

THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN SHAPING ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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Purpose: Today, as organizations around the world face increasing social and economic challenges, the role of effective leadership becomes crucial to their success and sustainability. The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a direct relationship between leaders' interpersonal communication skills and their effectiveness in problem solving, and to identify which specific aspects of communication are most influential in the context of effective leadership.

Design/methodology/approach: The research was conducted using the method of online interviews (CAWI) as part of the UGB 853/2023 project, focusing on a group of 172 companies from the Polish manufacturing, service and trade sectors, representing a wide range of small, medium and large enterprises. A total of 456 respondents took part in the study. The study aimed to understand how leaders' interpersonal communication skills influence their ability to effectively deal with complex social problems within the organization.

Findings: The survey results showed that 70% of respondents considered active listening to be a key factor influencing their effectiveness in solving problems. 65% of respondents rated empathy as the most influential aspect in the context of effective leadership. In addition, expressing appreciation and confirming the opinions of others was indicated by 55% of leaders, and effective feedback by 40% of respondents.

Research limitations/implications: The study was limited to companies from the Polish manufacturing, service and trade sectors, which may affect the generalization of the results. Future studies will aim to expand the scope to other sectors and countries to confirm the results.

Practical implications: The research results have a significant impact on the development of talent management strategies and leadership training. Companies should focus on developing leaders' communication skills to increase their effectiveness in solving problems and improving decision-making processes.

Social implications: Research indicates that improving leaders' communication skills can contribute to better coping with social problems in organizations, which in turn can influence social attitudes and increase corporate social responsibility.

Originality/value: The study offers a new perspective on the importance of communication skills in effective leadership, providing valuable conclusions for managers, management consultants and researchers dealing with leadership and communication.

Keywords: interpersonal communication, leadership, effectiveness.

1. Introduction

In today's rapidly changing organizational environments, effective interpersonal communication plays an essential role in developing effective leadership. In a context of increasing complexity in managing organizations, the ability of leaders to build relationships, inspire trust and effectively communicate vision and values is essential. This study focuses on analyzing how interpersonal communication skills influence the development and effectiveness of organizational leadership.

The elements of the interpersonal communication process include context, participants, message, channel, noise, and feedback. This process is social, takes place in a specific social context, is creative, dynamic, continuous, symbolic, interactive, purposeful, inevitable, complex and irreversible. Each of these aspects plays an important role in the effectiveness and efficiency of communication, influencing the quality and results of interpersonal interactions (Aqustini, Amanah, Harahap, 2022).

In this context, interpersonal communication in an organization is a complex process that requires continuous understanding and adaptation to changing conditions, needs and expectations of participants. This is essential to ensure effective exchange of information, building relationships and achieving organizational goals. Interpersonal communication, which is a key element of the structure of human society, plays an irreplaceable role in transmitting and preserving the accumulated cultural and civilizational heritage (Friedberg, 2019). It is a complex process in which information, values and feelings are not only exchanged, but also shape common relationships between individuals. This communication (Bîrsan, Cepraga, 2023) covers various functions, from educational to integrative, each of them playing an important role in the development and maintenance of social structures.

In the context of organizational management, interpersonal communication takes place on various levels, including vertical communication up and down the hierarchy, as well as horizontal and diagonal communication. The effectiveness of vertical downward communication depends on several factors. Communication channels should be as short and direct as possible. In addition, managers should adopt a management style that takes into account the psychological aspects of communication, for example the fact that information consistent with personal needs and values is more easily accepted and assimilated (Tholia et al., 2022).

Effective communication in an organization requires a combination of verbal skills with the appropriate use of non-verbal communication. Interpersonal communication in an organization is multidimensional, including vertical upward, horizontal and diagonal communication, each of which plays a unique role in management and information flow (Uka, 2014; Anders, 2021).

2. Effective communication in the organization

In the context of organizational structure, various elements play a key role in supporting effective communication processes (Uka, 2014; Anders, 2021). These include organizing numerous formal opportunities for information exchange, such as training, meetings, events and team-building events, which create space for interaction and exchange of ideas. It is also important to create a forum for the exchange of information and knowledge, which allows for the sharing of specialized knowledge and experiences (Tholia et al., 2022).

