

Theoretical references for the process of organizational communication management in junior high schools

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ABSTRACT

The paper provides a systematization of theoretical and methodological references for the process of organizational communication management in junior high schools. The main concepts and categories (process, management, communication, organization, organizational communication, organizational management and organizational communication management) are addressed. It is relevant and topical because it contributes to make up for the limited preparation of process managers at this educational level, and it also responds to the policies outlined by the Communist Party of Cuba, the Guidelines of the Economic and Social Policy and the Third Continuous Improvement of the General Education System in Cuba.

Keywords: Management; Communication; Organization; Organizational management; Organizational communication management

Introduction

In the closing speech of the 8th Congress of the PCC, it is stated, “to incorporate as pillars of our work, the computerization of all processes within the organization...as well as the creative development of social communication”. (PCC, 2021, p. 39).

Likewise, priority two of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to support the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, specifies: “the importance of advancing and investing in access to information and citizen participation” (p. 46).

In line with this primacy, the Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development highlights among the factors associated with the prosperity and well-being of Cuban citizens the effectiveness and quality of the education system and establishes its improvement as a systematic process based on the principles of our socialism (PCC, 2021a, p. 46).

In correspondence to this call, among the objectives of the project “Continuous Improvement of the General Education System”, inserted in the program “Access and Quality of Social Services”, of macroprogram 6 (“Human Development, Equity and Social Justice”) of the National Plan for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) until 2030, it is proposed to guarantee the development of computerization and institutional communication and give opportunity, space and possibility to the exercise of a management activity closer to collaboration, to the real participation of all in the educational institution...” (PNDES, 2021).

Under these precepts, the National Education System (SNE) is currently facing its III Upgrading (from 1975), which began experimentally since 2014 and should be consolidated by 2030. This comprises significant changes associated with the management of educational institutions such as the conception and work with the educational project (institutional and group); the work with the institutional curriculum; networking and the improvement of methodological work to ensure the concretion of the set of changes to be implemented, just to mention a few (Valiente *et al.*, 2019).

In this new stage of its continuous development, the improvement of the SNE poses a set of challenges to the management of educational institutions, among which the following are of relevant importance: “to guide, regulate and permanently improve the mechanisms of communication and social relations used both inside and outside the institution...”(p. 88); and, “to stimulate communication, to create a climate of democracy and participation, where all the factors involved in the socializing process of the institution, experience joy and satisfaction for the activities they carry out and feel proud of the results obtained” (p. 89).

Based on these premises, the importance of organizational communication in junior high schools, educational organizations whose purpose is the basic and comprehensive training of adolescents, based on a general and comprehensive culture, which allows them to be fully identified with their nationality and patriotism, to ensure the defense of social achievements and the continuity of the work of the revolution, is assessed.

The study of the preceding literature, as part of the systematization carried out, and with the accumulated experience of the author in working with the basic secondary school, and the result of the review of normative documents, interviews with teachers, non-teaching workers, retirees, experts, leaders, and other social actors, we realize that there is a set of limitations that from the theoretical and methodological perspective has had the approach to the object.

We highlight as significant that there are deficiencies in the system of knowledge related to the management of organizational communication in junior high schools, so there is a limited theoretical-methodological preparation of managers for the management of organizational communication in junior high schools.

Development

In Latin America, for example, Sousa (1993), Torcuato (1986) from a systemic approach, Collado (1997) with a systemic approach to communication, Serrano (2001) in the diagnosis of corporate communication, the researchers Muriel and Rota (1980) with a proposal for institutional communication at the macro level and Javier (2001) in the diagnosis of corporate communication, Muriel and Rota (1980) with a proposal for institutional communication at the macro level and Javier (2001) in the diagnosis of corporate communication, Collado (1997) with a systemic approach to communication, Serrano (2001) in the diagnosis of corporate communication, the researchers Muriel and Rota (1980) with a proposal for institutional communication at the macro level and Javier Garrido (2004) ventures into organizational communication underlining its strategic value.

