

Impact of Satisfaction with Internal Communication on Work Engagement: Correlational Analysis

Impacto de la satisfacción con la comunicación interna en el engagement laboral: Análisis correlacional

Impacto da satisfação com a comunicação interna no engajamento no trabalho: análise correlacional

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This quantitative study analyzes the impact of satisfaction with communication on the work engagement of employees in social firms. Two surveys were administered to obtain the correlation coefficient between both variables. A strong, positive and direct relationship was confirmed and it was found that vigor and commitment, components of work engagement, were more affected by satisfaction with organizational perspective, organizational integration, personal feedback and quality of communication media, which constitute components of satisfaction with communication.

KEY WORDS: Work environment; work commitment; communication; correlation; job satisfaction.

Este estudio cuantitativo analiza el impacto de la satisfacción con la comunicación en el compromiso laboral de los colaboradores de empresas sociales. Se aplicaron dos encuestas para obtener el coeficiente de correlación entre ambas variables. Se confirmó una relación fuerte, positiva y directa y se obtuvo que el vigor y la dedicación, componentes del work engagement, fueron más afectadas por la satisfacción con la perspectiva organizacional, la integración organizacional, la retroalimentación personal y la calidad de los medios de comunicación, componentes de la satisfacción con la comunicación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Ambiente de trabajo; compromiso laboral; comunicación; correlación; satisfacción en el trabajo.

Este estudo quantitativo analisa o impacto da satisfação com a comunicação no engajamento profissional de funcionários de empresas sociais. Foram aplicados dois inquéritos para obtenção do coeficiente de correlação entre as duas variáveis. Confirmou-se uma relação forte, positiva e direta e constatou-se que o vigor e a dedicação, componentes do engagement no trabalho, foram mais afetados pela satisfação com a perspectiva organizacional, pela integração organizacional, pelo feedback pessoal e pela qualidade dos meios de comunicação, componentes da satisfação com comunicação.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ambiente de trabalho; comprometimento com o trabalho; comunicação; correlação; satisfação no trabalho.

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INTRODUCTION

Technological developments have brought changes in the behavior of people, companies, and organizations. This has led to consumers having access to resources that evaluate and criticize companies (Ferro, 2015). One of the demands faced by companies is to be sustainable (Urdañ & Luoma, 2020). Sustainability is associated with better employment, environmental care, quality of life, and economic development, resulting in better and higher tangible and intangible profits (Chungyalpa, 2019; Ukko et al., 2019). More than a proactive business action, sustainability is what most informed consumers demand, choose, and prioritize in their purchasing decisions (Chungyalpa, 2019; Stubbs, 2019). However, small businesses often lack sufficient resources to implement sustainability actions, even though it is easier for them to make sustainability-oriented changes than in large and consolidated companies (Arévalo et al., 2020; Ukko et al., 2019).

For this reason, sustainability has been included as an innovation factor for new business ideas in the private sector, providing solutions to social or environmental problems that are sources of economic development: Social enterprises, which are the answer to a more responsible and conscious market (Arévalo et al., 2020; Stubbs, 2019). They have the same business responsibilities, but also face different types of challenges, so they have to be efficient in their use of resources (Arévalo et al., 2020; Moussetis & Cavenagh, 2021).

One of the greatest challenges for a social enterprise is to act under different areas to develop entrepreneurially, despite the fact that one of the great assets of this type of firm is its engagement with its internal and external stakeholders. Entrepreneurs do not pay attention to internal communication strategy and human capital management (Moussetis & Cavenagh, 2021; Sroka & Meyer, 2021). Organizations perform through the attitudes, skills and abilities of their workforce: their commitment and satisfaction (Arévalo et al., 2020). Therefore, since there is no precedent in the field of research on internal communication and human capital management, this study analyzes how satisfaction with communication affects the work commitment of workers in social enterprises of the Kunan Network in Peru.

The Kunan Network integrates and articulates the ecosystem of social enterprises. However, the strategic development of these companies is still a work in progress. Therefore, the objective is to provide an objective overview of the management of work engagement in social enterprises in Peru, also providing them with a professional approach to internal communication management as a tool to improve their performance. Thus, the objective of this research is to determine the influence of communication on the work engagement of employees in social enterprises.

