

Communication in educational practice

Daniel Kučerka^{*}, Ludmila Opekarová[†], Roman Hrmo[‡], Monika Karková[§]

Abstract

The aim of the article is to analyze the effective communication of the managing pedagogical workers. The paper points to the essence, meaning and function of the communication in the teaching practice. Communication means the process of transmitting the mutual understanding through the information, symbols such as the speech, character, font, and so on. On the other hand if there is no mutual understanding after the transfer of symbols, the effective communication does not occur. The communication process is divided into the basic elements that together in relations make up the model of the communication process (Čambál et al., 2000).

The survey deals with the analysis of the effective communication of the managers in the educational practice. The survey sample consisted of 20 managers from four secondary schools in the South Czech Region. In the items of the questionnaires we focused on their views on the communication culture or the effective communication with their subordinates. The results show that 40% of the workers think that they should improve their communication with subordinates. However, all agreed with the opinion that they are satisfied with their job.

Keywords:

Communication
Management
Pedagogical practice

1 Introduction

Communication is a very important element in man's daily life. We communicate continuously, it just depends on what kind of communication we choose. Sometimes we do not realize that by the form of non-verbal communication we manifest our current mood and physical condition.

Communication in a company or school has a great impact on the image of the employer's internal environment, atmosphere, vision or job satisfaction.

Vertical communication in the direction from top to bottom is intended for the top managers of the companies or for the school directors. His behaviour is very important, affects the performance of his prosecutors and other employees directly reporting. A very important factor in communication is the way of tasking, problem solving, but also empathy.

When communicating there may also occur the communication errors which affect the direction of the level of communication.

The result of the good work of a manager, his management and organizational work is the good and effective communication on the vertical and horizontal level. Such communication contributes to the consolidation and raising the efficiency of the collective.

^{*} The institute of Tecnology and Business in České Budějovice, Okružní 517/10, 370 01 České Budějovice
Corresponding author. E-mail: kucerka@mail.vstecb.cz

[†] The institute of Tecnology and Business in České Budějovice, Okružní 517/10, 370 01 České Budějovice

[‡] Dubnica Institute of Technology, sládkovičová 533/20, Dubnica nad Váhom

[§] The institute of Tecnology and Business in České Budějovice, Okružní 517/10, 370 01 České Budějovice

2 The nature and importance of communication

The concept of communication has a very wide application. Even when we look at it only in terms of social psychology, it can be hardly summarized in a few sentences. There are a variety of characteristics. Some of them emphasize more the substantive aspects, some of them formal aspects, while others emphasize the experiential site, others the logical site (Mikuláščík, 2003).

In various professional publications and dictionaries we meet the different definitions of the concept of communication, such as:

- "the process of the transfer and exchange of information in any form realized among people and manifested by some effect,
- process of communicating, social contact for the exchange of the thoughts among the participants of the communication through words (narration),
- process of transmission and reception of communication from the individuals to another people as the two-way process,
- process of transferring all sorts of information contents across the different communication systems using the different communication media, in particular through the language "(Vymětal, 2008, p.22)

2.1 Functions of communication

Communication functions can be grouped as follows:

- informative - communication of information, facts, figures, experiences and knowledge among the people,
- cognitive - the understanding of themselves as well as others, about the world,
- instructive - explaining the meanings, procedures, describing how to achieve something,
- training and education - a summary of informative, instructive, cognitive function through educational institutions or self-study,
- personal identity - the rationale for yourself, your views, attitudes, personal ambition and self-confidence,
- socializing and integrating socially - formation of a relationship with others, mutual responsiveness and interactivity in communications, networking, the art of communication depending on a variety of environments, the social class, the social status and so on.
- persuasive - an effort to act on another individual, changing the attitudes, beliefs, ways of actions and behaviour,
- empowering and motivating – the reinforcing of feelings of self-confidence, self necessity, relationship to something, in a way it belongs to the persuasive function,
- entertainment - creating the feelings of well-being, satisfaction, pleasure, amusement,
- entrusting - listening to others and offering the solutions to their problems, overcoming difficulties, deliverance from internal tension,
- escape - abreaction by communication from mental stress, worries, depression elimination (Vymětal, 2008).

