sciendo

ECONOMIC THEMES (2021) 59(4): 535-554

DOI 10.2478/ethemes-2021-0030

EMPLOYEES' SATISFACTION WITH SUPERVISOR COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL FEEDBACK

Vesna Milanović

"MB" University, Belgrade, Faculty of Business and Law, Republic of Serbia

✉ *vmilanovic555@gmail.com*

Andrea Bučalina Matić

University „Business Academy", Novi Sad, Faculty of Social Sciences, Belgrade

✉ *andreabucalina9@gmail.com*

Jelena Golubović

Independent Expert Associate, Republic of Serbia

✉ *jelenagolubovic1992@gmail.com*

UDC 331.101.32: 005.42

Review paper

Abstract: The subject of the research in this paper was the examination of satisfaction with the internal communication dimensions that have the strongest correlations with job satisfaction, which are: supervisor communication and personal feedback. Therefore, if employees are satisfied with these communication dimensions, their job satisfaction will be at a satisfactory level. The goal of the research was to determine satisfaction with the observed communication dimensions based on the employees' attitudes. Managers' and non-managerial employees' attitudes towards the observed communication dimensions are presented, also. On the sample of 72 respondents, using descriptive statistics, the results have shown that the employees are not satisfied with the observed dimensions, also, the non-managerial employees are less satisfied than the managerial ones. The results are useful since they provide a description of the observed dimensions and findings of the previous studies, especially the ones which investigated the relationship between satisfaction with the observed communication dimensions and job satisfaction. The results may be useful for (Serbian) managers in the process of managing the observed communication dimensions. The sample size limits the generalizability of the result.

Received: 31.03.2020
Accepted: 18.10.2021

Keywords: satisfaction, supervisor communication, personal feedback, employees, job satisfaction

JEL classification: M30, M10

1. Introduction

Internal communication is the process of exchange of information, thoughts and ideas between the employees within an organization. Internal communication "involves establishing and maintaining relationships between an organization, supervisors, and employees" (Karanges et al., 2015, p. 129). In this regard, Baksi and Aich (2018) notice that internal communication is observed as a key dimension of employee relationship management.

According to the findings by Verčić et al. (2012, p. 229), internal communication is described "as a management function in-charge of intra-organizational communication and as an interdisciplinary function integrating the elements of human resources management, communication and marketing". Therefore, in many of relevant studies and articles, internal communication is studied as a key process of human resource management and communication management (see previous studies in: García-Carbonell et al., 2018) and also as an aspect of internal marketing (Ahmed & Rafiq, 2003; Ahmed & Rafiq, 2013).

Internal communication, as an important tool of internal marketing[1], affects job satisfaction, job performance, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (see more: Chan & Lai, 2017). Consequently, measuring (internal) communication satisfaction has received a considerable attention in the research literature.

According to Downs and Hazen (1977, p. 72), "…'communication satisfaction' is a multidimensional construct"[2] i.e. communication satisfaction is employee's satisfaction with its various dimensions. In many studies CSQ – "The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire" and OCQ - "The Organizational Communication Questionnaire" were used.[3] CSQ and OCQ have been widely used today in original and somewhat modified versions. The relevant literature suggests that researchers choose the internal communication dimensions that correspond to the subject and the goal of their empirical research.

The subject of the research in this paper is the examination of satisfaction with the internal communication dimensions (the CSQ dimensions) that have the strongest correlations with job satisfaction, which are: supervisor communication

[1] Previous studies indicate that internal marketing affects employee satisfaction (Kanyurhi & Bugandwa Mungu Akonkwa, 2016) as well job satisfaction, employee commitment (adopting to Bailey et al., 2016; Joung et al., 2015) and their loyalty (Chen & Lin, 2013) while customer-oriented employee affects consumer satisfaction (Hennig-Thurau, 2004).

[2] The CSQ dimensions are: General Organizational Perspective, Organizational Integration, Personal Feedback, Relation with Supervisor, Horizontal-Informal Communication, Relation with Subordinate, Media Quality, Communication Climate (Downs & Hazen, 1977, p. 70, Table 1).

[3] CSQ measures 8 different communication dimensions (Downs & Hazen, 1977; etc.). OCQ measures 15 different communication aspects (see more: Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974; etc.).

and personal feedback (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986; Borovec & Balgač, 2017).[4] At the same time, the highest level of satisfaction is noted with the dimension of supervisor communication, while the lowest seems to be with the dimension of personal feedback (Clampitt & Girard, 1993; etc.). Consequently, the goal of the research in this paper is to determine satisfaction with supervisor communication and personal feedback based on the employees' attitudes. We based the research on the hypothesis: Employees are not satisfied with supervisor communication and personal feedback; non-managerial employees are less satisfied than managers.

According to Mihailović & Kovačević (2008, p. 247), immediate managers in Serbian private and public companies "think that problems in communication with employees are far more often than middle-level and top-level management think". In the light of the above, the primary data were collected by the employee survey in Belgrade, Serbia.

The results of this research are useful since they provide a description of the observed communication dimensions and findings of previous empirical studies, especially the ones which investigated the relationship between satisfaction with the observed communication dimensions and job satisfaction. The results of this empirical research may be useful for (Serbian) managers in the process of planning and managing the observed internal communication dimensions, although the results are applicable to this sample and not to the overall population.

The structure of the paper consists of several parts. Following the introduction, the second part shows supervisor communication and personal feedback as the CSQ dimensions, the third part describes the importance of the observed communication dimensions and the assessment of satisfaction – the findings of the previous studies, while the empirical research is given in the fourth part. It is followed by the conclusion and reference.

