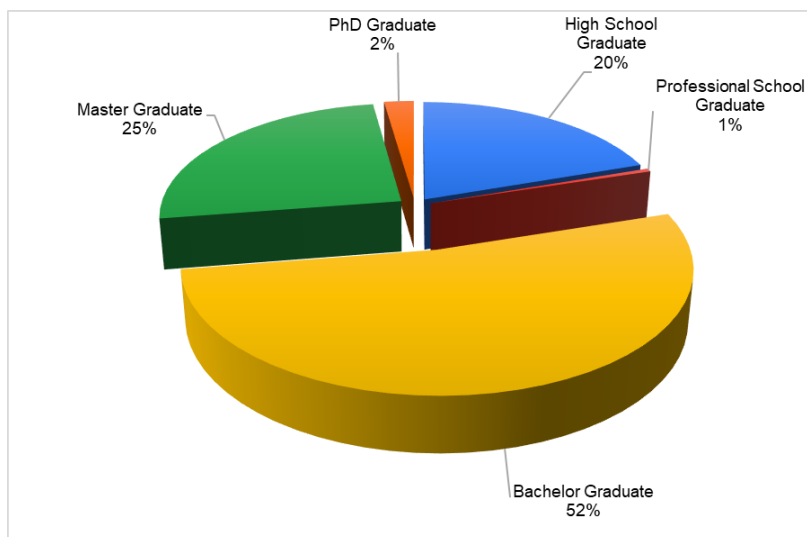


Figure 3. Last education level graduated
(authors' computation)

The last two items that we analysed in connection to the respondents profile were the overall work experience and how long they were employed by the current company (figure 4).

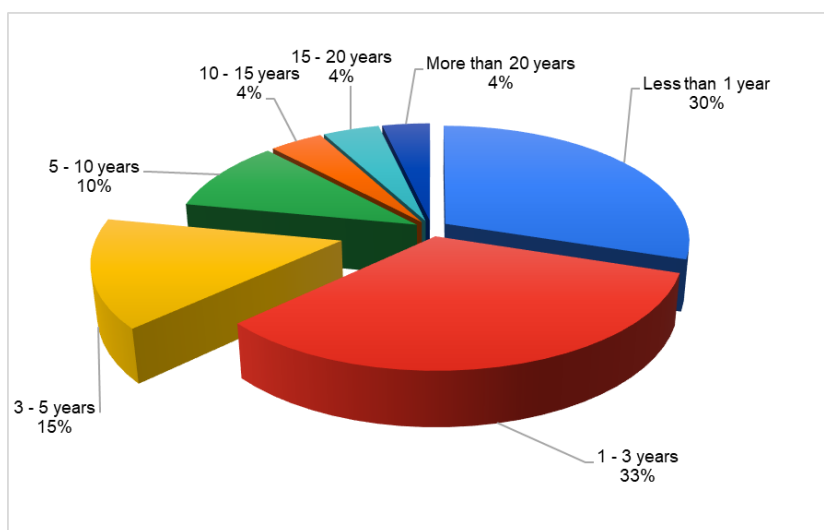


Figure 4. Employed in the same company
(authors' computation)

In correlation with the age of the respondents, where a great majority of them are aged 18 to 30 years old, we found that 40% of the respondents have under 3 years of overall experience, and 19% of them have a 3 to 5 year overall experience.

Regarding the length of employment at the same company, we can see from the above figure that 33% of the respondents are with the same company in a 1-3 year interval, 30% of them have been with the company for less than 1 year. 15% of the employees have been with the company for 3 to 5 years, a total of 26% of the employees have been employed with the company for more than 5 years, with various percentages as seen in figure 4.

4.2. Main findings

In order to answer the scope and the specific objectives of the paper presented in section 3, we asked the respondents some questions related to the internal communication process from within their company. For the determining of the employees' perception in relation to the way internal communication is undertaken within the company we have asked the employees a scale based question in order to determine their overall position to the matter (figure 5).

Following the analysis of the results, we can observe that 55% of the respondents have a good opinion about the manner in which the internal communication is done in the company. An important 29% of respondents have neutral opinion and only 18% of the responses show that the employees do not agree with the statement.