2.2 Communication levels

Communication regularly takes place on two levels:

- Content,
- relational, while the second explains the first.

Unless the relationship is positive, or neutral, content level is as "free", it means that information can go easily to a partner. However, if one the partners is not in a good mental condition (fear, anxiety, anger, envy, jealousy), the relationship takes priority over content.

The person is "derailed", the old parts of the brain are activated and they disrupt the analytical thinking of the brain activity, without which you cannot even listen or understand the offered information (Birkenbihlová, 1999).

2.3 Communication process

In the communication process each person expresses his ideas, giving them some form. This expression is called encoding, resulting in the selling message. The recipient receives this report and he decodes it, it means through the senses he transforms it into the understandable form. Each individual is limited by his skills and knowledge of expression, the ability to receive the messages and to perceive the reality correctly. The model of communication process according to Dědina, Odcházal (2007) is shown in Fig. 1.

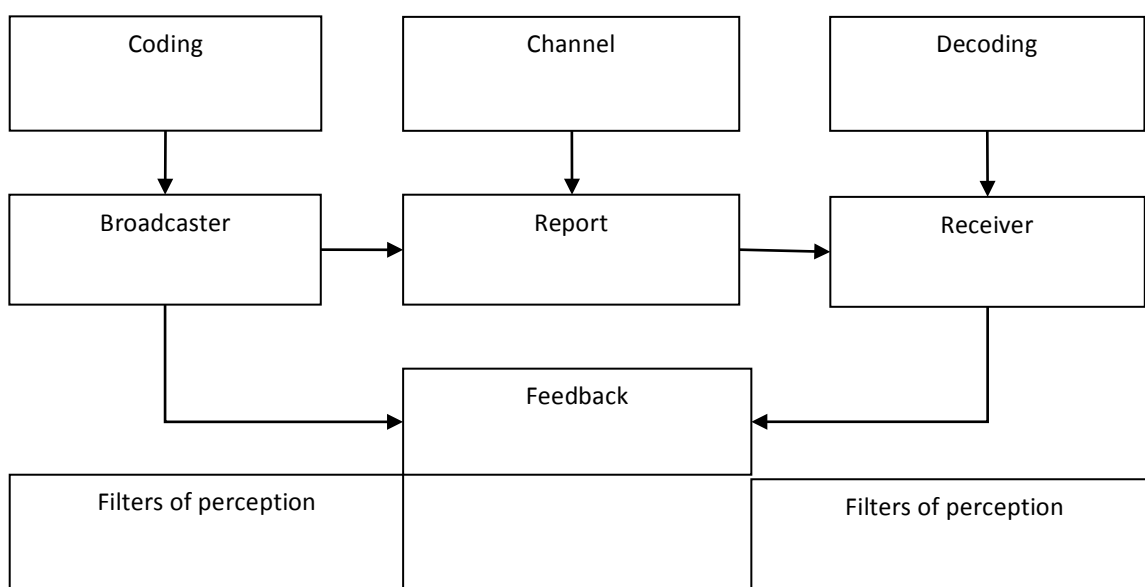


Fig. 1 Model of communicational process (Dědina, Odcházal, 2007, s. 46)

Comprehensively these capabilities are referred to as filters of perception. Communication is also affected by several factors resulting from physical, social and cultural environment. These factors may change the content of the transmitted messages, thus the distorting of the communication occurs.

2.4 Verbal and non-verbal communication

Verbal communication is the process of exchanging information among people by means of audio or graphic characters. Such system is called a language and for each linguistic sign is attached the meaning (Jiřicová, 2010). Its meaning is essential. It is a part of everyday life.

Non-verbal communication means the process of encoding our thoughts into non-verbal expressions such as body posture, facial expressions and gestures of hands. In most cases, the non-verbal communication forms a complement to the verbal communication, but it exists also independently. Non-verbal communication gives the meaning to the verbal communication (Dědina, Odcházal, 2007).

For the head person it is more beneficial to learn to manage the resources used in his own non-verbal communication. The large number is needed to learn what meanings are given to significant examples of non-verbal communication.

If an experienced head teacher or his representative want to influence the relationships in their collective effectively by communicating as well as the relations of its members to the organization and also contribute to the quality activity results of their co-workers, they must not only speak to them and motivate them, but they must know their colleagues. They must know their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and capabilities of their motivation for the active curricular and extracurricular activities.