2. Supervisor communication and personal feedback as the CSQ dimensions

According to Downs and Hazen (1977), supervisor communication as the CSQ dimension was called "Satisfaction with *Superiors*" (p. 66) as well as "Relation with supervisor" (p. 70, Table 1). However, the phrase "supervisory communication" was first used by Clampitt and Girard (1993, p. 86) while the phrase "supervisor communication" was used by Pincus (1986, p. 395). The

[4] Communication climate has the strongest correlations with job satisfaction, too (Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986; Clampitt & Girard, 1993; Borovec & Balgač, 2017).

phrases "relationship with the supervisor" or "supervisory communication" were used by Chan and Lai (2017, p. 215). Evidently, the phrases "satisfaction with superiors", "supervisory communication" and "supervisor communication" were used as synonyms as well as the phrases "relation with supervisor" and "relationship with the supervisor", because it is the same dimension of the CSQ instrument. In this paper the phrase "supervisor communication" is used.

According to Downs and Hazen (1977, p. 66), supervisor communication ("Satisfaction with *Superiors*") includes "both upward and downward dimensions of communication with superiors" as well as the extent to which a superior pays attention when an employee talks and the extent to which a superior listens to him/her. According to Chan and Lai (2017, p. 215) "the relationship with the supervisor, or supervisory communication, refers to the upward and downward communication with supervisors…", as well as supervisor's communication skills (e.g. supervisor's ability to pay attention and also be open in communication, etc.). In the light of the mentioned studies, in this paper, supervisor communication was observed through upward and downward communication with supervisor and supervisor's communication skills.

Personal feedback refers to the need of employees "to know how they are being judged and how their performance is being appraised" (Clampitt & Girard, 1993, p. 86), as well as "the information that should be expected to be passed from the supervisor to the subordinates" (Chan & Lai, 2017, p. 215). As in previous studies (e.g. Downs & Hazen, 1977, p. 68; etc.), in this paper, personal feedback as the separate dimension of the CSQ, includes communication related to personal work and achievement.

3. The importance of the observed communication dimensions and the assessment of satisfaction – findings of previous studies

3.1. Supervisor communication

According to Rajković et al. (2018), the highest level of satisfaction is noted with the dimension of supervisor communication[5], which is in line with the result of the previous studies. However, in the previous studies, the satisfaction level of communication in an organization was less examined than the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction, etc. According to Wheeless et al. (1983), employees' job satisfaction was positively related to their satisfaction with

[5] The research was conducted on the sample of employees (33) in Zemun, Serbia (at the company "Art Ival" d.o.o., Zemun; company has 40 employees). The employees "are generally satisfied with communication" (Rajković et al., 2018, p. 83).

an open communication with their supervisors and supervisor's receptivity to information. "The increase of communication satisfaction with the supervisor is accompanied by the increase of satisfaction with supervisor", as job satisfaction dimension (Nikolić et al., 2013, p. 565). In this regard, a clear relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction, especially satisfaction with supervisor communication, has been confirmed in many of the relevant studies (e.g. Downs & Hazen, 1977; Wheeless et al., 1983; Pincus, 1986; Clampitt & Girard, 1993; Giri & Kumar 2010; Nikolić et al., 2013; Borovec & Balgač, 2017). In addition, supervisors, perceived as leaders, were able to motivate their employees through communication and increase employees' job satisfaction (Mayfield et al., 1998). Many studies have confirmed that communication competence of supervisors is the predictor of employees' job satisfaction (e.g. Madlock, 2008), as well as that supervisors' behaviour in communication affects employees' turnover (Madlock & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2010). Therefore, it is important to evaluate supervisor communication satisfaction.

Downward and upward communication with the supervisor and supervisor's communication skills are interdependent indicators of supervisor communication. This means, for example, that is very important how supervisors receive and respond to messages sent by employees, because if a supervisor is ready to listen to them and is really listening, upward communication improves (Verma, 2015, p. 29).

3.1.1. *Downward and upward communication with the supervisor*

Vertical information flows occur through downward and upward communication i.e. among employees of different levels within an organization. The flow of information from a higher level within an organization to a lower one occurs through downward communication, while the flow of information from a lower level to a higher one occurs through upward communication. Downward and upward communication occur in a flow segment, i.e. between any higher and lower link in the chain and vice versa. Higher-level employees within an organization are managerial employees (top-level managers, middle-level managers, low-level managers). Lower-level employees can be managerial (as subordinates of upper-level ones) and non-managerial employees. Thus, an employee can be a superior in a certain segment, and a subordinate in another segment with his own superior who is at a higher link in the chain. Therefore, in this paper, the terms "a superior", and "a supervisor" (as a person in the first-line management) are used as synonyms.

Downward communication is used to inform the employees about the assigned tasks, goals; provide instructions on how to do specific tasks; explain policies and procedures, point to the issues that deserve special attention and provide performance feedback (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 339). Face to face communication and other rich media are perceived to be significantly linked to the

quality of information from a supervisor (Byrne & Lemay, 2006, p. 149) that refers to an employee personally, i.e. his job or his position in a group. The quality level of instructions that a supervisor offers for resolving a workplace issue is a predictor of the quality of his/her communication (adapting to Ramirez, 2012). Previous studies have indicated satisfaction among non-managerial employees[6] with direct supervisors i.e. with their guidance in solving job related problems (e.g. Wagner et al., 2015, p. 979; etc.). According to Verma (2015), downward communication plays the most important role in an organization because this communication direction affects upward communication. Therefore, it is very important how the supervisor communicates with his employees.