WORK ENGAGEMENT

More than a decade ago, work engagement was defined as the antithesis of burnout, which was conceived as a state of continuous stress and mental exhaustion caused by work and was recognized as a work phenomenon but not as an occupational hazard (Arora & Knight, 2021; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Both engagement and job burnout encompass the concept of satisfaction with the supervisor, as well as with the remuneration, the work climate, and the perception of reciprocity, among other factors (Mäkikangas et al., 2017). Over the years, this relationship has become less valid. Currently, they are two related concepts, but in practice they operate independently and need to be managed in such a way, as engagement represents the positive aspect and burnout the negative one (Mäkikangas et al., 2017; Salmela-Aro & Upadyaya, 2018).

Moreover, the theoretical analysis of work engagement started by focusing on more tangible indicators such as work performance, and as the bond between the employee and the organization was strengthened, intangible indicators such as conduct, individuality, behavior, and satisfaction of higher-ranking professionals were included, with a focus on the employee (Lee & Ok, 2016). To this end, work engagement is considered as an intrinsic cognitive-affective, continuous and general state, which consists of three components or dimensions: Vigor, Commitment, and Absorption. The first refers to the employee's energy for the job, the second to the intrinsic motivation to perform the job, and the third to the persistence with which the employee performs the tasks (Schaufeli et al., 2002; Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Work engagement is a state of self-motivation and positive sentiment in which people committed to their work feel enthusiastic about their work, feel important, and spend time absorbed in their tasks, which is reflected in greater commitment and conviction to their work (De Guzman & Dumantay, 2019; Lee & Ok, 2016). Negative emotions such as pressure or supervisory stress affect work engagement because it is a consequence of behavior (Qiao, et al., 2021). There are challenge and restraint stressors. These occur when the work demand motivates the employee to seek solutions and activate their skills, thus generating positive emotions and coping behaviors toward the challenge, as they are confident that they will be able to overcome it. On the other hand, when the employee has to meet a goal with a tight deadline, for example, the employee begins to believe that despite their efforts, they will not be able to overcome the work requirement (Ding et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2022). Regardless of the positive or not so positive emotions, work engagement itself has a positive and beneficial connotation, as engagement and affective commitment are directly and strongly related to each other in terms of human capital management and internal communication (Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006).

Thus, the management of work engagement is based on the emotional state of employees, which can be analyzed with various predictors such as feedback, peer support, gender, age, and type of profession, which affects the effectiveness, self-sufficiency of collaborators, and low or no turnover intention, as this in itself ensures more consistent and coherent work with less absenteeism, low performance, and productivity on organizational results (Chungyalpa, 2019; Doraiswamy, 2016; Song et al., 2021).

WORK SATISFACTION AND COMMUNICATION

Currently, companies are adopting certain management practices for which they need the conviction of their employees and their total involvement, creating a transformational relationship (Madero-Gómez, 2020). If employees feel that they are developing through their tasks, have good working conditions, and have positive feelings about their job, they will feel satisfied; therefore, satisfied employees will transmit

this satisfaction to others so that they participate in the company's goals (Guerrero Bejarano et al., 2021; Romero et al., 2021). Job satisfaction is composed of different variables, conditions, feelings (positive and negative), and behaviors that individuals express about their jobs (Romero et al., 2021).

Job satisfaction is a set of perceptions influenced by factors such as gender and age, since each group has different perceptions of salary, level of responsibility, recognition, financial conditions, working hours and free time (Cappi & Felix, 2015; Guerrero Bejarano et al., 2021; Romero et al., 2021). Thus, job satisfaction is composed of external factors, such as compensation, working relationships and opportunities for advancement, and internal factors, such as among others, personal experiences, educational level, perception of happiness, physical and emotional well-being (Cappi & Felix, 2015). It should be taken into account that this concept is dynamic and changes according to new trends (social, economic, cultural, etc.) that influence how individuals feel in society (Marchiori et al., 2020; Paz et al., 2020). It is relevant to pay attention to these factors as they directly affect the level of work engagement and organizational commitment (Fu & Deshpande, 2014).

Job satisfaction is approached from the point of view of human resources management, the most relevant field for the analysis of the human being, a resource that is the primary basis for the development of any company and organization. This concept is also developed in the field of psychology, since it defines job satisfaction from the cognitive aspect as an evaluative judgment of work and from the affective side as emotional responses of support, respect and inspiration at work (De Andrade et al., 2020; Lupano & Castro, 2018).