3 Application part and discussion of results

3.1 Objectives and subject of the survey

The main objective of the survey was to collect and analyze the effective communication in the educational practice.

The main objectives result in the sub-objectives:

- make sure whether the supervisor communicates with employees,
- make sure whether the superior thinks he should improve his communication with employees,
- determine the satisfaction with the work carried out,
- make sure whether the attendance at work is a conflict between superiors and employees,
- determine whether there are the rules for resolving complaints at schools.

The object of the survey was to determine the effectiveness in the vertical communication plane (senior and subordinates) in the educational practice.

3.2 Methodology of work

In this subchapter we will explore the survey sample and the implementation of the survey.

Characteristics of the survey sample

The sample consisted of a total of 20 teaching staff management. The survey was conducted at SOŠS a E Velešín, SOŠS a P Ceske Budejovice, VOŠ, SPŠ a SOŠR a S Strakonice and Euroškola Strakonice.

Implementation of the survey

To obtain the empirical data the questionnaire was used. The questionnaire focused on satisfaction surveys of the managers on the position, and their communication with the employees.

In the questionnaires from the question 3 the range of responses was determined: definitely yes (+2), rather yes (+1), I cannot judge (0), rather no (-1) and certainly not (-2).

3.3 Evaluation of results

The effective communication at work we investigated by the questionnaire survey. In the first item we investigated the representation of men and women in the workplace. We found out that in the surveyed community the women dominate, in management positions or in the positions of employees.

In the second item we investigated how long they work in the workplace. The largest representation is in the category over 10 years. More detailed comparison of the sex duration of employment at the workplace are shown in Table 1.

Tab 1: Sex of employees and the length of employment

Answer	Number of employees	Percentage
women	15	75%
men	5	5%
less than 1 year	0	0%
1 – 5 years	0	0%
5 - 10 years	5	25%
more than 10 years	15	75%

Managers

The item 1 and 2 was evaluated in Table 1. The table shows that in schools work mostly older workers, especially women.

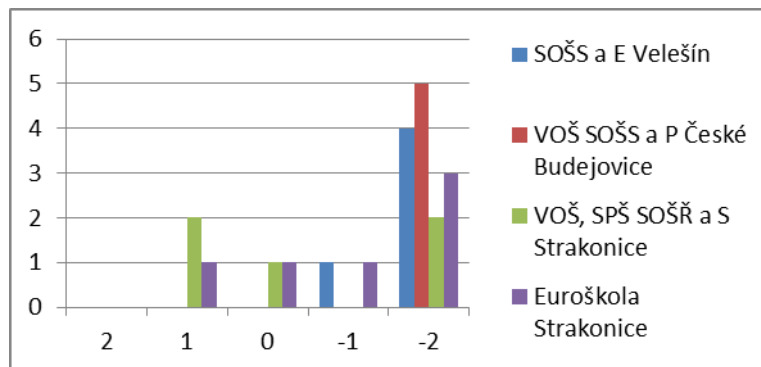
In the item 3 (Figure 1) we learned whether the bosses raise their voices when communicating. The graph clearly shows that the vast majority of the 20 respondents does not raise the voice. Only in three cases, i.e., 15% showed that the supervisor raised his voice.

Managers

The items 1 and 2 were evaluated in the subchapter 4.1 together with employees. In both categories it appears that in education work mostly older workers.

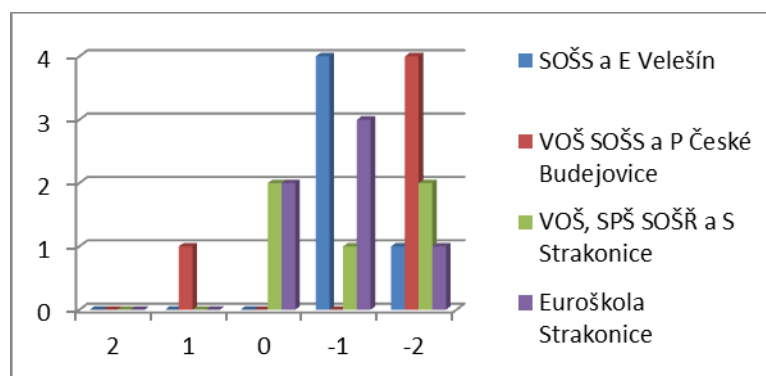
The questionnaire for the managers is given in Annex 1.