In Cuba, the research of Trelles (2001, 2002, 2014), Durand (2008), Martínez (2009), (2002 2003, 2004, 2005, 20014), Saladrigas (2005, 2006, 2010, 2014, 2016), Rivero

(2010), Jaquinet (2016), Hernández (2022) which have conceptualized the management of organizational communication from various theoretical positions and have referred to concepts, approaches, principles, as well as its different phases and models, stand out.

The contribution to the theory of these authors has gone from the criticism of a mechanical unidirectional approach to communication to more complete models that take into account the contexts, the relationships between culture and communication, the interrelation between the internal and external spheres, the importance of identity and image, and the defense of the appropriate use of different communication and information techniques and of productive messages that help to make decisions, create culture and change behavior among the organization's internal and external audiences.

Considering that organizational communication management is a process, the researcher considers it necessary to approach the term, for this reason some definitions and relevant contributions of some authors were selected.

According to the Philosophical Dictionary, Rosental and Ludin (1973) define process as “step, advance. Systematic transformation, subject to law, of a phenomenon, passage from the same to another phenomenon” (p. 376). González (2002) expresses that it is a “consecutivity of stages in which the relations of the structure of the object are changed, in time, with a view to achieving the objective” (p. 58).

Management is defined in the Quillet Encyclopedic Dictionary (1974) as “the action and effect of managing. Action and effect of managing. To manage consists in taking steps leading to the achievement of a business or of any desire” (p. 306).

Moreno (2001) defines management as:

The action and effect of developing or making an organization or institution evolve and it is materialized in each of the actions that the employees achieve in the exercise of their job and that is in dialogic, problémic and dialectic correspondence with the basic variables of the administration, the functions and the human quality of who manages or diligences. (p. 48).

For this research we assume the definition of management, given by the Doctorate Program in Organizational Management of the University of Holguín (2019) as: a social activity that has a concrete historical conditioning; as a system of interpersonal relationships (of cooperation and subordination); as a strategic process that has a conscious character... considers as its subsystems planning, organization, direction and

control..., two main dimensions (the direction of processes and the direction of people). Similarly, the authors of this article assume the postulates of the researcher Hernández (2022), when he refers to the four general functions of management:

1. Planning: is to decide in advance what to do, how to do it, when and where to do it. This requires an analysis of the existing conditions in the institution or at the corresponding management level in order to objectively project the goals to be achieved.
2. Organize: includes the definition of plans, strategies and general guidelines based on the objectives, it is organized to achieve them; it contains the determination of the tasks that will allow to reach these goals, their division and grouping in specific areas of work, according to certain criteria previously established; the selection of those responsible for these tasks or activities and defining their authority and responsibility.
3. Implementing: is the projection of interactions between the subjects involved in the process to achieve that they fulfill the assigned tasks, including communication with the collective, interests, needs, motivations, to achieve the responsible participation of those involved.
4. Control: is the comparison of the results obtained in the educational process with the expected results, in order to eliminate deviations between both parameters. It presupposes the existence of regulations, plans and standards as an essential measure to assess whether the result is acceptable or not and to be able to take corrective measures.

In this regard (Botero, 2009 as cited in Hernández, 2022) states that the general principles of administration and management are applied to the specific field of education, as follows.

Educational management is enriched with the theoretical and practical development of this field of knowledge, which in its beginnings was closer to the idea of “government” than to that of administration and more specifically to that of “collective participation” by the members of the educational organization in the processes of design, decision making and evaluation of its operation (Botero, 2009, p. 1). (Botero, 2009, p. 1).

Cárdenas (2002) states that educational management is nothing more than “...the succession of rational activities that are linked and coordinated to achieve a purpose” (p. 367). Likewise, De Vries and Ibarra (2004) define educational management as “...the

specific ways in which institutions organize and conduct themselves to achieve their essential purposes” (p. 575).

After analyzing these considerations, we assume the definition given by Rico (2016) who adds that “it is an organized process oriented to the optimization of processes and internal projects of educational institutions, with the aim of improving the pedagogical, managerial, community and administrative procedures that are mobilized therein” (p. 70).