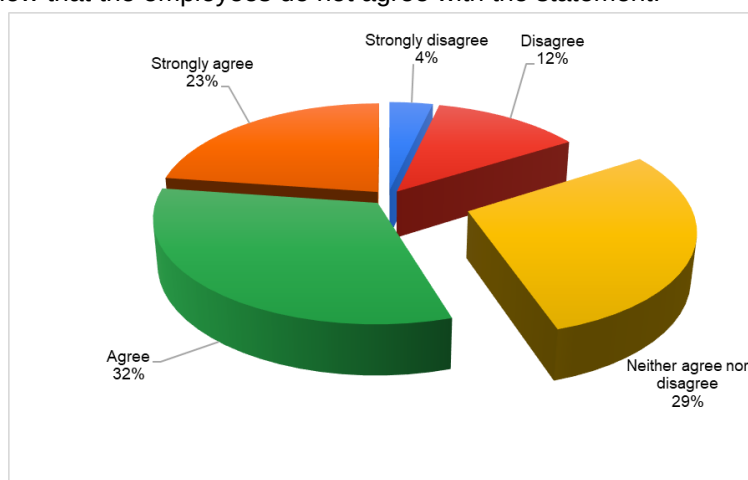


Figure 5. Overall perception about internal communication in the company
(authors' computation)

Applying the Likert scale shows that the score for this question is 3.57, which represents an above average score that shows that the respondents agree with the statement that the internal communication is done properly in the company. The value of the score is mitigated by the high value of the average responses.

The second objective tried to identify the perception regarding the degree of continuous information towards the employees from the management team.

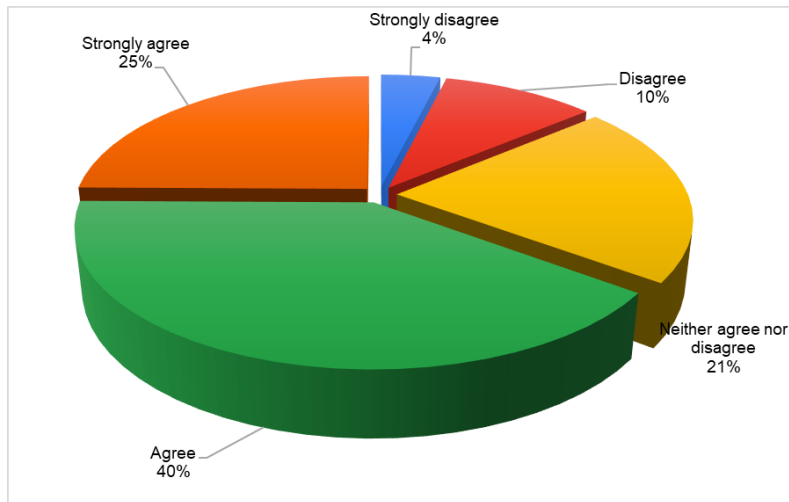


Figure 6. Overall perception regarding continuous information towards the employees
(authors' computation)

For that the results (figure 6) show that 65% of the respondents agree that the company informs them in a sustained manner, 21% neither agree nor disagree and only 14% do not agree with the statement. The overall score calculated for this question is 3.72.

The third objective was designed to determine how the internal communication process is done within the company. For that we have developed 8 items that can give a clear image regarding the issue at hand. The main findings for this objectives can be seen in form of Likert scale scores in figure 7.

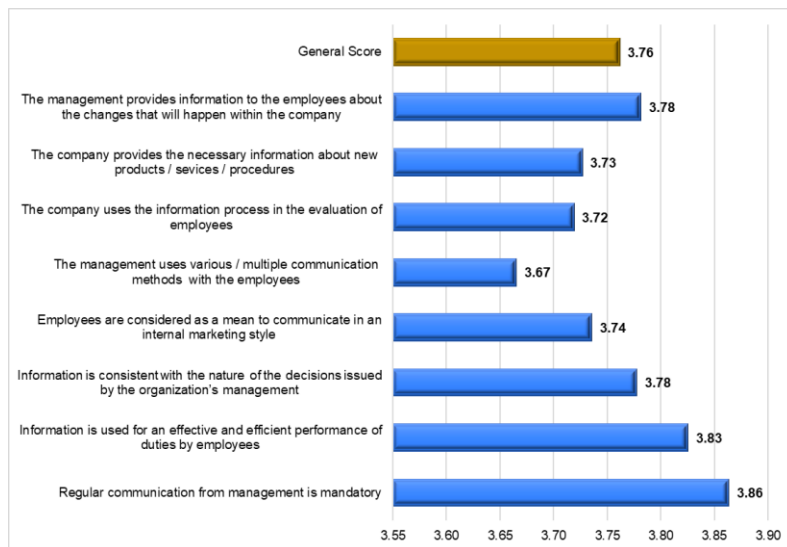


Figure 7. Perception about the internal communication process in the company
(authors' computation)

Considering the above mentioned findings, we can see that the overall score is 3,76, which represent an acceptance of the methods of communication used by the company, however, we can observe that the most appreciated item was *Regular communication from management is mandatory* – 3.86; followed by *Information is used for an effective and efficient performance of duties* – 3.83. The lowest score is that about the perception regarding *The management uses various / multiple communication methods with the employees* - 3.67, but even at this value the majority of the respondents agree with the statement.