Within psychology, creating a harmonious working environment at the personal and professional levels will involve managing internal communication (Paz et al., 2020). Considering that job satisfaction is a set of cognitive and affective responses, internal communication is a tool that allows employees to resolve doubts, complaints and recommendations through internal communication channels that need to be enabled and effective (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2019; Gismera et al., 2017). To manage and evaluate internal communication, it is necessary to consider the

channels, both physical and virtual, active listening, feedback, updating information according to circumstances or changes, and relevant and important content (Santos & Higashi, 2021). In addition, the management of these channels and the messages they convey must be adapted to new trends, such as digitization, in order to achieve bidirectionality, interactivity, empathy, and listening (Ewing et al., 2019).

Internal communication is strategic in nature. However, it is difficult to achieve results (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla, 2020) because in most organizations it is a human resources area and not under communication management. The sense of belonging, climate and job satisfaction of employees are directly related to the quality and proactivity of strategic communication, the avoidance of subjectivity in messages and the connection with their internal audiences (Abrashi, 2018). The information shared must be conveyed in a human way so that people can identify with it and consequently become involved (Ewing et al., 2019). It is the collaborators who recognize and value the efforts of internal communication, which should be aimed at talking, listening, inspiring, nurturing, developing, sharing, caring, engaging and celebrating (Cappi & Felix, 2015). Therefore, the buzz and conversation among collaborators is important: they are the primary audience and the organization must recognize them as active participants and not passive (Castro-Martínez & Díaz-Morilla; Dhanesh, 2017; Santos & Higashi, 2021).

Because of its importance, internal communication must be intentional and include all employees in the communication network, both horizontally and vertically, upward and downward. Otherwise, employees may feel that they are not considered and are not part of the organization, which will negatively affect their work performance and cause financial losses (Abrashi, 2018; Santos & Higashi, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study is positioned in the positivist paradigm (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) and is quantitative in character, as the study determines the impact of satisfaction with communication on the degree of work engagement of workers in Peruvian social enterprises. Given the nature

of the research question, the data analyzed and findings are correlational (Field, 2018). The population studied is made up of all those working in any of the social enterprises included in the Kunan Network. The sampling carried out is non-probabilistic: by convenience and snowball, since the database has access to maps and records of 307 companies, but not the number of their employees (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Two surveys were used to collect the data: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ). The UWES was used to determine the level of employee engagement. The UWES was developed by Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) with a Likert scale from zero to six, where zero = Never and six = Always, consisting of 17 items. The CSQ, developed by Downs and Hazen (1977), measures the satisfaction with the communication based on a Likert scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied and is composed of 40 questions. These two instruments, the UWES by Laureano et al. (2020) and the CSQ by Alvarado et al. (2017), have already been applied in the Peruvian context.

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, 80 surveys were virtually applied in the span of 60 days; the data were decoded in Excel, where the variables “age” and “position held” were regrouped and decoded. The former, when referring to employees, was grouped according to the segmentation of the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics for the economically active population (INEI, 2018). The second considered the segmentation of positions by decision-making level within the company (Láinez et al., 2008).

The SPSS program was used to determine the level of reliability of both instruments, estimating Cronbach’s alpha at the unidimensional and multidimensional levels. Then, the means were estimated to perform the correlation analysis of the means of the independent variable on the dependent variable at the unidimensional and multidimensional levels. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) indicate the classification of work engagement data based on the following: Determine the 5th, 25th, 75th, and 95th percentiles in SPSS to define the normative score ranges that will be a rule for classifying the average scores into five levels (very low, low, medium, high, and very high). In order to objectify the results and keep both work engagement and satisfaction with communication variables numerical, we decided not to convert the numerical data

into ordinal variables, as suggested by the authors of the UWES. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used because the means belong to continuous ordinal variables (Riffenburgh, 20128). For Pearson's correlation coefficient, values from 0 to $+0.2$ indicate a weak relationship, from $+0.2$ to $+0.6$ moderate, and from $+0.6$ to $+1$ strong (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, positive (+) scores are described as a direct relationship, meaning that as one variable increases due to the correlation, the other variable will also increase; and negative (-) scores are described as an inverse relationship, meaning that as one variable increases, the other variable will decrease. An information sheet was sent to each participant informing them of the research purpose, risks, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained from participants for each questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since the research included two variables that operate both unidimensional and multidimensional, it became relevant to find out the reliability of both and to define the validity and internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability analysis of both variables was carried out and it was found that the UWES has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.947 and the CSQ has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.973, both higher than 0.7, thus showing the internal consistency of both instruments used here. Both the unidimensionally applied questionnaires and the application of the multidimensions independently have validity for the analysis of each component, since each dimension of each instrument passed the 0.7 threshold. This means that the application of both instruments works as unidimensional and multidimensional, and the dimensions of each instrument also work independently to measure the variable they are analyzing.

