

# IMPACT OF THE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM ON THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN A SELECTED POVIAT HOSPITAL

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**Introduction/background:** This article is based on a master thesis carried out by Aleksandra Pędowska under the scientific supervision of the author (Management stationary II degree: “Impact of the communication system on the management process in a selected poviast hospital”). Communication, as an element of management, is an essential function of all activities that are undertaken in organisations. A high level of communication leads to effective and efficient functioning and management of the organisation. Any cooperation that occurs between employees within an organisation is geared towards communicating with each other in such a way that the organisation can function well. The communication process also shapes interpersonal relationships. Communication in organisations, as in everyday life, is a difficult and complex process, which requires constant improvement and change. Clear and reliable communication contributes to the professional success of the organisation, to job satisfaction and effectively influences the organisation's management; it also warms up the organisation's image, increases the satisfaction of customers or patients as well as the employees who work for the organisation.

**Aim of the paper:** The main aim of the research was to find out how the communication between the employees of the respective organisational units looks like and to collect as much information and data as possible on how the communication system influences the management process in the selected poviast hospital.

**Materials and methods:** Literature analysis, analysis of source materials (internal), survey method – technique: indirect survey, tool: survey questionnaire.

**Results and conclusions:** The important areas that comprise the effective management of a public organisation are dependent on the functioning of a proper communication system. The effectiveness of communication in the studied organisation in relation to management, in the opinion of the employees, is at a good or very good level. The occurrence of communication within the organisation contributes to the functioning of the organisation in an effective and efficient manner, despite the moderate current level of communication, which may be caused, for example, by the lack of training at the workplace. Communication contributes to the better functioning and management of the poviast hospital and furthermore warms the image of the organisation among patients and correctly influences the fulfilment of assigned duties or tasks by employees when communication is an efficient and clear process. Communication influences the management process in an organisation. Employees form the foundation of the organisation's functioning through communication within the organisation. In the researched organisation, the management orders and the electronic form (e-mail) are important areas in the process of information transfer, which works and is effective. It can be

concluded that a good communication system in the organisation means motivated to work and informed employees. The foundation for building an effective management process in the organisation is a coherent and clear communication system. Therefore, it can be concluded that communication in the selected organisation, which is Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej Spółka z.o.o., (Health Care Centre LTD.) is correct both in the area of functioning of the entire organisation and between individual employees.

**Keywords:** Human Resources Management, quality, communication, management in the health care.

## 1. Introduction

Communication, as an element of management, is an essential function of all activities that are undertaken in organisations. A high level of communication leads to effective and efficient functioning and management of the organisation. Any cooperation that occurs between employees within an organisation is geared towards communicating with each other in such a way that the organisation can function well. The communication process also shapes interpersonal relationships.

Communication in organisations, as in everyday life, is a difficult and complex process, which requires constant improvement and change. Clear and reliable communication contributes to the professional success of the organisation, to job satisfaction and to the effective management of the organisation, as well as enhancing its image, customer or patient satisfaction and the satisfaction of the employees who work for the organisation.

This master's thesis is devoted to the issue of communication, with particular emphasis on the influence of the communication system on the management process in a selected poviat hospital located in the city of Świętochłowice.

The research conducted aimed to find out how communication is important in an organisation in order to manage it properly and effectively. A survey questionnaire was used to conduct the research. The data presented in the thesis is an analysis of the answers obtained from employees working in management/leadership units in Health Care Centre Świętochłowice.

The thesis consists of five chapters preceded by an introduction and conclusion and is divided into theoretical and practical parts. The first chapter defines key management concepts in terms of general management, public management and management in the health care system. The positions of different authors on how the term "management" is defined, what approaches exist in public management and what management in the health system looks like are briefly presented. The entire second chapter was devoted to communication from a theoretical perspective: the first part of this chapter discussed how important communication is in relation to human resource management in an organisation. Then, the basic elements of communication were presented, i.e. its objectives, functions, its types, as well as the