As every employee is supposed to know the current rules and why they should be obeyed (Torrington et al., 2005), at the same time, it is necessary that every supervisor knows how employees respond to certain information. Feedback is also provided through upward communication (in case of initial downward communication). Upward communication is used for sending feedback to higher levels, information about progress toward goals, information about potential problems (Robbins & Judge, 2013, p. 339). Thus, supervisors are informed about how and how much their employees work, if they perform tasks efficiently, what are their attitudes towards his/her relationship with them and the work assignments etc.

Downward and upward communication with the supervisor may influence the positive atmosphere i.e. communication climate within a group and an organization, and vice versa, adopting to Nordin et al. (2014, p. 1046), the communication climate within an organization may influence upward and downward communication flow among the employees. According to Pettit et al. (1997, p. 84), "although conflicting results have been reported" in O'Reilly & Roberts (1977) and Schuler (1977), downward and upward communication appears to be directly related to job performance. Satisfactory communication down and up and its information flows connect supervisors to their employees as subordinates, and it can intensify their interaction. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the quality and regularity of downward and upward communication with the supervisor.

3.1.2. *Supervisor's communication skills*

Active listening is one of the most important supervisor communication skills. It means that active listening skill is of key importance for the efficiency and quality of supervisor communication, in the way it is perceived by subordinates, and the way they see their supervisor as someone who pays attention to his interlocutors (Ramirez, 2012). According to Brownell (1990), subordinates' perceptions of how their supervisors (managers) listen to them are related to at least three variables: how well they know their supervisors, how often they communicate and how

[6] professional nurses in this research

satisfied they are with their job and relationship with the supervisor. Thus, according to Nikolić et al. (2013, p. 565), high level of employees satisfaction with supervisors communication indicates that the supervisor was ready to listen to employees' complaints[7].

In face to face communication, supervisors can hardly hide when they are uninterested in listening to their subordinates, and especially when supervisors spend most of their time in face to face communication with their subordinates (Guo et al., 2015, p. 211). Besides, experts believe that over 90% of two-way face to face communication can be conveyed through non-verbal elements (Lehman & DuFrene, 2015, p. 5). In the light of the above, active listening skill and non-verbal communication skill seem to be essential for supervisors.

Previous studies noticed that "when supervisors were perceived as nonverbally immediate, employees reported a greater level of emotional support from their supervisor" (e.g. Jia et al., 2017, p. 79). Besides, according to subordinates, supervisors' readiness for cooperation and flexibility towards them can be noted in non-verbal signs (warmth in one's voice, facial expressions) that they send to subordinates in interactive open communication (Tjosvold, 1985). Therefore, the communication manner of supervisors is important for employees and understanding of messages because non-verbal communication influences the interaction of supervisor with his/her employees more than verbal content would (Kay & Christophel, 1995; Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016). In this regard, Graham et al. (1991, p. 61) recommended that "Managers should be aware that most employees feel frustration and distrust when receiving conflicting signals from their supervisors..." and that they should try to be more honest in communicating their emotions. However, according to Jia et al. (2017), limited studies have explored the relationship between emotions and supervisor communication with employees.

3.2. Personal feedback

Communication is the most effective when supervisor communicates directly and two-way with their employees, which implies a feedback flow. Providing personal feedback is one of the primary goals in communication which affects employees' satisfaction. Therefore, it is need that employees receive adequate personal feedback about performance and personnel development, and not just about their contribution to the policies and processes within an organization. Unfortunately, personal feedback is the area of the lowest satisfaction of employees (Rodrigues et al., 2018, p. 111). Besides, providing adequate personal feedback is a universal difficulty in many organizations.

[7] middle managers in this research

According to Nikolić et al. (2013, p. 565) "...personal feedback is the most influential communication satisfaction dimension, with respect to satisfaction with nature of the work". Receiving personal feedback affects communication satisfaction and job satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2015). In this regard, clear relationship between communication satisfaction and its dimension – personal feedback and job satisfaction has been confirmed in many of the relevant studies (e.g. Downs & Hazen, 1977; Pincus, 1986; Clampitt & Girard, 1993; Giri & Kumar 2010; Wińska, 2010; Nikolić et al., 2013; Borovec & Balgač, 2017). Therefore, focusing on investigating employees' attitudes about satisfaction with personal feedback is very important.

4. Empirical research

4.1. Methodological framework

The subject of the research in this paper was the examination of satisfaction with the internal communication dimensions that have the strongest correlations with job satisfaction, which are: supervisor communication and personal feedback.

Supervisor communication was observed through upward and downward communication with the supervisor and supervisor's communication skills. Satisfaction with upward and downward communication with the supervisor was observed through employees' attitudes to the quality and regularity of upward and downward communication. Satisfaction with supervisor's communication skills was observed through employees' attitudes to the extent to which supervisors pay attention to active listening and non-verbal communication skill. The satisfaction with personal feedback was observed through employees' attitudes to adequacy in providing information to employees on their performance and to the importance of personal development for an organization success.

The first task was to determine what attitudes the employees had about upward and downward communication with the supervisor and whether they perceived them differently. The second task was to find the employees' attitudes towards supervisor's communication skills. The third task was to establish what attitudes the employees had about the personal feedback. Considering that subordinates are less satisfied with communication (practices) than supervisors (Varona, 1996), the fourth task was to find whether the managers' and non-managerial employees' attitudes about the mentioned issues differ.

