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PECULIARITIES OF COMMUNICATION PROCESSES IN SELF-MANAGED WORK TEAM

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Abstract

Theoretical and methodological foundations of research of communicative processes in a self-managed work team are considered in the paper. The self-managed work team has been studied as a form of organisational self-management. Communication processes act as a foundation of management of social relations. Therefore, the study of communication processes is connected with the change of the structure of the team, the structure of communication, decentralization and complexity of tasks of self-managed work teams, which implies the necessity of free access to information and effective exchange with it. Analysis is conducted based on the study of models of teams, models of communication processes, as well as materials. The empirical sociological study is undertaken in the company "Lubimyi Krai" in 2009-2016. The paper includes a characteristic of the study; an interdisciplinary approach underlies the study. The purpose of the paper is to reveal the peculiarities of communication processes in the self-managed work team and to develop the directions of improvement the activity of self-managed work teams. General scientific methods and the methods of concrete-sociological studies are used in the paper. The authors of the paper provide analysis of the findings. It is possible to conclude that it is necessary to improve the process of introduction and formation of self-managed work teams as a form of organisational self-management, the programmes of lifelong coeducation of employees and tutorship, which allow involving the participants of the work team in the production of sociocultural models of behaviour.

Keywords: Self-managed work team, communication processes, models.

1. Introduction

Under conditions of the existing multipolar world, which is characterised by the changeability, instability and diversity (Kuznetsova, Markova, 2015), mini-teams, a self-managed work team become the main element of an organisation. A modern stage of development of the organisational design is characterised by the development of self-management and a transition from vertical to horizontal information relationships (Borisov, Strelnikova, 2016). The self-managed work team is a specific form of organisation of social relations.

The necessity of studying the peculiarities of self-managed work teams' formation is conditioned by the following factors. First, organisation management becomes a work which concerns every human being. Ubiquitous spreading of self-managed work teams in the organisations of different types shows that these forms of arrangement of labour activity are potentially more effective than traditional groups from the viewpoint of a speed of reaction to the situation and a quality of decision-making (Akmaeva, Lunev, Mineva, 2015). Second, under modern conditions, the changes of the social, political and economic worldview are accompanied by crisis events. Organisations aim at providing an increasing horizontal coordination among work operations; thus, the boundaries among subdivisions are blurred. Flexibility and ability of the system of subject-subjective and subject-objective social relations to adapt leads to establishing new horizontal relationships and new communication channels, formation and development of the content of one or another cultural-organisational environment. Third, practical from the scientific viewpoint study of factors, facilitating effective introduction of self-managed work teams in the management practice, is of particular attention (Wei, Lau, 2012). Fourth, in the scientific sense, from the viewpoint of management sociology, there is a collapse, which consists in the absence of research programmes that would base on rigorous methods of cognition and obtained reliable data on transforming the mechanisms of management regulation and self-regulation of new cultural samples of a so quickly spreading post-industrial paradigm. Fifth, there is a tendency of active introduction of work teams in organisations of the very different types, but this innovation does not always provide a positive effect for the organisation, which is justified by some number of examples of insufficiently effective teams. Sixth, development of the information technologies leads, in its turn, to the change of traditional standard requirements for employees. New jobs appear, but along with this, the readiness to change, to adapt, an ability to reach an agreement and to resolve conflict situations are appreciated. Possessing such skills and abilities becomes the most important requirements for both employees and supervisors. At that, the supervisor must not only know and understand modern digital technologies, but also possess skills and abilities of management of the social relations' network. Seventh, globalisation acquires new scales. In this connection, there is an increased necessity of specialists who possess profound special knowledge in different branches of science and engineering and who must work in collaboration within one company for achieving the unified complex goal. There is a growing demand for coordination, which, in turn, implies making high demands on skills of team work for different specialists so that they could achieve corporate and personal goals.

Thus, the tendency to the enhancement of the all-round professionalism of employees and quick changes in the external environment weaken bureaucracy, and the number of levels of hierarchy in the company and the personnel training replace the rules and instructions to a significant degree.

2.   Problem Statement

The problem is connected with the search of the ways of providing the efficiency of self-managed work teams and is conditioned by insufficient effectiveness of self-managed work teams in the management practice of different organisations. The dynamic external world dictates the necessity of establishing flexible structures, able to rearrange themselves independently. On the other hand, high demands are made on an employee, on one's qualification and ability to perform contiguous functions. At that, there is a situation of absence of the adjusted mechanisms of social partnership (Kalashnikov, Sharov, 2017). The employees learn in the process of work. For this, it is necessary to master the skill of communication; therefore, the development of communication skills comes to the fore. Communicative processes act as a common thread when organising social relations of all structural elements in the self-managed team. Hence, the coordinating function is provided.