By the item 3 (Figure 1), we learned whether the bosses raise their voices when communicating. The graph clearly shows that the vast majority of the 20 respondents does not raise the voice. Only in three cases, i.e., 15% showed that the supervisor increases his voice.



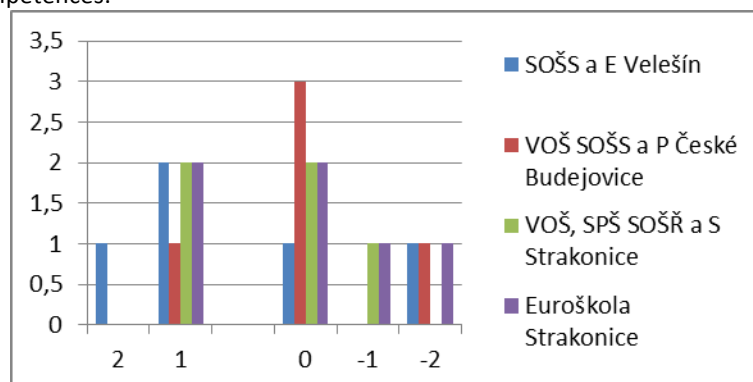
Graph 1 Answers of supervisors whether they shout at subordinates

By the item 4 (Graph No. 2) we investigated whether the supervisors have the habit of using uncontrolled expressions when communicating with subordinates. 80% of managers answered the answer rather not or definitely not.



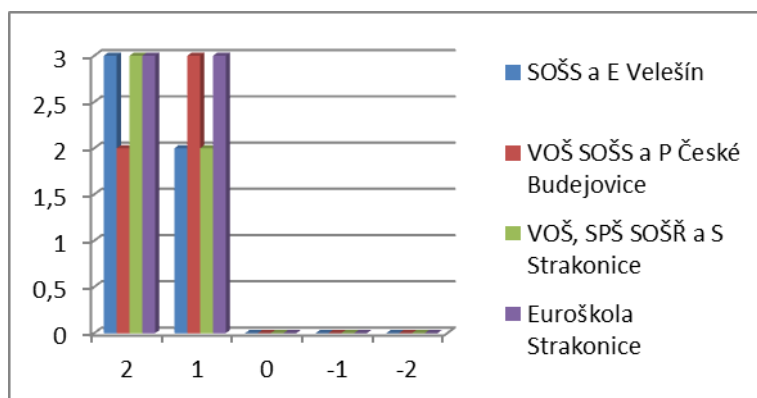
Graph 2 Answers of supervisors whether they use uncontrolled expressions

By the Item 5 (Graph No. 3) we examined the opinion on whether the managers think that they should improve their communication skills. 40% of managers think that they should improve their communication skills. The same percentage cannot decide, and 25% believe that they do not have to change their communication competences.



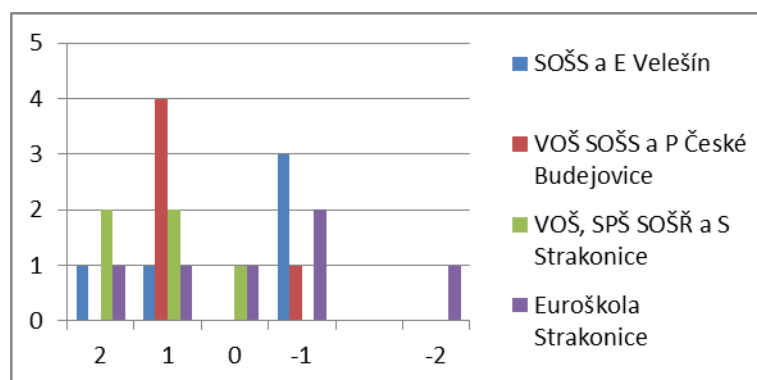
Graph 3 Answers of supervisors whether they think that they should improve their communication skills

By the item 6 (Graph No. 4) we found out that the managers are satisfied with their jobs. All agreed that they are definitely or rather satisfied with their jobs. None of them expressed dissatisfaction.