The primary data were collected by carrying out an employees' survey in Belgrade, Serbia. An electronic form was applied, and 72 questionnaires were analysed. As for the gender structure, the sample consisted of 56% of female respondents, and 44% of male. As for the age structure, 53% of the respondents were aged 21-30, 26% between 31-40, 7% between 41-50, 11% between 51-60 and

3% were over 61. 15% of the respondents were high-school graduates, 17% post-secondary vocational school graduates, 56% had academic degrees (Bachelor or Master) and 12% had PhD degree. Most respondents had been working less than 10 years (72%), 10% from 11 to 20 years, 14% from 21 to 30 years, 4% from 31 to 40 years. Most respondents were non-managerial employees (81%), and the remaining 19% were managers. For scaling responses, Likert scale was used (very little – 1; little – 2; undecided – 3; much – 4, very much – 5).

For managerial employees the term manager is used - the abbreviation M. For non-managerial employees (in the capacity of subordinates) the term non-managerial employee is used - the abbreviation N. The term employee refers to all the employees.

4.2. Results and discussion

The employees' attitudes about satisfaction with upward and downward communication with supervisor are shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Response structure - how much attention is paid to the quality and regularity of downward communication with the supervisor (the first indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very ittle
Response structure	12%	35%	10%	29%	14%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

Table 2: Response structure - how much attention is paid to the quality and regularity of upward communication with the supervisor (the second indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very little
Response structure	13%	36%	12%	33%	6%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

The employees' attitudes about supervisor communication satisfaction, i.e. how much attention supervisors pay to active listening and non-verbal communication is shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Response structure - the rating of supervisors' active listening skill (the third indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very little
Response structure	21%	29%	11%	24%	15%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

Table 4: Response structure - the rating of supervisors' non-verbal communication skill (the fourth indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very little
Response structure	14%	18%	33%	20%	15%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

The employees' attitudes about satisfaction with personal feedback i.e. with adequacy in providing information to employees on their performance and the importance of personal development for the organizational success are shown in Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Response structure - the rating of personal feedback on the performance of the employees (the fifth indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very little
Response structure	14%	29%	17%	17%	23%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

Table 6: Response structure - the rating of personal feedback on the importance of personal development for the organizational success (the sixth indicator)

Scale rating	very much	much	undecided	little	very little
Response structure	7%	28%	18%	28%	19%

Source: The data were obtained by the authors' research

Response structure managers and their employees is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Response structure

I/ E	the first indicator		the second indicator		the third indicator		the fourth indicator		the fifth indicator		the sixth indicator	
	5	**%**	**5**	**%**	**5**	**%**	**5**	**%**	**5**	**%**	**5**	**%**
N	7	12	8	14	14	24	8	14	5	9	4	7
M	2	14	1	7	1	7	2	14	5	36	1	7
	4	**%**	**4**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**4**	**%**	**4**	**%**
N	18	31	19	33	14	24	9	16	15	26	13	22
M	7	50	7	50	7	50	4	29	6	43	7	50
	3	**%**	**3**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**3**	**%**	**3**	**%**
N	6	10	6	10	7	12	20	34	10	17	10	17
M	1	7	3	21	1	7	4	29	2	14	3	21
	2	**%**	**2**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**2**	**%**	**2**	**%**
N	18	31	21	36	14	24	11	19	11	19	19	33
M	3	21	3	21	3	21	3	21	1	7	1	7
	1	**%**	**1**	**%**	**1**	**%**	**1**	**%**	**1**	**%**	**1**	**%**
N	9	16	4	7	9	16	10	17	17	29	12	21
M	1	7	0	0	2	14	1	7	0	0	2	14

I: indicator
N: non-managerial employees 58 in the sample
M: managers 14 in the sample
E: employees 72 total

1,2,3,4,5: scale rating; %: of the sample N/M

Due to rounding of the percentages related to M (1) and M (3) sum is 99%.

Source: Authors' calculations

For the sake of interpretation, the results have been classified into percentages at the level of the aggregate sample (72 respondents) and only those answers that responded to the scores 5 – very much and 4 – much at Likert five-point scale were observed. Thus, when 50% of the respondents reacted this way, the result is at the verge of satisfaction; when 41%-49% of the respondents reacted this way, it was interpreted as mild dissatisfaction with the tested communication dimension; when 31%-40% of the respondents reacted this way, it was interpreted as significant dissatisfaction.

Result 1 - The employees' satisfaction with upward and downward communication with the supervisor as supervisor communication indicators: There is a mild dissatisfaction with communication in both directions (on average 48%). Dissatisfaction with downward communication is more evident than upward

communication (47% - Table 1; 49% Table 2). Managers have more positive attitude. Out of the total number of managers, more managers have better perception of downward communication (64% in comparison to upward – 57%). Non-managerial employees have better perception of upward communication (47% in comparison to downward – 43%). The gap between the attitudes of non-managerial employees and managers is wider when it comes to upward communication (10% i.e. 21%, respectively) in comparison to downward communication (10% i.e. 7%, respectively) with the response „undecided" (Table 7; the first and the second indicator).

Result 2 - The employees' satisfaction with active listening skill and non-verbal communication skill as supervisor communication indicators: There is a mild dissatisfaction with supervisor's communication skills (on average 41%). However, active listening is at the verge of satisfaction (50% - Table 3), while non-verbal communication of supervisors is significantly neglected (32% - Table 4). Managers have more positive attitude on both skills, while more undecided in responses are non-managerial employees. Majority of the managers have better perception of active listening than non-verbal communication (percentage of the sample M - 57% i.e. 43%, respectively). When it comes to non-managerial employees, this relation is 48% i.e. 30%, respectively (percentage of the sample N). A high percentage of the respondents is undecided about using non-verbal communication. 34% of non-managerial employees and 29% of managers were undecided about this (Table 7; the third and the fourth indicator).