3.   Research Questions

The problematics of studies of self-managed work teams forms a disciplinary field of such sciences as sociology, psychology, economics, management. The specifics of this research of self-managed work teams has also revealed and proved the necessity of the interdisciplinary approach. The self-managed work team in this paper is considered as a small group of people, which is able to distribute the volume of executive and managerial functions independently. The self-managed work team, in contrast to any other team, functions autonomously and includes all members for making common decisions, coordinates and controls their work, educates and supports the initiative, bears collective responsibility for the results of its activity (Pestova, 2011). A large number of works are devoted to the study of work teams (Bavelas and Barrett, 1951), to the study of leadership and supervision (Katzenbach, Smith, 1994), typology of teams (Samoylenko, Voronina, 2013), building and the role of effective communications in the team (Rogersand, Rogers, 1976), group dynamics (Shaw, 1976), factors of team development (Sotnikova, 2016), influence of communications on the productivity (Parker, 1996). Studying different emphases of this question, scientists (Daft, Murphy, Wilmott, 2013) identified five coordination mechanisms of horizontal relationships, which facilitate coordination of actions and improve the information flow: information systems, immediate contact, target groups, a staff integrator, teams.

The main peculiarity of the self-managed work team is freedom of creation and management of situations. A base model is a model of the situation, understood as some configuration of system components at the moment of their interaction (Dudchenko, 1996). When interpreting the situation, Dudchenko V.S. suggested identifying two moments:

1.   The concept "configuration" reflects the composition, interrelations, interaction, and new biased meanings.
2.   Specific situations are considered as problematic.

The category "situation" allows realising the process of training by means of representative modelling of the fragments of human life activity. One of the first tasks is to establish orientation to reflexive work and acquisition of skills of such actions in the participants. At that, the effectiveness is achieved owing to alternation of the work in the situation and in the reflexive position. First, it is

necessary to master the operation of transition, and then – the transition to the position of the problem organiser (Dudchenko, 1996). To solve problems, it is necessary to learn to coordinate the actions of different people. This model orients to a new understanding of the situation, an understanding of problems. At that, it is important to achieve the building of unified interpretational schemes.

The strategy of team development, establishing dialogue areas for defining development trends, is presented as very promising:

1. Arrangement of meetings.
2. Selection of elements of interaction.
3. Open exchange with viewpoints, avoidance of arguments.

Sessions for analysis of meetings (Strelnikova, 2016).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to reveal the peculiarities of communication processes in the self-managed work team. Besides, it is necessary to develop the directions of improving self-managed work teams' activity. To achieve the purpose, the authors conducted a comparative analysis of the models of organising communication processes in the self-managed work team. Based on the undertaken empirical social study, the authors identified the factors facilitating the introduction and formation of self-managed work teams as a form of organisational self-management.

5. Research Methods

Conditions and factors of formation of self-managed work teams, namely communication processes, are of interest to the authors, which implies studying an informal structure of social relations and latent mechanisms of its development.

The specifics of the empirical object – a self-managed work team as a form of organisational self-management – requires a complex multifaceted study and diverse information sources, studying it as an integrity.

The strategy "case-study", which allows describing the team interaction, revealing the peculiarities of formation, corresponds to all the mentioned conditions. Besides, this strategy allows a complex study of the selected object as well. Therefore, the authors chose the strategy of case analysis or "case-study" as a research strategy.

In the paper, the authors used:

1. General scientific methods: methods of systemic, process, problem, situational and comparative analysis, theoretical modelling, methods of typologization, empirical and theoretical generalization.
2. Methods of concrete sociological studies: analysis of documentary data, observation, participant observation, a questionnaire, a developing diagnostic interview, a free interview.

The combined multistep sample was applied in the study. At the first stage of the selection of sampling population from the list of organisations, one company was chosen at random – Confectionary Association "Lubimyi Krai". At the second stage, two working teams, involved in production of pastries,

were chosen within this organisation. One of them is effective (demonstrates high performance – shift No. 3); the other is ineffective (demonstrates low performance – shift No. 4). At the third stage of determining sampling population within the limits of the work teams, the participants of the teams were interviewed; they answered the questions of the questionnaire.

6. Findings

On the whole, it is possible to state that development of horizontal communications provides the function of the social system integration and unification of the employees into a unified interconnected whole. At that, a high synchronization of actions of subdivisions is provided by the subjectivity development of the individual, able to freely participate in the process of action and to react to arising problems, to take a stance of an organiser of problem solution. A team participator acts as a builder of situations.

Development of the horizontal coordination facilitates the blurring of the boundaries among subdivisions, which allows employees to aware and accept the goals of the organisation as a whole, not of a separate subdivision, the member of which they are. The horizontal structure is based on cooperation.

By the results of the empirical sociological study, the factors of improving the process of introduction of self-managed work teams as a form of organisational self-management include:

- formation of cultural models, corresponding to a self-management system (management stereotypes relatively the labour quality, consistent with the concept of self-managed work teams, how the labour is organised: what is good and what is bad);
- educational level of employees in management;
- strategies of conflict resolution;
- common goal, shared by everybody;
- common system of team values, shared by everybody;
- necessary programme of coeducation of work team participants, including the presence of a mediator in training – a trainer, a tutor;
- motivation level of employees;
- awareness level;
- effective communications.

7. Conclusion

To improve the process of introduction and formation of self-managed work teams as a form of organisational self-management, the programmes of lifelong coeducation of employees and tutorship, which will allow involving the work team participants in the production of sociocultural behaviour models, are necessary. Training programmes and tutorship are the mechanism of transformation of social relations. When developing and introducing the programmes of coeducation by the self-managed work team, as a form of organisational self-management, it is necessary to take into account the mentality of employees and management stereotypes that exist in the organisation, to adapt training programmes

taking into account this circumstance. The main vector of training is development of communication skills.

Acknowledgments

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