We have worked with two variables that can be analyzed in a unidimensional and multidimensional way. Both Downs and Hazen (1977) in the CSQ –instrument that measures satisfaction with communication– and Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) in the UWES – instrument that measures work engagement– require the obtaining of averages of the data collected for their processing and classification, in order to obtain more accurate results for the analysis and demonstration of the possible existence of a relationship between both study variables.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was determined between the independent variable, satisfaction with communication, and the dependent variable, work engagement, a coefficient applicable to continuous ordinal variables, such as those studied (Sarlis & Gallhofer, 2014). The type of correlation is shown and explained below.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF THE LEVEL OF WORK ENGAGEMENT AND THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIDIMENSIONAL AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL LEVELS

Variables	Dimensions	Media	DE	Level
Work		4.7	0.96	High
Engagement				
	Vigor	4.78	0.99	High Average
	Commitment	5.10	1.03	High
	Absorption	4.20	1.12	Average
Satisfaction with communication		5.51	0.92	High
	Organizational Perspective	5.19	1.11	Average
	Organizational Integration	5.51	1.04	Average
	Personal Feedback	5.36	1.10	Average
	Communication with Supervisor	5.86	1.07	High
	Horizontal and Informal Communication	5.63	0.95	High
	Subordinate Communication	5.57	0.87	High
	Quality of Means of Communication	5.46	1.21	Average
	Communication Climate	5.44	1.26	Average

Source: Compiled by the authors.

TABLE 2
PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT OF THE MEANS OF THE COMPONENTS OF SATISFACTION
WITH COMMUNICATION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

Variable 1		Variable 2	Square Chi	Existence Correlation	Pearson's coefficient
Satisfaction with communication	&	Work engagement	0.03	Yes	0.68
Dimensions of satisfaction with communication		Work engagement dimensions			
Organizational perspective	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.64
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.69
		Absorption	0.00	Yes	0.56
Organizational integration	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.63
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.67
		Absorption	0.00	Yes	0.45
Personal feedback	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.65
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.64
		Absorption	0.00	Yes	0.54
Supervisor communication	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.44
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.39
		Absorption	0.05	Yes	0.33
Horizontal and informal communication	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.53
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.60
		Absorption	0.10	Yes	0.46

Variable 1		Variable 2	Square Chi	Existence Correlation	Pearson's coefficient
Subordinate communication	&	Vigor	0.01	Yes	0.48
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.55
		Absorption	0.04	Yes	0.37
Quality of the means of communication	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.61
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.64
		Absorption	0.20	Yes	0.49
Communication climate	&	Vigor	0.00	Yes	0.59
		Commitment	0.00	Yes	0.63
		Absorption	0.00	Yes	0.47

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The study variables (commitment to work and satisfaction with communication), when treated as unidimensional, have a coefficient greater than 0.2, which confirms the existence of a relationship between the two. Moreover, it is positive, since +0.6 indicates a direct, linear correlation of strong magnitude or intensity. This means that as satisfaction with communication increases, so does the average level of employee engagement, and vice versa. This supports the idea that because this variable responds to the sense of active listening in the workplace and the motivation perceived by employees, the components of internal communication, such as internal channels, level of communication, and quality of communication, influence the level of work engagement. These areas respond to and are improved by strategic internal communication (Abrashi, 2018; Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Therefore, proper communication management becomes an important ally for human capital management.