Result 3 - The employees' satisfaction with adequacy in providing information to employees on their performance and the importance of personal development for the organizational success as personal feedback indicators: The employees think that not enough attention in the company is paid to providing personal feedback – it is significantly neglected (on average 39%): the importance of personal feedback on employees' performance is mildly neglected (43% - Table 5), personal feedback on the importance of personal development for the organizational success is significantly neglected (35% - Table 6). Majority of the managers (79% of the sample M) in comparison with non-managerial employees (35% of the sample N) think that much and very much attention is paid to personal feedback on performance. More undecided in responses are non-managerial employees. Majority of the managers (57% of the sample M) in comparison with non-managerial employees (29% of the sample N) think that much and very much attention is paid to personal feedback on the importance of personal development for the organizational success. More undecided in responses are managers - 21% of the sample M (Table 7; the fifth and the sixth indicator).

The results of this empirical research have shown that employees are not satisfied with the observed communication dimensions (mild dissatisfaction). Non-managerial employees (as a subordinates) are less satisfied than managers, which is

in line with the findings by Varona (1996). However, Wagner et al. (2015) indicated dissatisfaction among managers and nonmanagerial employees[8] with regard to personal feedback. Contrary to that, the study indicated that the non-managerial employees were satisfied with supervisors' openness of communication and their listening skill[9] while the managerial employees were not satisfied with listening skill of their supervisor (Wagner et al., 2015, p. 979).

The individual results have shown that supervisor communication is better evaluated than personal feedback, which is in line with the results of the previous studies (Clampitt & Girard, 1993; Wagner et al., 2015; Rajković et al., 2018). Also, the individual results have shown that supervisor's listening skill is best evaluated - at the verge of satisfaction, in spite of its poor differential advantage over others. It is followed by the quality and regularity of upward communication with the supervisor, the quality and regularity of downward communication with the supervisor, personal feedback on performance (mild dissatisfaction), and finally, personal feedback on the importance of personal development for the organizational success and supervisor's non-verbal communication (significant dissatisfaction).

The results of the empirical research may be useful for (Serbian) managers in the process of managing the observed internal communication dimensions, although the results are applicable to this sample and not to the overall population.

4.3. Recommendations to managers

Measuring internal communication satisfaction can be difficult and complex. At the same time, good internal communication and the high level of communication satisfaction, especially of supervisors' listening skills and personal feedback, can lead to improved employees' satisfaction (van Vuuren et al., 2007). Therefore, on the basis of the research the following results can be concluded and recommended to (Serbian) managers on how to increase the level of satisfaction with supervisor communication and personal feedback.

It is necessary to foster organisational efforts in devoting more attention to supervisor's communication in both directions, particularly downward communication. Effective downward communication is based on the attitude: "Communicate orally, then follow up in writing" (Gibson &Hodgetts, 1991 in: Tariszka-Semegine, 2012, p. 91). Supervisors should strive a face-to-face communication with employees, (Birne & Lemai, 2006; Chitrao, 2014; Guo et al.,

[8] proffesional nurses in this research
[9] "the extent to which their supervisors listened to them and paid attention to them" (Wagner et al., 2015, p. 979).

2015) then written communication. Supervisors need to know that effective writing should attract the recipient's attention, the message and its arguments must be understood, "the recipient must learn the arguments" and "come to accept them as true" (Hargie et al., 2017, pp. 264-265). Besides, more communication does not mean better communication (Hargie et al., 2017, p. 263). In this regard, interactive open communication, openness in downward communication (Kay & Christophel, 1995; Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016; Ramirez, 2012; Wagner et al., 2015), openness to feedback from employees (van Vuuren et al., 2007), skills of enquiry (Barker, 2010), direct supervisors' communication with their employee (Jablin, 1980) and finally, supervisors' willingness to listen to employees' complaints (Nikolić et al., 2013) were found to be powerful factors of communication satisfaction with the supervisor. Managers can improve internal communication and satisfaction with supervisor communication through regular training programs to educate supervisors and employees on down and up communication (Said & Said, 2018).

Active listening was perceived better than non-verbal communication that most respondents were "undecided" about. It cannot be assumed that the reason behind it is the lack of direct communication, face-to-face communication, since the responses received for listening skill confute that. It is also assumed that the managers gave more desirable answers than honest opinions regarding active listening. It is very important for both supervisors and their employees to understand each other, listen (Sharma et al., 2015), and to give honest opinions about it. In this regard, enquiry skills, real, deep and attentive listening (Barker, 2010), as well as active listening skills are crucial for the efficiency and quality of supervisor communication and employee motivation (Ramirez, 2012; Ramadanti & Martinus, 2016). Besides, body, face and eye communication skills are among the most important non-verbal skills that a good supervisor should possess (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016), because "Nonverbal communication can help employees understand the information" (Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016, p. 82). Non-verbal communication and non-verbal immediacy can improve the degree to satisfaction with supervisor communication (Graham et al., 1991; Kay & Christophel, 1995; Ramadanty & Martinus, 2016; Jia et al., 2017). Managers can improve internal communication skills through workshops, to educate supervisors and employees on active listening and non-verbal communication. Adapting to Maguire & Pitceathly (2002), supervisors with good communication skills identify employees′ problems more accurately.

