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The Psycho-Communicational Group Structure and the Activity Efficiency

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Abstract

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Any type of human activity is inextricably interconnected with the communication process. Living and working within a social community entails interaction between people, which leads to exchanging views on experience, expressing ideas, intentions, goals and aspirations. The interpersonal relationships are influenced by various characteristics of the psychic life and are configured within socio-cultural context. The internalization of a set of rules, specific types of behaviour, habits, action modes a.s.o. are an integral part of the system of elements which contribute to the development of individuals' ability to cope with various problems encountered in their professional and family life. The current study aims to analyse a work group's communicational structure starting from the hypothesis that intensity and especially quality of the communication process have an impact upon achieved results. The efficiency of the communication process depends upon psychological factors as well, or, more precisely, upon mental state of group members. The intelligibility and the results of the information conveying process depend upon the logical argument of the message. However, the message can have a persuasive effect if it has a motivational foundation, displaying both emotional and personal features. The psychic structure and, especially, the personality traits of each of the group members influence the act of communication and, consequently, the action efficiency. The climate favourable to cooperation brings about positive emotional states and enhanced group cohesion instrumental to a good coordination activity.

We are in favour of constituting a work group according to psychological criteria in order to achieve higher productivity.

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Keywords: The quality of communication; psychological and communicational structure; the work team management.



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1. Introduction

The twenty-first century began with an unprecedented dynamism in economy. In Europe, the entrepreneurial spirit has increased with the advent of the market economy in the former communist countries. Profit is the driving force behind any business (which motivates any entrepreneur in the highest degree) and can be understood as businessman or entrepreneur's reward for the fact that he assumes the market risks (the uncertainty). But, the following problems occur: is the objective economic law of the profit compatible with the moral law? To what extent and in what sense the capitalist entrepreneur correlates the objective economic law of the profit with the subjective moral law of the need to bring as much good as possible to the fellows? We believe that the entrepreneur from the democratic society is continuously involved in the following dilemma: either he increases the profits and generates low incomes for the employees, or he increases the incomes of the employees, reducing profit and risking going bankrupt. Therefore, he must maintain a double, ethical and economic, balance between the two laws, the economic and the moral one, which he is constrained to observe. We wonder what the entrepreneur should do and how should he behave in order to maintain a dynamic economic and moral balance, within his company, within the company's relations with business partners, within the relationship between his company and economic and administrative community of belonging, within the company's relations with the national state of belonging. Consequently, more often, the analysts of the global economy bring into debate the issue of morality in the free market based economy (Machan, 2015). There is more and more evidence that clearly shows us that permanent education into an ethics of the economic and labour relations is necessary. The importance of the sustainable growth of the labour productivity is now more evident than ever. It is well-known the fact that in the labour process, the workforce plays the essential role in the production of surplus product. We cannot help bringing into question the global problems of the international community that need to be resolved equitably by all states, together with all the economic agents. These global problems have a strong ethical character as well, meaning that their unresolving or aggravation contributes to increasing people's physical and mental insecurity, escalating their unnecessary sufferings. The quality of the human resource and the efficiency of networking in the work process are elements on which the increasing level of the efficiency of that activity (essentially) depends on (Peters & Heraud, 2015). We believe that an increased productivity can solve the problem of profit sharing so as to avoided, on the one hand, the bankruptcy of the respective enterprise, and on the other hand, the issue of the possible conflicts between employee and entrepreneur.

The efficiency and profitability of the activity depend to an overwhelming proportion on the good functionality of the intra and intergroup relations, which provide cohesion and a good coordination necessary in order to manage the problems that must be solved. Within the human activity of the adults material goods, spiritual values or services are produced. The psychical processes and functions have as a result the human activity, which is the expression of the activation and reactivation of the increasingly elevated needs of the modern man (understood as being creator of material and spiritual goods). The coordination activity is one specific to the joint activities, undertaken by groups and work teams. And, the communication activity is the central core of all these activities. The human

personality develops and manifests itself through human activities; it is cause and effect of the human being development.

We believe that an analysis of the interpersonal relationships (from psychology's perspective), specifically the role that communication plays in the development of these relations, can generate viable solutions to increase work efficiency within the group. The road covered within the process of identifying the dynamic aspects of the psycho-communicational structural of the group work requires a sequential analysis of language and its use in the management of labour relations. The lack of coordination in solving some work tasks leads to serious dysfunction of the group.

