

Iwona Rzeszutek

Summary of the PhD dissertation:

The role of interpersonal communication in employee integration

(Sociological study based on the selected organisations of Podkarpackie Voivodeship)

Communication is the basis of commencement, continuation and cessation of each activity of a team of people, it also constitutes an essential component of decision processes during fulfilment of various tasks in organisation. It is beyond doubt that while managing employees, such a goal-oriented communication between people (interpersonal communication) is very important. It constitutes a source of information and on its basis it is possible to set goals and establish the ways of operation of workteams, to organise the resources necessary for implementation of plans, to motivate staff to fulfil the tasks in compliance with goals, as well as to control the process of task fulfilment. The effectiveness of exchange of information in organisation is influenced by all individuals taking part in the communication process (both superiors and subordinates).

The modern technologies, called Web 2.0, include new channels of communication between people and significantly change the functioning of individuals on the Internet. These changes cover also the area of communication between employees, as they create a possibility to continue traditional interpersonal relations outside a workplace. Now, the members of a young generation are entering the market. They are so-called digital natives, who, together with digital immigrants, create a new organisational culture, therefore it is important to understand the communication behaviours of employees in the contemporary organisations.

The goal of the dissertation was to understand the role that is currently played by the interpersonal communication in employee integration – considering the changes in the contemporary workplace resulting in the increasing use of electronic means of communication.

The dissertation was divided into three parts: theoretical, methodological, and empirical. The first part – theoretical – consists of three chapters. The first chapter discusses communication as a basis of social relations. It includes, among others, the historical overview of communication theory and communication theories of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, the theories of communication of Palo Alto School, the communication model of Denis McQuail and the theory of communication activity of Jurgen Habermas. It presents also the selected theories of symbolic interactionism, such as: the concept of social

interaction of Georg Herbert Mead, the concept of self in social interaction of Ralph H. Turner, the contexts of consciousness and social interaction of Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Straus and the interaction order of Erving Goffman.

The second chapter covers communication in organisation. It presents the importance of interpersonal communication in organisation, taking into consideration the selected models of the structure of communication system in organisation and factors influencing communication. It presents the categories of communication processes, the functions of communication, the influence of formal and informal communication in organisation. It covers also the importance of the managerial staff in interpersonal communication processes and the communication barriers that may have a negative effect on the interpersonal relations.

The third chapter covers the integration in workteams in organisation and consists of two thematic subchapters. The first of those two chapters includes information on the role of a group in organisation, the rules of its functioning and its importance for organisation, it also covers the issues of a connection as a basis of social integration. The second subchapter presents the influence of integration on development of social relations in an organisation. It also includes the definition of the basic terms explaining the nature of integration, its types and categories, as well as the conditions determining an integration in an organisation.

In the second part – methodological one – the methodological assumptions of the doctoral dissertation were presented. It includes the goal of the research, its scope, the research problems and research hypotheses, the variables and indicators, the selection of research methods and techniques, the area where the empirical research was carried out and the organisation of the carried out empirical research, as well as the characteristic of the research sample. For the purposes of the quantitative research, an original survey questionnaire was used, which was completed by 657 employees of the sample specially created for that purpose, consisting of employees of six selected organisations of three different industries (production, administration, and services), which operated at the area of Podkarpackie Voivodeship. The qualitative research was based on a sample of 12 members of managerial staff and it was carried out with the use of a structured interview (two persons per each researched organisation). In the dissertation, a method of triangulation of research methods (quantitative research and qualitative research) was used, combining the survey questionnaire and oral structured interview. The temporal scope of the empirical research covered the period from February to April 2019.

The third part – empirical one – includes the chapters 5 – 7. It was divided into three thematic blocks. The first thematic block refers to the issues related to the evaluation of communication processes taking place in an organisation. In this block, the communication process taking part in the selected organisations were researched and in particular the main management style in organisations was identified, the following information was acquired: how do employees evaluate the communication tools used in the organisations, what forms of contact are preferred among the employees, whether electronic communication limits the traditional, face-to-face communication. Moreover, the extent to which the employees use the informal communication was examined, as well as which barriers in the interpersonal communication are the most conspicuous to employees. Additionally, the alternative sources of information used by employees in the cases when they did not understand the task they were to complete were examined, the communication competences of superiors were evaluated as well. The empirical research of this thematic block covers also the assessment of internal communication in organisation, taking into consideration the communication between employees, between employee and superior and the communication between departments.

The second thematic block covers the conditions supporting the process of integration of the employees of the examined organisations. It includes investigation of the conditions, which should be met by an organisation to make the process of integration of workteams efficient. The empirical analysis covered the selected organisational values, such as: a possibility to receive a satisfying remuneration by an employee, an opportunity for employees to develop and to improve professional skills, participation in functioning of organisation by employees, employees' access to information, the level of motivation to work, the evaluation of the interpersonal relations in organisation and the issues related to the feeling of connection with a workteam.

The third thematic block discusses the identification of the forms of integration in workteams, which contribute to shaping of the proper interpersonal relations in the examined organisations. It covers, among others, the research on what categories of integration (according to employees) to the greatest extent contribute to shaping proper interpersonal relations in a the examined group, what informal groups that function in an organisation contribute to a better integration of employees and whether the employees participate in integration activities together outside the organisation. The author also carried out empirical analysis in order to determine which organisational values contribute to

an integration of employees into organisation, using satisfaction from meeting the goals of integration in organisation index (ISI).

At the end of the doctoral dissertation, the final conclusions of the carried out empirical research are presented, which constitute as synthetic presentation of the issues presented in particular parts of the doctoral dissertation. They cover the main trends of changes in communication processes of the contemporary organisations and the scope of the employees' needs related to the processes of integration in organisation.

The role of interpersonal communication in the integration of workteams cannot be denied. Therefore, we could say that the better is the interpersonal communication in an organisation, the better the integration of workteams can be, as only proper connections between employees create proper interpersonal relations.

The dissertation constitutes an attempt of the author to join the scientific discourse on the role of the interpersonal communication in the employee integration in the contemporary organisations and thanks to the interdisciplinary approach and the use of such social sciences as, among others: sociology, psychology and management sciences – it may become a supplementation to the research on the social system of the contemporary organisations.

Key words: communication, integration, interpersonal relations, human resources management,