Organizational arrangements that enable mutual learning, such as mentoring programs or joint projects, are also important. A flat organizational structure and appropriate arrangement of workplaces facilitate the exchange of thoughts and ideas, which in turn increases the flow of information and cooperation between various levels of the organization. Additionally, an effective communication system, including both formal and informal channels, allows employees to freely express opinions and suggestions, which is crucial for a better understanding of needs and expectations (Tholia et al., 2022).

Organizational culture that supports communication processes between employees plays a key role in developing the effectiveness of cooperation in the organization. Efficient communication is the basis for the effective operation of the entire organization because it enables the effective exchange of information, solving problems, building trust and supporting innovation. Therefore, investing in the development of employees' communication skills and creating a structure conducive to open communication are key activities for any organization striving for success (Aqustini, Amanah, Harahap, 2022).

The role of a leader in the process of effective interpersonal communication is important because a leader is not only a person who inspires, convinces and motivates, but also paves the way for changes and is a key element in shaping organizational culture. A leader, being a team member, is usually open to information from colleagues. By outlining directions of action and an inspiring attitude, the leader influences the functioning of the team as a community.

An effective leader presents a vision based on input from his or her partners, creating an environment in which every team member has the right to express their own views. It is important that the leader and his team share responsibility for the results of their actions, both for successes and failures, and are honest with themselves. It is crucial to realize that differences of opinion within the group are inevitable, and any disputes or conflicts should be resolved constructively. A leader's success depends largely on his or her ability to communicate effectively with his or her team. Everything a leader achieves is related to other people, usually his team. A leader's level of success depends on the members of the team he or she leads. In this context, the quality of communication with the team is crucial for the success of both the leader and the entire team (Laitinen, Valo, 2018).

In traditional organizational cultures based on the principles of giving commands and control, leader effectiveness was often the key to persuasion. However, this method of management and communication does not work in the long term. Even if the team knows what it has to do, without proper motivation and commitment it will not perform its tasks effectively. Therefore, a modern approach to leadership requires not only management skills, but also understanding and effective interpersonal communication skills, which are the basis for building a strong and integrated team.

Effective communication between a leader and an individual or group is measurable through interactions in which recipients actively participate, expressing their opinions in an understandable way, showing trust, and showing emotional involvement in the process (Banaszek, 2015). What is crucial for the quality of communication is that team members establish contact with each other on an emotional level and accept certain messages and commands without reservations (O'Conner, Jackson, 2017).

In the context of effective communication in an organization, the leader's development of four areas is crucial. The first is position, understood as the leader's personal credibility, opinions and reputation among the people with whom he communicates. The second area is the result, i.e. skills and competences in the field that the leader deals with, and the perception of him or her as a person with experience, proficiency and knowledge. The third element is personal power, which refers to a leader's ability to influence people, money, or other resources. The last, but equally important sphere is politeness, manifested through kindness towards team members and co-workers, good manners and respect in interactions (Tholia, Rastoqi, Gupta, Pandey, 2022).

In the context of the effectiveness of a leader's verbal communication, not only verbal skills are crucial, but also the ability to actively listen. A good leader is characterized by the ability to build dialogue by asking questions that enable a deeper understanding of the situation being discussed, while maintaining discretion (Tholia et al., 2022). Moreover, he is characterized by the desire to put himself in the interlocutor's situation and look at it from his perspective. The ability to build the interlocutor's value by creating a positive conversation atmosphere, providing trust, and refraining from criticizing and assessing is also important (Piorunek, 2019). A leader should be able to build an atmosphere of cooperation, characterized by openness and free exchange of thoughts and views. Additionally, the ability to build constructive feedback without judgments, moralizing, ridicule, as well as honesty with oneself, awareness of one's own behavior and weaknesses are crucial for the effectiveness of a leader's communication.