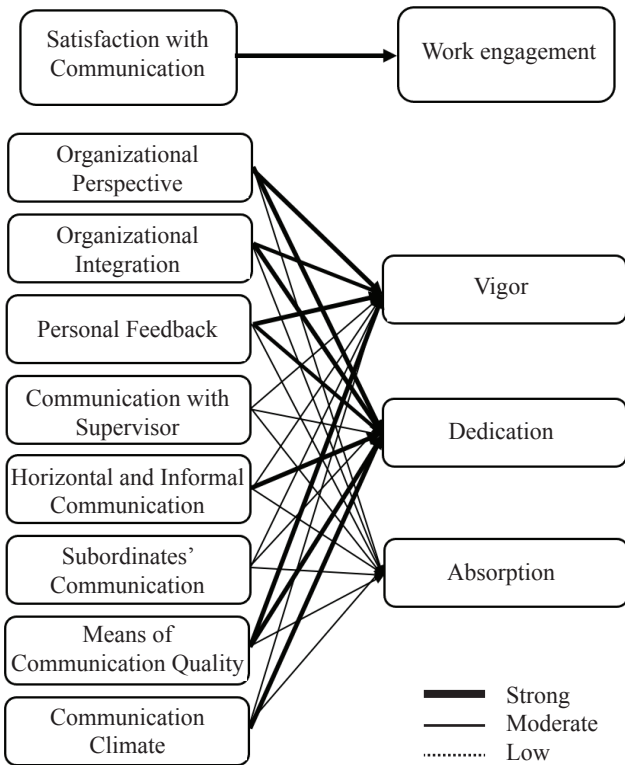
At the multidimensional level, the dimensions of satisfaction with communication are directly correlated to average vigor, commitment and absorption, which have a strong linear correlation, except for absorption whose magnitude of correlation is only moderate. This scenario is replicated with the following sub-dimensions: Organizational perception, organizational integration, personal feedback and quality of the means of communication.

This may be due to the fact that the first two variables have a psychological component and can be enhanced by means of communication, such as motivation and well-being, while absorption contains, within its concept, satisfaction with administrative aspects, such as remuneration, level of education and hierarchy within the company (Cappi & Felix, 2015; Marchiori et al., 2020).

Regarding satisfaction with horizontal and informal communication and communication climate, the relationship was found to be direct, linear and moderate for vigor and absorption, but in its interaction with commitment, the density of the correlation becomes stronger. This may be because both satisfaction with horizontal communication and communication climate are tools used to impart the impact and relevance of the work performed, the sense of belonging, affiliation and inspiration generated with the company (Madero-Gómez, 2020; Marchiori et al., 2020; Paz et al., 2020).

Finally, satisfaction with supervisor/subordinate communication is linearly and directly related to work engagement dimensions, but these interactions with vigor, commitment, and absorption are moderate in magnitude. Thus, they are the least influential on work engagement. Previous studies (Ewing et al., 2019; Santos & Higashi, 2021) mention that transversal communication, because it depends on the human factor,

FIGURE 1
UNI- AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL CORRELATION DIAGRAM



Note: The lines show the magnitude/intensity of the relationship between the variables, classified according to the legend in the image.
Source: Compiled by the authors.

becomes a much more dynamic and changing factor. Therefore, it is more difficult to manage and presents greater opportunities for error. Above is a correlation diagram that visually shows the magnitudes of the relationships and their interactions in a clear and concise manner.

CONCLUSIONS

The statistical correlation, which is direct and has a strong impact on work engagement, confirms the impact of satisfaction with internal communication on the work engagement of employees of social enterprises in the Kunan Network.

The dimensions of communication satisfaction that have the most impact, or a “strong” impact, on the dimensions of work engagement are organizational perspective, organizational integration, personal feedback, and media quality, while those that have the least impact, or a “moderate” impact, are satisfaction with horizontal and informal communication, communication climate, subordinate communication, and supervisor communication (in that order). The vigor and commitment dimensions of work engagement are the most affected, and absorption is the least or “moderately” affected variable. No interaction of the variables is weakly correlated at either the unidimensional or the multidimensional level.

The study had three limitations. First of all, the sample is not probabilistic due to the impossibility of traveling to the departments of the country where the operational positions of the majority of social enterprises are located. Considering that the hierarchy of positions is an important factor of influence, it would be relevant to include them in a representative way. Secondly, there was a linguistic limitation, since Spanish is not the mother tongue of many of the employees, and so the instrument had to be adapted in order to be fully understood. Finally, there was a technological problem because, according to the COVID-19 protocols, the survey was conducted virtually, so participants needed to have an electronic device and access to the Internet to fill it out, and many of these employees do not have access to them on a regular basis.

These factors, which were not the subject of this study, should be the subject of future qualitative studies in order to have a better

understanding of how communication can be an ally in the improvement of the level of work engagement and, consequently, of business performance. It is also recommended that, in order to provide companies with a more efficient, practical and useful model for assessing work engagement based on internal communication management, more studies should be developed that define precise models between the interactions of both variables at a multidimensional level.

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