juxtaposition of the concept of communication by different authors. Particularly noteworthy is the analysis of the process of communication, which was divided and specified into given elements and the characteristics of these elements were made. The last two subchapters present the existing barriers to effective communication, as well as the principles of correct communication, which have been listed and described in detail. The third chapter deals with the general specification of the functioning of the health care sector in the country. The history of reforms in Poland concerning the health care system was presented. This chapter presents the basic issues of the health care sector, its functioning, participants and the whole structure of the system that is based on it. Moreover, the principles, which function in the Polish health care system, as well as its financing have been specified. This chapter also includes the characteristics of the models that existed in health care at that time and describes the model of the health care system currently existing in Poland. The fourth chapter contains methodological assumptions which are the basis of the study. It sets out the specific objectives including the main objective of the master's thesis, the problem area and research hypotheses, as well as a description of methods and research tool, which was used for own research in the study. At the end of the fourth chapter there is a brief characterisation of the organisation with a description of the course of research on the communication system on the management process. Detailed results of own research are presented in the last chapter. It includes the results of the questionnaire filled in by the employees. The whole research was thoroughly analysed on the level of general communication evaluation in the selected organisation as well as the communication system evaluation. An important element of the research was the aspect of how the employees of the selected organisation evaluate the communication process in the organisation where they work.

In the conclusion, final conclusions are formulated concerning the topic of the work and resulting from the analyses of the literature sources used to write the paper, as well as the research that was conducted for the purposes of the paper. The effects of the verification of the research hypotheses and the summary of the whole paper are also presented.

## **2. Characteristics of the studied facility**

Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej w Świętochłowicach Sp. z o.o. is an independent municipal organisational unit with legal personality. The founding body of the Company is the Municipal Council in Świętochłowice. The Company's seat and area of operation is the city of Świętochłowice. The Independent Public Health Care Unit was transformed into a capital company under the name: Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej w Świętochłowicach Spółka z ograniczoną odpowiedzialnością (Health Care Complex in Świętochłowice LTD.) by the act of transformation of 4 June 2012.

The Health Care Complex in Świętochłowice functions on the basis of:

- Act of 15 April 2011 on medical activity,
- the applicable Articles of institution,
- other provisions concerning independent public health care institutions and municipal organisational units,
- of the Act of 23 April 1964 – Civil Code.

Based on the Resolution of the City Council of 25th June 1997, the Health Care Complex became an Independent Public Health Care Institution. In order to secure the health needs of the city's residents, the Świętochłowice Municipality concluded a contract with the Independent Public Health Care Institution for the provision of comprehensive health care services. The establishment provides health services that serve to preserve, save, restore and improve health, as well as other medical activities resulting from the treatment process or separate provisions that regulate the principles of their performance and health promotion.

According to the Statutes of the entity characterised, the hospital provides health services in the field of:

- primary health care,
- outpatient specialised healthcare,
- inpatient specialised healthcare,
- a care and treatment facility,
- occupational medicine,
- sports medicine,
- diagnostic tests,
- outpatient emergency care,
- disease prevention and health promotion,
- long-term home care team – long-term nursing care,
- management of blood and blood products for the Hospital,
- services provided by the N. neonatology outreach team.

Currently, the following hospital wards operate in Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej w Świętochłowicach Sp. z o.o.:

- Neurology Ward,
- Neonatology Ward,
- Paediatric Ward,
- Otolaryngology Ward,
- Rehabilitation Ward,
- Anaesthesiology Ward,
- Psychiatric Ward,
- Internal Medicine Ward,
- General and Short-Term Surgery Ward,

- Gynaecology and Obstetrics Ward,
- Alcohol Addiction Treatment Ward.

Health services are provided under a contract signed by the National Health Fund or under commercial services according to the price list established by Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej w Świętochłowicach Sp. z o.o.

### 3. Research methodology

The subject of the undertaken research was broadly understood communication in relation to management on the example of a public organisation in management/management units.

The main objective of the research was to find out how the communication between the employees of the organisational units concerned looks like, and to collect as much information and data as possible on how the communication system influences the management process in the selected poviát hospital. Specific objectives were then set:

- characterise/examine the formal communication system in the Poviát Hospital in Świętochłowice on the basis of available documents,
- characterise/research the system of informal communication in the Poviát Hospital in Świętochłowice on the basis of conducted research in the form of a questionnaire and an interview,
- check whether an internal organisational structure is being built up at the Poviát Hospital in Świętochłowice through communication,
- find out whether communication can be part of the professional competence of health professionals,
- check the importance of communication for employees at the Poviát Hospital in Świętochłowice.