The feeling of being important and heard is one of the fundamental needs of human nature in the communication process. Bearing this need in mind, the leader should take all actions to strengthen the self-esteem of his interlocutors, and thus increase their trust and sympathy (Banaszek, 2015). It is crucial that each interaction carried out by the leader gives team members the feeling that they are important and valued, which has a positive impact on morale and work efficiency (Aqustini, Amanah, Harahap, 2022).

In an organizational context, the ability to communicate effectively is extremely important. The lack of adequate communication skills within and between teams may lead to the failure of planned activities. Since the implementation of tasks in an organization is impossible without the participation of people, leaders should focus on constantly improving the level of communication between team members (Tholia et.al., 2022).

The interpersonal communication system in an organization includes communication processes at both the interpersonal and group levels. This is an important element in explaining the communication processes taking place within an organizational structure with a clearly separated management apparatus. Assuming that there is a logical relationship between knowledge, creativity and innovation, which are crucial for the competitiveness of an organization, it is possible to identify at least two groups of methods and management that significantly support the development and use of knowledge in the context of communication. The first group are communication methods focused on generating and sharing knowledge, and the second are heuristic methods (Tholia et al., 2022).

Effective interpersonal communication in an organization is moderated by a number of factors of various nature. Understanding these factors is crucial to achieving company goals and driving efficiency at various levels of the organization. These factors can be analyzed at the interpersonal, group and organizational levels, and their determinants can be divided into biological, socio-professional and psychological (Aqustini, Amanah, Harahap, 2022).

3. Analysis of author's research

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations often face complex social challenges that require not only a strategic approach, but also effective leadership. A central element of this leadership is leaders' interpersonal communication skills, which can play a decisive role in the process of solving these problems. In the context of this hypothesis, the study aims to understand how leaders' communication competencies influence their ability to effectively deal with social problems in the organization. The focus was on analyzing the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and effectiveness in problem solving, taking into account both the self-assessment of leaders and the opinions of their subordinates. This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the importance of communication skills in the context of organizational leadership and their impact on the effectiveness of solving social problems.

In the face of the growing complexity of social problems faced by modern organizations, the role of effective leadership takes on a new dimension. A key aspect that can contribute to more effective management of these challenges is the interpersonal communication skills of leaders. This analysis aims to explore what specific communication skills, such as empathy,

active listening and expressing appreciation, are most often used by leaders in the process of solving complex social problems in their organizations. Understanding which of these skills are considered the most effective will help identify areas where organizations can focus their development activities to increase the effectiveness of their leaders in crisis management and solving social problems.

In the study, data analysis revealed that 70% of respondents reported that active listening is a key skill used in solving complex social problems in their organizations. Empathy was highlighted as the second most important skill, with a score of 65%, while expressing appreciation and validating the opinions of others was cited by 55% of leaders. Interestingly, 40% of leaders also emphasized the importance of effective feedback as an important skill in the problem-solving process. This data indicates that interpersonal communication skills, such as active listening and empathy, are considered crucial in managing and solving complex social challenges in organizational settings.

In the context of the growing need for effective leadership in the face of complex social problems, it becomes important to understand how leaders' interpersonal communication skills impact their ability to manage these challenges. The purpose of this analysis was to examine the potential relationship between leaders' assessment of their interpersonal communication skills - both as self-assessment and as assessed by their subordinates - and these leaders' perceptions of their effectiveness in solving social problems in their organizations. This study is crucial because it allowed us to determine whether there is a correlation between a leader's own perception of a leader's communication skills and his or her actual performance in managing and solving social problems. The results of this analysis provided valuable tips for the development of leadership training programs and talent management strategies in organizations.

The collected data showed that in the case of 60% of leaders, high self-assessment of their communication skills correlated with a positive assessment of these skills by their subordinates. Moreover, in the group of leaders with high self-esteem and positive evaluation by subordinates, 75% of them were also rated as effective in solving social problems in the organization. On the other hand, in the group of leaders with low self-esteem and negative evaluation by subordinates, only 30% were considered effective in solving such problems. These results suggest that there is a significant relationship between leaders' interpersonal communication skills and the perception of their effectiveness in solving social problems in the organization.