Graph 4 Graphical representation of expressing the job satisfaction

In the item 7 (Graph No. 5) we were wondering whether they criticize the work of their subordinates. 60% of executives said that they criticize the work of their subordinates and 35% do not criticize the work of subordinates.



Graph 5 Answers of managers whether they criticize their subordinates

3.4 Discussion of results and recommendations for practice

Based on the review findings we think that in the education system work mostly old people and our research shows that in schools are employed up to 75% more women.

In other items of the questionnaire of the managers we focused on their views on the communication culture or the effective communication with subordinates.

According to the graphs No. 1-5 (item 3-8) it appears that the employees in managerial positions (director, deputy director, head of the subject commission) have a great desire to communicate with their subordinates in such a way in order to the teachers undertake the role of the necessary quality, without increasing the voice (80% of managers think so), they control themselves also in the non-verbal communication.

At the same time 40% of managers think they should improve their communication. They all expressed the view that they are more or less satisfied with the work being carried out.

The survey showed that motivation in the workplace raises the interest in the work. If the workers are motivated they achieve better performance. Our recommendation is that the director should motivate his employees more. Motivation is not seen as a one-off affair, it is a continuous process to be carried out systematically.

Based on the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire survey we recommend in order to the managers attend the courses in verbal and non-verbal communication and they apply the assertiveness, empathy, active listening and other communication equipment in their management.

4 Conclusion

In this article we have tried to suggest the possibilities of communication in educational practice of managers and their opinion on their communication in school teams. The aim was to find out their opinion on communicating with subordinates. We also surveyed the opinion of employees on the level of communication with higher-level executives.

The information we obtained in the form of the questionnaire which was distributed in the paper form in individual workplaces. Based on the graphical evaluation we found out that the managers know how to communicate with each other effectively without inappropriate manifestation of emotions. Despite this fact, the executives admitted that they have to improve something in their speech. However, in teaching practice each teacher is the superior as he manages his pupils even when we included the executive directors, deputy directors and heads of subject commission in the group of managing workers. These are the people who have the management in their job description.

Acknowledgement:

The authors gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the KEGA Grant Agency of the Slovak Republic under the KEGA Project 010UCM-4/2015.

References

- BIRKENBIHLOVÁ, V. 1999. *Umenie komunikácie alebo...ako úspešne utvárať vzťahy k ľuďom*. Bratislava: Slovak edition, 1999. ISBN 80-88915-20-1
- COTTRELL, D., HARVEY, E. 2003. *The Manager's Communication Handbook: A Practical Guide to Build Understanding, Support and Acceptance*. Dallas, USA: Multi Ad, 2003. ISBN 1-885228-53-8
- ČAMBÁL, M., HOLKOVÁ, A., HORŇÁK, F. 2000. *Manažérstvo podniku*. Bratislava: STU, 2000. ISBN 80-227-1365-1
- DĚDINA, J., ODCHÁZEL, J. 2007. *Management a moderní organizování firmy*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978-80-247-2149-1
- ĎURNÝ P. a kol. 2008. *Komunikácia*. CORETA, s.r.o. 2008. Učebný text vychádza v rámci projektu "Tvorba nových vzdelávacích programov v odbornom vzdelávaní automobilového priemyslu" z finančných prostriedkov ministerstva školstva SR. Kód projektu: ITMS 11 23 01 00 481.
- JIRICOVÁ, B. 2010. *Efektívni komunikace pro manažery*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2010. ISBN 978-80-247-1708-1
- MIKULÁŠTÍK, M. 2003. *Komunikační dovednosti v praxi*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2003. ISBN 80-247-0650-4
- MIKULÁŠTÍK, M. 2010. *Komunikační dovednosti v praxi 2. doplněné a přepracované vydání*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2010. ISBN 978-80-247-2339-6
- TURECKIOVÁ, M. 2007. *Klíč k účinnému vedení lidí: odemkněte potenciál svých spolupracovníků*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2007. ISBN 978-80-247-0882-9
- VYMĚTAL, J. 2008. *Průvodce úspěšnou komunikací: Efektívni komunikace v praxi*. Praha: Grada Publishing, 2008. ISBN 978-80-247-3176-6