2. The argument of communication in the cognitive integration of the psyche

We believe that in addressing some group work issues is inevitable the analysis of the relationship between thinking, language and human activity, both at individual and interindividual level. The human being's orientation towards the world and, at the same time, the self is achieved through the psyche. We mention that we approach the psyche from the perspective of its components (the mental processes – cognitive, emotional, volitional, etc. – as well as its connections) and less from the perspective of its depth (subconscious and unconscious). Relevant for our research are the conscious, as level of the psyche in direct connection with the present, and especially, the personality, which is responsible for the individual's interrelations, for his decisions, his creative capacity, etc.

The psychic process that intermediates the objectification of the activity and of the products of the other components of the psyche is, mainly, the language. The psychic components of communication are in a permanent interdependent relationship. Communication functions as an open system, found in a permanent dynamic. That is why, the functionality of the other psychic components is enhanced, highlighted and valorised by the communicational capacity of the individual. For example, among the paths of knowing the human psyche one of its regulatory components – the communication is included. It allows the psyche to be knowable, but only by virtue of the fact that the individual's psychic activity is regulated by objective laws specific to it (which inevitably manifest themselves when the necessary conditions are met). The psychic life of an individual is, at the same time, unique and unrepeatable. The very ability of individual to communicate can be analysed by some methods involving the communication and language phenomenon. But, both thinking and language cannot be confused with the objects, phenomena, processes (or with the relations between them) they address: they are just a transposition of these into our minds.

The human being as bio-psycho-socio-cultural being permanently communicates with his peers; therefore, the psychosocial factors play an important role in the evolution of language. Language (an extraindividual phenomenon) is used as a communication tool within the community that uses it. Consequently, language depends not only on the individual, but it depends, firstly, on the community that speaks it and to whom the individual belongs to. The anatomical construction of the human being's upper limbs has allowed him to handle objects, fact that has led to the perception of some connections between objects and phenomena, to the birth of some thinking operations, as well as to articulating words. As human's interaction with the environment and with his peers, the language and communication have developed to the level of abstract thinking and symbolic language.

Communication is the main factor of socialization, of assimilation of some behavioural patterns and assimilation of a culture. Language also contributes to the modification of the gregarious behaviour into (Machan, 2016) a developed one. We mention that man is the being with history that is planning his future: studies the past, appreciates the present and can estimate his future; he elaborates projects and methods of achieving them. We believe that man is the being who, through thinking and practical activities, objectifies his goals and aspirations. But, the complex system of the personality singles the man out. It is the binder of all psychic structure components of the individual. As a matter of fact, the main function of communication is that of personality affirmation. Thus, the man, free and healthy individual wants to convince himself of the fact that his words have reached their destination and have been received in the spirit of those he said (Schwartz, 2005, pp. 60-79).

The problem-solving process itself takes place over several stages involving the language and communication act: setting the problem and its formulation; construction and formulation of the hypotheses; expressing the motivation; discussing the solution; elaborating the optimal solution; discussing how to implement the solution; communicating the problems arising while implementing the solution; negotiating in choosing a new solution; discussing the methodology in applying the definitive solution; discussing the methods used in applying the chosen solution; the discussions concerning the preselection and selection of the persons that are to implement the concerned solution; reporting the obtained results after applying the final solution.

3. The role of communication in the functionality of intergroup relations

The increasing role of knowing the structure of the relationships from within the group in increasing the efficiency of its activity requires specialized personnel in organizing the group, as well as taking into account the psychological criteria. The conduct within the joint activity is focused, on the one hand, by the psycho-social interaction with others and, on the other hand, by individual's psychological particularities and personality. The common goal of the group's activity can be achieved in the conditions in which the motivational act and the desire to improve that activity occurs.

In the human activity, perseverance is supported both by the value of the purpose and also by the confidence that man has in his own forces, which, in their turn, depend on the motivational act, on the intensity of creativity. It is due to the experience gained by the human being and his capacity to properly assess the factors involved in the activity undertaken. Previously acquired skills are essential; they may favour in different proportions (low or high) the forming of new habits. Therefore, during the labour activity, the skills needed for that activity are acquired differently by the group members (in a variable time).