It is necessary to foster the organisational efforts in devoting more attention to personal feedback, because personal feedback is very valuable for employees' satisfaction and feeling of contributing to one's organisation. Personal feedback on performance enables an employee to monitor his progress towards a goal (Locke & Latham, 2015). A positive personal feedback on performance and the importance of personal development for the organizational success can raise employees' self-

esteem. In case that personal feedback is negative, employees learn from mistakes (Nikolić et al., 2013; Chitrao, 2014). Then, employees work accordingly (Chitrao, 2014). Although, it is necessary to balance respect and criticism (Barker, 2010), "The best kind of feedback is genuine, succinct and specific" (Barker, 2010, p. 73). For supervisors, giving feedback is a crucial activity to improve communication satisfaction of employees (van Vuuren et al., 2007). The opportunity to practise communication skills and receive personal feedback is essential (adapting to Maguire & Pitceathly, 2002). Finally, the internal communication strategy can improve the internal communication satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2015; Motoi, 2017).

5. Conclusion

Internal communication is an important tool of internal marketing. Internal communication affects organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, job performance, especially job satisfaction. In the previous studies, the satisfaction level of communication in an organization was less examined than the relationship between communication satisfaction and job satisfaction, etc.

Noting that supervisor communication and personal feedback as the internal communication dimensions (the CSQ dimensions) have a powerful impact on job satisfaction, this paper is focused on examining satisfaction with the observed communication dimensions. The survey was conducted on the sample of the employees (72) in Belgrade, Serbia. The results[10] suggest the acceptance of the defined hypothesis: Employees are not satisfied with the observed communication dimensions (mild dissatisfaction); non-managerial employees are less satisfied than managers. Based on the research results (Serbian) managers were suggested how to increase the level of satisfaction with supervisor communication and personal feedback.

Despite the attempt to empirically investigate employees' satisfaction with the dimensions of internal communication, there are some limitations. The small sample size limits the generalizability of the result. Therefore, in future research, employees' satisfaction with the dimensions of internal communication should be examined on a larger sample of employees. This implies the use of appropriate statistical analysis in addition to descriptive statistics. More research is recommended that would be more focused on every communication dimension.

[10] The results of this research are applicable to this sample and not to the overall population.

References

Ahmed, P. K. & Rafiq, M. (2003). Internal Marketing Issues and Challenges. *European Journal of Marketing*, 37 (9), 1177-1186. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560310498813.

Ahmed, P. K. & Rafiq, M. (2013). *Internal marketing, Tools and Concepts for Customer-Focused Management*. Routledge.

Bailey, A. A., Albassami, F. & Al-Meshal, S. (2016). The Roles of Employee Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment in the Internal Marketing-Employee Bank Identification Relationship. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 34 (6), 821-840. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-06-2015-0097

Baksi, A. K. & Aich, A. (2018). Developing a Communication Satisfaction Scale for Internal Marketing. *Asian Journal of Management*, 9 (1), 643-648. doi: 10.5958/2321-5763.2018.00101.4

Barker, A. (2010). *Improve your Communication Skills* (Vol. 39). Kogan Page Publishers.

Borovec, K. & Balgač, I. (2017). Contribution of Internal Communication in Predicting Job Satisfaction among Police Officers. *Criminology & Social Integration Journal*, 25 (1), 17-33.

Brownell, J. (1990). Perceptions of Effective Listeners: A Management Study. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 27 (4), 401-415. https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369002700405

Byrne, Z. S. & Lemay, E. (2006). Different Media for Organizational Communication: Perceptions of Quality and Satisfaction. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 21 (2), 149-173. doi: DOI: 10.1007/s10869-006-9023-8

Chan, S. H. J. & Lai, H. Y. I. (2017). Understanding the Link between Communication Satisfaction, Perceived Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 214-223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.08.017

Chen, Y-C. & Lin, S. (2013). Modeling Internal Marketing and Employee Loyalty: A Quantitative Approach. *Asian Social Science*, 9 (5), 99-109. DOI:10.5539/ass.v9n5p99

Chitrao, P. (2014). Internal Communication Satisfaction as an Employee Motivation Tool in the Retail Sector in Pune. *The European Journal of Social & Behavioural Sciences*, 10 (3), 1541-1552. doi: 10.15405/ejsbs.137

Clampitt, P. G. & Girard, D. (1993). Communication Satisfaction: A Useful Construct? *The New Jersey Journal of Communication*, 1 (2), 84-102. https://doi.org/10.1080/15456879309367255

Downs, C. W. & Hazen, M. D. (1977). A Factor Analytic Study of Communication Satisfaction. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 14 (3), 63-73. https://doi.org/10.1177/002194367701400306

García-Carbonell, N., Martín-Alcázar, F. & Sanchez-Gardey, G. (2018). Determinants of Building Consistent Human Resources Management Systems: A Focus on Internal Communication. *International Journal of Manpower*, 39 (3), 354-377. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-06-2016-0140

Giri, V. N. & Kumar, B. P. (2010). Assessing the Impact of Organizational Communication on Job Satisfaction and Job Performance. *Psychological Studies*, 55 (2), 137-143. DOI: 10.1007/s12646-010-0013-6

Graham, G. H., Unruh, J. & Jennings, P. (1991). The Impact of Nonverbal Communication in Organizations: A Survey of Perceptions. *The Journal of Business Communication*, 28 (1), 45-62.