On this basis, the following research hypotheses were adopted:

- H1: A proper internal communication system of the organisation influences management.
- H2: The quality of communication affects management.
- H3: Proper communication in the organisation contributes to effective management.

The research concerned the influence of communication on the management process and was conducted among employees working in management/management units at the Health Care Centre in Świętochłowice.

A survey method was used to collect the most necessary information and data. The research tool that was used for the research method was a survey questionnaire that was developed by the author of the thesis. The questionnaire that was created for the author's own research,

which was about how communication influences management in management/leadership cells, provided a close-up look at how communication works in specific organisational cells at the poviát hospital. The research was conducted on the basis of a questionnaire that was sent to the respondents electronically via the Internet. The survey questionnaire had open-ended questions, which consisted of an independent answer, and closed questions, where each respondent had to mark one or a maximum of two answers in the question; the survey questionnaire also included Likert scale questions. The survey consisted of twenty-three questions. Each respondent independently answered the questions, which were divided into three groups: questions 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 23 refer to the assessment of the importance of communication in general in the organisation, the second group of questions (7, 12, 13, 18 and 22) is the overall assessment of the communication system in the organisation, while questions 17, 19, 20 and 21 refer to internal communication among employees in the organisation.

#### **4. Course of research**

The course of the research and collection of materials for presentation was as follows: the realization of the research took place during a month-long student internship, which lasted from 1.02.2021 to 5.03.2021 on the area of the selected poviát hospital.

The mode of implementation of the research was such that the first stage of collecting materials for analysis was to send employees working in management/leadership cells in the public organisation a survey questionnaire in electronic form via the Internet. By using the research tool, it was possible to obtain a sufficient amount of data and research information. As a result, from the collected materials it was possible to proceed to their analysis and interpretation, and then to formulate and draw final conclusions.

Due to the prevailing situation in the country, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the study included ten employees working in the management/management cells at Health Care Centre Świętochłowice, most of whom were women, who accounted for 70% of all the surveyed employees of Health care Centre Świętochłowice; men accounted for 30%.

The second demographic characteristic of the respondents was their age. The following age structure was adopted in the research: group one - up to 25 years, group two: 25-35 years, group three: 36-45 years, group four – over 45 years. The most numerous age group is group three (36-45 years old), which constitutes 40% of all employees surveyed. The second group (25-36 years old) and the fourth group (over 45 years old) are equally numerous, accounting for 30% each. There are no members of the first group (under 25 years) among the employees surveyed.

Another characteristic of the employees surveyed is their level of education. All respondents indicated that they have a university degree, which is 100% of the votes.

With regard to seniority in the organisation, it can be noted that there is no dominant number of years worked. It can be concluded that each of the surveyed employees has different length of service, with 70% of the surveyed employees having shorter service in the organisation (from 1 to 5 years) than employees with longer service in the organisation and working over 13 years. Three employees with longer seniority represent 30% of the surveyed employees in Health Care Centre Świętochłowice.

## 5. Verification of research hypotheses

The research hypotheses made in the study were verified on the basis of the obtained results of the quantitative research, which was carried out on the basis of a questionnaire survey among the employees of the management/leadership units in the poviát hospital. In the studied organization, opinions were obtained from employees who work at managerial level in the following organizational cells: Administrative, Administration and Operations Section, Management, Secretariat, Wards and Hospital Departments. The selection of employees for the study was non-random, purposeful, as it was desired to present the communication system in the poviát hospital from the managerial level. On this basis, the adopted research hypotheses were verified.

**H1:** "A proper internal communication system of an organisation influences management". In the light of the research results obtained, the truth of the hypothesis can be confirmed. Based on the analysis of the questions concerning H1, the following conclusions were made:

- every employee of Health Care Centre Świętochłowice communicates with other employees so that there is communication between them, which allows for better management of the organisation regardless of what information needs to be communicated or matters need to be settled;
- in order to manage the organisation effectively by communicating the most important information within the organisation, the employees of Health Care Centre Świętochłowice practice two forms: management orders and electronic form (e-mail). Both forms are the most effective in transferring information as they are fast, formal and are delivered to all employees immediately/at the same time;
- feedback enables effective and correct communication between employees, which significantly influences the course of communication in an organisation;
- employees at Health Care Centre Świętochłowice felt that communication within the organisation has a significant impact in the workplace and on the management of the organisation as a whole;

- the communication system within the organisation has a strong influence on: the management of the public organisation, the image of the organisation among patients, the quality of the tasks and responsibilities performed by the employees, and the loyalty of the employees;
- the existing communication system at Health Care Centre Świętochłowice does not cause serious communication problems within the organisation.