The definition of communication has been very varied in nuances and perspectives as diverse as its complexity, since it is a phenomenon, but it is also a process and a result, a practice or set of practices, an essential part of culture... a tool for interlocution, a space for conflict, a set of images, sounds and meanings, languages and the logic of articulation of discourses... (Orozco, 1997, p. 70). (Orozco, 1997, p. 28).

The communication process according to Morales (2021), is the set of actions that are put into practice to transmit, effectively and efficiently, a message between one or more individuals, it arises from the need to communicate and exchange information, opinion or feeling successfully. Therefore, its objective is to communicate something that others can understand.

The organization exists to fulfill objectives that an individual cannot achieve in isolation. Cantón (2004) states that “organization is a complex system of personal and material resources that are oriented to achieve certain goals, objectives or interests, and for this purpose they set in motion structures and relationships within the broad social system” (p. 25).

Among the different ways of conceiving the organization, Pérez (1998) defines it as “those coordinations of human, material and technological resources that produce and exchange onerously and among themselves, and with other agents, goods, services, ideas, illusions and anything else imaginable and susceptible of being bought” (p. 12). Elías and Mascaray (2003) state that organizations are “open systems, which function and develop their activity in permanent interaction with their environment, from which they receive stimuli and conditioning factors and which they influence” (p. 33).

Trying to identify aspects in our opinion essential, in the concept organization, and trying to refer it to the environment of the present research, we assume the contributions of Trelles (2014), who defines that an organization is:

A grouping of people united by a common interest, whose purposes must be precisely defined and collectively shared, and which has a legitimate structure among the members of the grouping...and in the interaction among its members, and between the organization and its external environment. (pp. 35-36).

Organizational management is a process that has practical realization in the dissimilar fields of socioeconomic and political life, from state and governmental instances to organizations as diverse in their social objects as production or service companies or military, educational, hospital, sports, social, cultural, ecclesiastical or charitable institutions, just to mention a few.

In the case of the present research we will work with institutions at the Basic Secondary education level, these educational organizations develop school management, which according to De la O Casillas, is understood as the capacity to generate new institutional policies, involving the entire school community with democratic forms of participation that support the performance of teachers and principals through the development of educational projects appropriate to the characteristics and needs of each school. (p. 1).

De la O Casillas also states that the following dimensions are determined for the analysis and foundation of management practice in school management:

Pedagogical-didactic dimension (the activities proper to the educational institution...characterized by the links that the actors build with knowledge and didactic models); community dimension (activities that promote the participation of the different actors in decision making and in the activities of each center), it is also included.... links between school and community); administrative dimension (analyzes government actions that include strategies for managing human and financial resources and the time required; and organizational dimension (teachers and administrators, as well as students and parents, develop their educational activity within the framework of an organization,... under certain norms and requirements).

Having analyzed these definitions of management, communication and the organization, as well as its various manifestations during its evolution as part of the study of the object of this research, it is necessary to analyze organizational communication, which according to Marín (2001) states that “Organizational communication is a source of ideas through which the members come together to give core information about their organization and the transformations that occur in it” (p. 380).

The research assumes the definition given by Saladrigas (2005)

Process of production and exchange of messages, with systemic character, mediated and mediated nature, planned or spontaneous, that generates flows of meaning, which occur both within organizations and between them and the environment, in order to facilitate the achievement of their objectives and strengthen their identity and culture. (p. 143).

Communication audiences or actors

In the opinion of Muriel and Rota in Trelles (2014), audiences are groups of individuals temporarily or permanently linked to each other based on a common interest. They are classified into two groups, internal and external audiences (p. 83).

Internal audiences are those that are part of the formal structure of the organization and external audiences are groups of people who, although they are related to the organization, are not part of its structure and do not maintain a very close relationship with it and are classified into general and specific audiences. p. 84 and 87.

The general publics are the national and international community, with which the organization comes into contact directly or indirectly through the specific publics, which are found in the organization's immediate external environment (mass media, suppliers, authorities). p. 86.