Solving social problems in organizations requires not only in-depth knowledge and skills, but also effective interpersonal communication. Leaders' communication styles have a significant impact on how problems are identified, understood, and ultimately resolved. The aim of this analysis was to examine how different interpersonal communication styles used by leaders affect the effectiveness of social problem-solving processes in the organization. Particular attention was focused on recognizing how these different communication approaches

contribute to successes or challenges in managing social issues, and assessing their impact on organizational performance. By thoroughly understanding these dynamics, organizations will be able to better adapt their management strategies and develop effective communication methods that promote effective problem solving and the achievement of organizational goals.

The influence of three main interpersonal communication styles (autocratic, participative and supportive) on the processes of solving social problems in organizations was examined. The results showed that leaders using a participative style (45% of respondents) had the highest levels of effectiveness in solving social problems, with 80% of positive effectiveness ratings by their teams. Leaders with a supportive style (35% of respondents) had the second highest effectiveness score, with 70% positive ratings. However, leaders with an autocratic style (20% of respondents) had the lowest effectiveness in solving social problems, with only 50% of positive effectiveness ratings. This data suggests that interpersonal communication styles have a significant impact on the effectiveness of leaders in solving social problems in organizations, with the participative style appearing to be the most effective.

4. Analysis of author's research

Nowadays, when organizations face increasingly complex social challenges, the role of effective leadership becomes crucial. In particular, leaders' interpersonal communication skills are gaining importance as a fundamental tool in managing and solving these challenges. The research presented in this article focused on understanding how various aspects of interpersonal communication affect the effectiveness of leaders, taking into account both their self-esteem and the perception of their subordinates. Various communication styles used by leaders were also analyzed to assess their effectiveness in the context of solving social problems in organizations. The findings from this research shed new light on understanding the key elements that define effective leadership in today's business world.

Interpersonal communication skills, such as active listening, empathy and appreciation, are crucial to the effectiveness of leaders in solving complex social problems in organizations.

There is a relationship between the self-assessment of leaders' interpersonal communication skills and the assessment of these skills by their subordinates as well as the perception of effectiveness in solving social problems.

The participative style of interpersonal communication is most effective in solving social problems in organizations, as opposed to the authoritative style.

In today's dynamically changing business world, leadership effectiveness is a key factor in the success of every organization. Recent research indicates the significant role of leaders' interpersonal communication skills in effectively solving social problems within the organization. In the context of these findings, it is important that organizations actively take

actions to develop and strengthen these competencies in their leaders. Our recommendations focus on three main areas: developing interpersonal communication skills, introducing effective evaluation and feedback systems, and promoting a participative leadership style. Implementing these strategies can help to increase the effectiveness of leaders, which translates into the overall performance and adaptability of the organization in the face of complex social challenges.

Organizations should focus on developing these skills through leadership training and workshops. A culture of openness and empathy should be promoted to increase leadership effectiveness in solving problems.

Leaders should regularly collect feedback from their teams to more accurately assess their communication skills and effectiveness. Organizations can also implement 360-degree feedback systems to provide an objective assessment of leadership skills.

Organizations should promote a participatory style among their leaders, encouraging collaboration, openness to opinions and active involvement of teams in the decision-making process. Training for leaders may include techniques for building team commitment and participation.

In summary, this research highlights how crucial effective leadership, and especially leaders' interpersonal communication skills, is to organizational success. Developing these competencies, regularly collecting feedback and promoting a participative leadership style are not only strategies, but also investments in the future of the organization. Implementing the recommended actions can significantly contribute to increasing the effectiveness of leaders, which in turn has a direct impact on the organization's ability to effectively deal with social challenges and a changing business environment. In the face of constant changes and growing expectations, interpersonal communication skills are becoming not so much a desirable feature, but a necessity for every leader striving to achieve lasting success in the world of modern business.

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