**H2:** "The quality of communication influences management". In the light of the research results obtained, the truth of the hypothesis can be confirmed. Based on the analysis of the questions on H2, the following conclusions were made:

- the most effective tool in communication is formal communication;
- formal communication fulfils the function of giving orders and is the main and fluent source of information transfer in Health Care Centre Świętochłowice; there is also informal communication in the surveyed organisation, which is complementary to formal communication and fulfils the function of relaxing the atmosphere in the workplace;
- vast majority of the employees surveyed responded that formal communication is the more appropriate form of communication in management/leadership units, which is effective in influencing the quality of communication and management of the organisation as a whole, as it maintains the business path in the workplace, is more precise, more effective and more complete, which influences the quality of communication in the workplace as a whole;
- the surveyed employees unanimously answered that the quality of communication in the organisation is at a good/average level, which can be classified that the overall quality of communication is at a neutral, good level;
- quality of the communication system within the organisation also influences: the management of the public organisation, the image of the organisation among patients, the quality of the tasks and responsibilities carried out by the employees, and the loyalty of the employees;

**H3:** "Proper communication in the organisation contributes to effective management". In light of the research results obtained, the truth of the hypothesis can be confirmed. Based on the analysis of the questions on H2, the following conclusions were made:

- the communication system has a great impact on the management process in an organisation as it determines the quality and effectiveness of the organisation's management and the level of performance of tasks and responsibilities;
- the current communication system in the organisation is efficient and fulfils its role/function well to manage the organisation effectively;



- the current system of communication in the organisation towards the surveyed employees of Health Care Centre Świętochłowice needs to be improved in order to manage the organisation effectively;
- up-to-date communication system facilitates the transfer of the most relevant and up-to-date information to employees in order for them to function properly, and is efficient and clear and influences the management process in the organisation;
- communication in the organisation is acceptable, minor changes would suffice.

In conclusion, the analyses of the research findings confirmed that the communication system influences the management process in an organisation.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

The intention of the research in this research was to gain as much information and opinions as possible on how important communication is in the functioning of an organisation and to show to what extent the communication system influences management in a selected public organisation.

The main objective of the thesis, which was "to present the existing communication system and its influence on management at the Poviát Hospital in Świętochłowice", was achieved by using a research tool, i.e. a questionnaire survey. As a result, responses were received from employees working in management/management units at the Świętochłowice Poviát Hospital.

The important areas that comprise the effective management of a public organisation are dependent on the functioning of a proper communication system. The effectiveness of communication in the studied organisation in relation to management, in the opinion of the employees, is at a good or very good level. The occurrence of communication within the organisation contributes to the functioning of the organisation in an effective and efficient manner, despite the moderate current level of communication, which may be caused, for example, by the lack of training at the workplace.

Based on the quantitative research conducted using a questionnaire survey at Health Care Centre Świętochłowice, the employees stated that communication contributes to the better functioning and management of the poviát hospital and, moreover, warms the image of the organisation among patients and correctly influences the fulfilment of the duties or tasks assigned to the employees when communication is an efficient and clear process.

In the light of the research analysis, the results on communication condition that it influences the management process in the organisation. Employees form the foundation of the organisation's functioning through communication within the organisation. In the researched organisation, management orders and electronic form (e-mail) are important areas in the process of information transfer, which works and is effective. It can be concluded that a good communication system in the organisation means motivated to work and informed employees.

The foundation for building an effective management process in the organisation is a coherent and clear communication system. Therefore, it can be concluded that communication in the selected organisation, which is Zespół Opieki Zdrowotnej Spółka z o.o., is correct both in the area of functioning of the entire organisation and between individual employees.

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