The areas of organizational communication are internal communication and external communication, in this order it is important to define the conceptions that several authors have offered on internal communication, among them Sanz de la Tajada, who defines internal communication:

Tajada (1994)

It is carried out with the members of the constituent elements of the company: superiors, collaterals and subordinates, in their endless circumstances, especially to find and exchange ideas, contrast opinions, make decisions and giving rise to a communication structure in three dimensions: ascending, horizontal and descending and to a whole set of techniques developed in the field of human relations. (p. 72).

Channels are the method of dissemination used to send the message. These can be broadly divided into: mediatized and direct. Mediated channels are those that require some type

of technology for the production of messages and the contact between the source and the receiver(s) is not direct, but through some external physical vehicle. Direct channels depend on the individual's capacity and ability to communicate with others face to face. For example, talking, listening, nonverbal cues, etc. (Cited by Álvarez, 2018, p. 34).

The communication network is the path followed by the flow of messages and each of the elements (departments, people, etc.). Formal networks are those explicitly pointed out in the organization chart of the institution, which can be conceived as a diagrammatic description of the formal structure of the institution; ...is the one that follows the lines of the organization chart, it gives a clear view of the information channels planned for the organization. (Marín as cited in Trelles, 2001. p. 44)

The informal network is the message flows without respecting hierarchical or functional lines and obeying more to personal affinities than to formal work structures. Messages through informal networks emerge spontaneously, are less structured and less predictable (Muriel and Rota as cited in Trelles, 2001, pp. 147-148).

Communication flows if it proceeds from the organization's management to the intermediate levels and to the base, downward flow, upward communication, refers to the flow of communication that is directed from employees to superiors; if communication is established between similar levels of authority, horizontal communication occurs...communication in all directions, and from all levels, cross flow, favors the participation of all members of the organization, and decision making based on consensus. (Trelles, 2014, p. 95)

External communication is analyzed by different authors Muriel and Rota (1980) consider that, through external communication, the institution comes into contact with its environment, from where the institution obtains the necessary inputs for the development of its functions. (p. 35)

In the same sense, for Saladrigas (2007), external or inter-institutional communication takes place between organizations (private or public) and others that are linked to them by productive, commercial or social issues, such as suppliers, distributors, the media, among others, an approach that converges with Public Relations.

Trelles (2014), defines it as: "That which the organization establishes with external audiences, i.e. it is the interrelation of the constituent elements of the internal environment with those that exist in the external environment" (p. 98).

Regarding messages Goldhaber, (1977) points out that: “Messages deal with significant information about people, objects and events generated during human interactions” and adds that “the messages produced in the organization, addressed to both internal and external audiences, can be classified as: task, maintenance and human” (p. 18).

Task: They are closely related to those products, services or activities that have a special interest for the organization... they have the mission of informing employees on how to perform their work. They include activities such as training, orientation, goal setting, problem solving, and idea suggestions.

Maintenance: They help the organization to stay alive and perpetuate itself. Maintenance messages include orders, dictates, procedures and controls necessary to facilitate the movement of the organization towards its intended objectives.

Human: They are addressed to the individuals of the organization, considering mainly their attitudes, satisfaction and fulfillment.

It is appropriate in this research to assume Trelles (2014), who considers that there are also messages related to:

Strategic cut issues, this type of message addresses essential aspects for the organization; they must be the result of shared construction processes, given their high symbolic load, and they move on issues related to the *raison d'être* of the entity, its mission, its vision, its values, its strategic objectives, that is to say, its essence, its identity; who it is and what is its reason for existing.

Messages on political-ideological contents and values, is a type of message of great transcendence in our entities... (p. 104); and ...it must be built attending to the deeply human, social essences ...and must respond to the needs of each collective, which are inserted in a common universe of meanings and values shared today by Cubans. (p. 104)

The process of organizational communication management has been described by a large number of authors both internationally and nationally. Saladrigas (2009) states that communication management consists of: “foreseeing, planning, organizing, managing, administering, evaluating and controlling communication actions to ensure greater communicative effectiveness in the entity” (p. 113).