Guo, W., Li, T. & Wu, N. (2015). Empirical Study on the Effects of Leader's Verbal Communication Style on Employee's Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 3 (4), 211-227. http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jhrss.2015.34027

Hargie, O., Dickson, D., & Tourish, D. (2017). *Communication Skills for effective Management*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Hennig-Thurau, T. (2004). Customer Orientation of Service Employees: Its Impact on Customer Satisfaction, Commitment, and Retention. *International Journal of Service Industry Management*, 15 (5), 460-478. https://doi.org/10.1108/09564230410564939

Jablin, F. M. (1980). Superior's Upward Influence, Satisfaction, and Openness in Superior Subordinate Communication: A Re-examination of the Pelz Effect. *Human Communication Research* 6 (3), 210-220.

Jia, M., Cheng, J. & Hale, C. L. (2017). Workplace Emotion and Communication: Supervisor Nonverbal Immediacy, Employees' Emotion Experience, and their Communication Motives. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 31 (1), 69-87.

Joung, H. W., Goh, B. K., Huffman, L., Yuan, J. J. & Surles, J. (2015). Investigating Relationships between Internal Marketing Practices and Employee Organizational Commitment in the Foodservice Industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27 (7), 1618-1640. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-05-2014-0269

Kanyurhi, E. B. & Bugandwa Mungu Akonkwa, D. (2016). Internal marketing, Employee Job Satisfaction, and Perceived Organizational Performance in Microfinance Institutions. *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 34 (5), 773-796. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJBM-06-2015-0083

Karanges, E., Johnston, K., Beatson, A. & Lings, I. (2015). The Influence of Internal Communication on Employee Engagement: A Pilot Study. *Public Relations Review*, 41 (1), 129-131. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.12.003

Kay, B. & Christophel, D. M. (1995). The Relationships among Manager Communication Openness, Nonverbal Immediacy, and Subordinate Motivation. *Communication Research Reports*, 12 (2), 200-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/08824099509362057

Locke, E. A. & Latham, G. P. (2015). Breaking the Rules: a Historical Overview of Goal-setting Theory. In: Elliot, A. J. (Ed.), *Advances in motivation science* (Vol. 2, pp. 99-126). Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2015.05.001

Madlock, P. E. (2008). The Link Between Leadership Style, Communicator Competence and Employee Satisfaction. *Journal of Business Communication*, 45 (1), 61-78.

Madlock, P. E. & Kennedy-Lightsey, C. (2010). The Effects of Supervisors' Verbal Aggressiveness and Mentoring on their Subordinates. *Journal of Business Communication,* 47 (1), 42-62. doi: 10.1177/0021943609353511

Maguire, P. & Pitceathly, C. (2002). Key Communication Skills and how to acquire them. *Bmj*, 325 (7366), 697-700.

Mayfield, J., Mayfield, M. R. & Kopf, J. (1998). The Effects of Leader Motivating Language on Subordinate Performance and Satisfaction. *Human Resource Management*, 37 (3-4), 235-248.

Motoi, G. (2017). Could Employees' Motivation Be Increased By A Better Organizational Communication? A Sociological Perspective. *Social Sciences and Education Research Review*, 4 (1), 174-190.

Nikolić, M., Vukonjanski, J., Nedeljković, M., Hadžić, O. & Terek, E. (2013). The Impact of Internal Communication Satisfaction Dimensions on Job Satisfaction Dimensions and the Moderating Role of LMX. *Public Relations Review*, 39 (5), 563-565. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2013.09.002

Nordin, S. M., Sivapalan, S., Bhattacharyya, E., Ahmad, H.H.W.F.W. & Abdullah, A. (2014). Organizational Communication Climate and Conflict Management: Communications Management in an Oil and Gas Company. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 109, 1046-1058. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.587

Pettit, J. D., Goris, J. R. & Vaught, B. C. (1997). An Examination of Organizational Communication as a Moderator of the Relationship between Job Performance and Job Ssatisfaction. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 34 (1), 81-98. https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369703400105

Pincus, D. J. (1986). Communication Satisfaction, Job Satisfaction, and Job Performance. *Human Communication Research*, 12 (3), 395-419. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2958.1986.tb00084.x

Rajković, J., Terek, E., Magzan, M., Ivin, D. & Nikolić, M. (2018). The Impact of Job and Communication Satisfaction on the Financial Performance of a Mid-sized Company. *Journal of Contemporary Economic and Business Issues*, 5 (1), 77-87.

Ramadanty, S. & Martinus, H. (2016). Organizational Communication; Communication and Motivation in the Workplace. *Humaniora*, 7 (1), 79-88.

Ramirez, D. L. (2012). *Organizational Communication Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction within University Foodservice* (doctoral dissertation). USA, Manhattan, Kansas: Kansas State University. Retrieved from http://krex.k-state.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2097/14123/DanielRamirez2012.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y, Assessed on November 9, 2018.

Robbins, S. P. & Judge, T. A. (2013). *Organizational Behaviour* (15th ed). USA, New Jersey: Pearson Education.

Roberts, K. H. & O'Reilly, C. A. (1974). Measuring Organizational Communication. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 59 (3), 321–326. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0036660

Rodrigues, A. P., Cordeiro, A. C., António, P., Pires, C. & Madeira, R. (2018). Employees' Perceptions of Internal Communication Processes and Communication Satisfaction in a Northern Portuguese Higher Education Institution. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media,* 6 (10), 96-121.