We appreciate that the positive attitude towards the tasks must characterize all group members, regardless of the status acquired inside the group (Duck, 2000, pp. 49-77). For this, it is necessary that the group be constituted based on some personalities able to collaborate. In many cases it is about self-training and education necessary for preparing for the beginning of the 21st century's work (Reveley, 2015). We believe that the education systems must provide a continuous, permanent training, throughout the entire life of man as an individual, social group and community.

We mention that the information communicated to the work team is received not only depending on the logical arguments, but also depending on the motivational support, which has emotional implications (at the level of each person). Creating a favourable climate for collaboration, cohesion, solidarity is possible through the development of some positive emotional states, which ensure the efficient communication of the information. Otherwise, negative affective states (suspicion, mistrust, fear) prevent the good collaboration between people. That is why it is important that those coordinating the group communicate, in a timely manner, the information related to its activities. We consider that it is necessary to determine what is to be communicated, to create psychological states favourable to communication, to establish the conditions favourable for communicating the information. Also, we consider that it is absolutely necessary for the leader to choose the time for communicating the information, taking into account his mental state as well, as strong emotional states can influence the objectivity and clarity of thinking (Kunnamatt, 2016). The vulnerability (regardless of its nature) of the one coordinating a project can influence and even compromise the project. Also, vulnerability generated by the insufficiency of the subsistence means, insufficiency in which the participants in a project can find themselves (temporarily or permanently), regardless of their position, causes severe problems of communication and coordination (Flegar, 2016).

The content of communication is at least as important as the conditions in which it is conducted. The verbal language is dominant within intergroup relationships. We believe that simple words should be used in order to express concrete notions (in stating the facts) so as not to create difficulties in understanding and thus ensuring that the information transmitted is perceived correctly. Expressiveness of the verbal communication act is extremely important; it depends on a number of psychosocial factors. For example, the selection of words and the manner to use them in the construction of phrases help to clearly shape the expressed ideas. The vocabulary of a language contains homonymous, synonyms terms, which, appropriately used, lead to the sense aimed by the communication act. On the other hand, the length of the sentences favours or disfavours the clarity of the communication content. Thus, short sentences containing suggestive words give clarity, rhythm and expressiveness to communication. The meaning and significance of the conveyed message depend equally on the verbal and nonverbal language that it completes: intensity of words, emphasis on certain words, intonation, gestures that accompany the speech.

Oral language involves speaking, but also listening. The latter is as demanding as the speech; it requires exercise and education (Peters, 2015). Based on these conclusions of the experts in psychology, we notice that the manager (the one that manages the work team's issues) needs to educate the activity of listening collaborators, subordinates' speech, for a better appreciation of the factual situation. We believe that listening is part of the psychological conditions necessary for managing a work team.

We have also noticed other important aspects of communication within the group work. For the accuracy of the transmitted information it is necessary that it be communicated only once so as to avoid distortions due to reformulations, additional interpretations, distorted reception of the significance. Therefore, dialogue (and the stimulation of questions) is necessary in a relaxed atmosphere, in order to clarify the less clear matters.

We find that group communication effectiveness depends on the following factors as well: each group member's ability to understand, each one's training and work experience, personal problems and mood during communication etc. For example, in the health systems, it is important not only the communication between the team members treating the patient, but also the communication with the patient (Popescu, 2015). Also it should not be neglected the position, role, namely, the tasks had by the team members within their family (Buber-Ennser, 2015), since they have a direct impact on work efficiency. The leader is the one who knows, through informal relationships, colleagues' problems. Team building sessions are meant to bring closer the members of the work team, gives them the possibility to know each other better, to discover common hobbies, etc. We cannot help bring into discussion the issue of Facebook communication (Cheung & Leung, 2016); it has been found that the members of a work group know each other the best through such communication and share the same views, have the same preferences, etc. We believe that such communication is beneficial to forming the work teams (in the sense of distributing the tasks to some behaviourally compatible persons). We mention that neglecting (Hurd, 2016) all these aspects can only block the common activities from a lack of tolerance towards the real problems faced by some team members. All these ensure the coordination of each individual's activities, reported to the purpose of the common activity. Coordination of efforts to achieve a common purpose necessarily implies efficient communication. The success of an efficient communication implies the baseline assessment in order to make a real and realistic comparison (Friedman & Lewis, 2015).