Communication management requires knowledge of the organization's structure, formulating diagnostics, choosing strategies, setting goals, knowing the organization's mission and managing corporate/organizational relationships by visualizing the organization's ongoing interests.... (Yang, 2016, p. 2 4)

Rivero (2016), defines organizational communication management as:

A set of continuous and coordinated phases or stages (diagnosis, analysis or research; planning and programming; execution or implementation; and control and evaluation) that is deployed to direct and control everything related to the communication processes generated in any type of organization, regardless of its sector, size, structure, ownership, mission or any other classification: companies, corporations, associations, NGOs, public administrations, political parties. (p. 44).

For his part Hernández (2022)

Process of planning, organization, implementation and control, aimed at facilitating and streamlining the exchange that takes place through the flow of messages (ascending, descending and horizontal) among its stakeholders (internal and external) and between the organization and its environment that transverses the substantive functions of the organization and in turn is influenced by them, from the institutional, administrative, pedagogical and community (p. 31).

The phases of organizational communication management (diagnosis, planning, organization, implementation, evaluation and control).

Diagnosis: the aim is to investigate a set of elements that allow us to know the situation from which communication starts and the information it raises should constitute a starting point for strategic decision making. There are multiple aspects to be taken into account; however, the selection of categories and the design of the diagnostic research will depend on the particularities of the communication process to be managed (purposes, audiences, type of organization, etc. (Rodriguez, 2017, p. 20).

The planning phase is approached from the treatment of the variables planning, integration, values, objectives, strategies and plans, standing out for the comprehensiveness of their approaches the positions assumed by Villafañe (1993), Van Riel (1997) and Trelles (2001, 2014). These last two authors coincide in linking the variables organization, models, Dircom, norms and coordination with this phase.

The organization is a system designed to achieve certain goals and objectives through plans, strategies and general skills in function of the objectives, in order to comply with them; it contains the determination of the tasks that will allow it to reach these goals, their division and grouping in specific work areas, according to certain criteria previously established; the selection of those responsible for these tasks or activities and defining their authority and responsibility.

Implementation implies the execution of the actions thought out with the planning, and because of this it may be believed that it is a linear process. However, Elías and Mascaray (2003) remind us that imponderables may arise that determine the redirection of actions on the fly (p. 102), while Muriel and Rota (1980) call attention to several elements that should always be considered by those who coordinate communication, beyond what is contained in the strategies or plans.

According to these authors, it is necessary to structure messages appropriately, make an adequate codification, use the media and channels correctly, establish direct contact with audiences and pay attention to verbal and nonverbal language (Muriel and Rota, 1980, pp. 288-320).

Evaluation is an investigative activity, but instead of allowing orientation for action, it is aimed at verifying whether what was planned is fulfilled and whether the objectives are achieved (Saladrigas and Olivera, 2008, p. 379). In the case of having a participatory character, its contact with the public should not be limited to knowing their opinion, but to critically reflect on what is advanced and what is lacking and to set out together new actions that enhance the transformative practice (Rodríguez, 2017, p. 20). (Rodríguez, 2017, p. 20).

On the other hand, an element that is repeatedly recognized as fundamental for Communication Management is a structure that is responsible for the communication processes, the training to that communication structure is another aspect alluded to in the literature, the communication policy that establishes general principles and guidelines that can be applied in specific communication plans. Strategy, Communication Plan, Communication and Identity Manual.

The complexity of organizational communication management contemplates intangible resources that are directly associated with meanings, these resources as mentioned by Costa (2009) are “identity, culture, value production, communication and image” (p. 73).

Taking these elements into account places the analysis of management at a level of comprehensiveness that allows projecting communication with greater success.

Conclusions

In line with the analysis carried out, it is synthesized by way of conclusions that the organizational communication management process responds to the needs and demands of the educational level of junior high schools, its implementation guarantees improvements in the relationship between the internal audiences that make up the educational community, and between these and their external audiences.

The historical, theoretical and methodological references of the organizational communication management process allowed us to understand the theories of this field of study and to elaborate a proposal for an operational definition of organizational communication management in junior high schools, as well as methods and instruments to diagnose this process and implement impact actions.