Said, M. & Said, L. R. (2018). Differences in Employee Perceptions on Downward and Upward Communications. *Academy for Global Business Advancement*, 15, 822-830 (Conference: Academy for Global Business Advancement's 15th World Congress Held at the AACSB Accredited National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), at: Bangkok, Thailand, Volume: 15).

Sharma, P., Lampley, J. & Good, D. (2015). Organizational Communication: Perceptions of Staff Members' Level of Communication Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education*, 11 (1), 43-54.

Tariszka-Semegine, E. (2012). Organizational Internal Communication as a Means of Improving Efficiency. *European Scientific Journal*, 8 (15), 86-96. https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2012.v8n15p%25p

Tjosvold, D. (1985). The Effects of Attribution and Social Context on Superiors' Influence and Interaction with Low Performing Subordinates. *Personnel Psychology*, 38 (2), 361-376. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1985.tb00553.x

Torrington, D., Hall, L. & Taylor, S. (2005). *Human Resource Management* (6th ed.). England, Harlow: FT Prentice Hall.

van Vuuren, M., de Jong, M. D. T., & Seydel, E. R. (2007). Direct and Indirect Effects of Supervisor Communication on Organizational Commitment. *Corporate Communications*, 12 (2), 116–128. https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280710744801

Varona, F. (1996). Relationship between Communication Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment in three Guatemalan Organizations. *International Journal of Business Communication,* 33 (2), 111-140. https://doi.org/10.1177/002194369603300203

Verčić, A. T., Verčić, D. & Sriramesh, K. (2012). Internal Communication: Definition, Parameters, and the Future. *Public Relations Review*, 38 (2), 223-230. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2011.12.019

Verma, P. (2015). Communication Flow, Communication Climate and Organisational Growth. In: Verma, P. (Ed.), *Effective Communication, Management & Organizational Growth* (pp. 19-35). India, New Delhi: Variety Books Publishers' Distributors.

Wagner, J. D., Bezuidenhout, M. C. & Roos, J. H. (2015). Communication Satisfaction of Professional Nurses working in Public Hospitals. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 23 (8), 974-982.

Wheeless, V. E., Wheeless, L. R. & Howard, R. D. (1983). An Analysis of the Contribution of Participative Decision Making and Communication with Supervisor as Predictors of Job Satisfaction. *Research in Higher Education*, 18 (2), 145-160. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00992059

Wińska, J. (2010). Influence of Superior-subordinate Communication on Employee Satisfaction. *Journal of Positive Management*, 1 (1), 110-124.

Lehman, M. C. & DuFrene D. D. (2015). *Poslovna komunikacija*. Beograd: Data status.

Mihailović, D. & Kovačević, I. (2008). Poslovna komunikacija i karakteristike zaposlenih menadžera. *Psihologija*, 41 (2), 237-249.

ZADOVOLJSTVO ZAPOSLENIH KOMUNIKACIJOM SA SUPERVIZOROM I LIČNIM POVRATNIM INFORMACIJAMA

Rezime: Predmet istraživanja u ovom radu bio je ispitivanje zadovoljstva dimenzijama interne komunikacije, koje imaju najjaču korelaciju sa zadovoljstvom poslom, kao što su: komunikacija supervizora i lične povratne informacije. Prema tome, ako su zaposleni zadovoljni ovim dimenzijama komunikacije, i njihovo zadovoljstvo poslom će biti na zadovoljavajućem nivou. Cilj istraživanja je bio da se utvrdi zadovoljstvo posmatranim dimenzijama komunikacije na osnovu stavova zaposlenih. Predstavljeni su, takođe, i stavovi menadžera i zaposlenih koji nisu menadžeri u posmatranim dimenzijama komunikacije. Koristeći deskriptivnu statistiku, na uzorku od 72 ispitanika, rezultati su pokazali da zaposleni nisu zadovoljni posmatranim dimenzijama komunikacije, kao i to da su zaposleni koji nisu menadžeri, manje zadovoljni od zaposlenih menadžera. Rezultati su korisni jer daju opis posmatranih dimenzija i nalaze prethodnih studija, naročito onih koje su istraživale odnos između zadovoljstva posmatranim dimenzijama komunikacije i zadovoljstva

poslom. Rezultati mogu biti korisni za (srpske) menadžere u procesu upravljanja posmatranim dimenzijama komunikacije. Veličina uzorka ograničava generalizaciju rezultata.

Ključne reči: zadovoljstvo, komunikacija sa supervizorom, lične povratne informacije, zaposleni, zadovoljstvo poslom

Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, project iii 45003 – „Nano-scale Opto-electronic Systems - Towards its application", Institute of Physics Belgrade and project iii 44006 – "Development of new information and communication technologies, based on advanced mathematical methods, with applications in medicine, telecommunications, power systems, protection of national heritage and education", Mathematical Institute SANU, Belgrade.

Authors' biographies

Vesna Milanović graduated from the Faculty of Economics at the University of Belgrade in 1989, got her master's degree in 1994 and her PhD degree in 2003. She worked at the Megatrend University (1999-2017). Since 2017 she has been employed with Faculty of Business and Law (MB University Belgrade). She is Full-time professor of marketing.

Andrea Bučalina Matić got her PhD degree in 2013 (Graduate School of Business Studies at the Megatrend University, Belgrade, Serbia). She worked at the Megatrend University (2008-2019). Since 2019 she has been employed with an Faculty of Social Sciences Belgrade (University „Business Academy", Novi Sad). She is Associate professor of management.

Jelena Golubović got her master's degree in 2017 (Faculty of Culture and Media, Belgrade). She graduated from the Faculty of Geoeconomics in Belgrade in 2015