At the same time, communication in crisis situations should be considered (Cesaroni, Sentuti & Buratti, 2015), which require a specific approach; flawed approach of problems can lead to conflicts between work team members and not only. Managers' orientation towards solving the material and financial problems of the organization (in crisis situations), to the detriment of the teams involved in projects generates an even deeper crisis: communication crisis, which can have an unexpected and unpredictable evolution. Therefore, simple communicational disorders can turn into a real communication crisis and conflicts dangerous for the very existence of the organization. Correct and complete information of the work group members is absolutely necessary, as well as the adaptation of communication to overload situations.

Sometimes, in the relationships within the group the related issue of the degree of inter-ethnic, intercultural and interreligious tolerance are induced as well. We notice that the common purpose of the activities performed blur these differences. Specifically, contributes to an efficient communication, based on moral values. Some empirical evidence (Wickremasinghe, 2016) and the analysis of these problems show us that the current difficulties of an economy (in crisis) are conducted within globalization (through which is attempted the diminishing, more precisely, the attenuation of this type of differences). We consider that it is desirable for globalization and tolerance to support each other (Peters & Besley, 2016).

Negotiations are an important part of intra-group and inter-group interaction. They suppose a specific language in which the dialogue partners pursue a predetermined objective. Here we are dealing with a communication session well prepared in the smallest details. Nonverbal language is as important

(as the spoken or written language) in face to face confrontation during negotiations. The information can be also identified by carefully studying the attitude, clothing, mimic of the negotiation team.

The dynamics and functionality of the open system called human group depend fundamentally on the information exchange and their integrated circuit.

4. Conclusions

Analysing group's communicational structure shows us that the intensity of communication between individuals depends on the achievement of the pursued objectives. We find that the results are directly proportional to the intensity of communication. It turns out that the communication deficiencies diminishing the functional links between team members may result in the isolation of some team members and the counterproductive dispersal of its efforts, which leads to decreased quality and efficiency at work. The communication process should be functional both vertically, between the different hierarchical and execution levels, and horizontally, on the same level. It was found that the effectiveness of communication and hence of labour also depend on the time elapsed between communicating a piece of information and its use; submitted details can be forgotten if the time is too long.

This analysis (during the conduct of this study) allowed us to configure some solutions, relatively viable. Counselling coming from the psycho-sociologist is advisable in order to form a team with a climate necessary to an increased productivity at work. We consider that it is necessary to set up an ethical code for each company, that will compel all members of the company to comply with the ethical and moral values they have selected; another solution is to invest employees with economic and administrative, salaried responsibilities, this investing being made by the entrepreneur based on some criteria from a so-called meritocracy grid. Such solutions would optimize the economic and social activity, would maximize profits and salaries or other incomes of company's entire staff. We notice that all the fields of human action are based today on well thought and organized methodologies, including methods adequate and up to date (Constantin, 2016, pp. 55-76), accompanied by communication rules. We believe that the sustainable development (Nica, 2015) of the institutions producing material and spiritual goods depends today in a consistent proportion on the ability to manage the information, on the way they are provided by approved persons and, especially, on how they are used in the common activity.

We notice that the argumentation is frequently used in negotiating the solutions to be adopted for the successful implementation of some group's tasks. Although theories about the argument claim that there is no type argument for a specific problem, in the practice of the work groups the arguments are born in the dialogue between the decision-maker and the performer and have as a common denominator the plea for labour increased efficiency. The argumentation is always subject to the laws of contextual appropriateness, including appropriateness in relation to the audience (Săvulescu, 2004, pp. 118-122). In some businesses, communication is extremely important in the area of the sale of goods, services, loans, loan recovery, insurance etc. The success of that enterprise depends in an overwhelming proportion on it (Anderson & Kantarelis, 2016). We find that people with a high potential in communication, persuasion and even manipulation are identified by specialized persons

(labour psychologist, psychosocial counsellor) and recommended for training within specialization courses. This because the existence of a psychological compatibility is extremely important between people that are in direct interaction during the work process.

Communication differentiates us from other beings and gave us the opportunity to live in a world created by us (through the application in the production of – material and/or immaterial – economic goods of the acquisitions of the scientific and technological knowledge). The analysis of these problems allows us the configuration of some viable solutions to the current problems of some economies (that are in crisis).

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