We also added a question about the employees' access to information in order for them to perform their jobs efficiently, which can also be considered a further validation for the *Information is used for an effective and efficient performance of duties* item mentioned above. Figure 8 shows that 68% of the employees agree that the company provides information / access to information in other for them to perform their duties in an effective manner. But as always, the results are rather consistent and show that 24% of respondents have a neutral perception about the situation. The score of 3.92 further solidifies the findings.

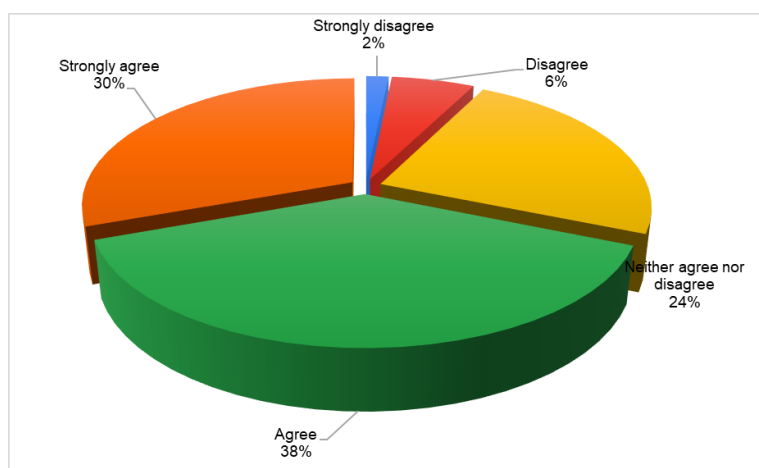


Figure 7. Perception on the access to internal information
(authors' computation)

In order to deepen our understanding of the communication process undertaken in the analysed companies we developed a Pearson correlation analysis between the studied variables that showed the following: a strong correlation of 0.743 was identified between the following items: *The management uses various / multiple communication methods with the employees* and *information is consistent with the nature of the decisions issued by the organization's management*. The second strongest correlation of 0.717 was determined between: *Information is used for an effective and efficient performance of duties* and *information is consistent with the nature of the decisions issued by the organization's management*. We have to mention that the significance level is at 0.01 (2 tailed).

Furthermore, the rest of the correlation between the variables were deemed as having an average strength with values between 0.574 and 0.694 having the same significance level as before.

5. Discussions and conclusions

Internal communication has become, as stated before, an integral and essential part of the communication and management strategy of 21st century company. While considering internal communication it is mandatory to understand the feeling and perception of employees of the process that happens in their companies. Drawing from previous researches and literature review, we can agree with Welch (2012) that shows the importance of using multiple methods and channels for internal communication in order to cope with the everchanging environment generated by the evolution from a face-to-face interaction to a online or hybrid one.

But that is not just the it factor, companies and managers must also comprehend how their own employees see internal communication, based on a funnel system and starting from the general impression on internal communications, continuing with the idea of communicating with your employees all the time, but also understanding the main uses of internal communication from the employee point of view.

Although the current research has certain limitations that stem from the geographical perspective (the research was done within companies of Sibiu City and the surrounding areas), we feel that the information gathered can offer an important image on the perception of employees regarding internal communication. Additional limitations should be considered in the form of a skewness of the distribution of respondents in terms of age and work experience (the majority of respondents are young employees aged 18 - 30 years old and more than 60% have up to 3 years work experience in the company).

However, the undertaken research has shown that the majority of the respondents feel that their companies have a working internal communication process, that aims to provide regular information about: the state of the company, about changes, new products, services or processes, and also about using the internal communication and the provided information for working effectively and efficiently.

For most of the questions, we found that an average of 20 to 30% of the respondents have an average opinion about the discussed items, an aspect that should be followed and analysed further in future research. An additional future aspect that could be studied is the effectiveness of internal communication channels and identification of the best ones that fit the needs of the companied that operate in this dynamic and everchanging business environment.

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