

COMMUNICATION ABILITIES OF DAMBOVITA'S MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT. In modern times, the complexity and mobility of the socio- economical environment lead to shaping and developing some improved abilities on which the quality and evolution of the organizational management depend. Communication abilities are essential in business, the preoccupation of the manager should be permanent to improve the communication abilities that build relationships, improve working relations and can lead to raising team's performance. This is the reasons that lead to making a research that reflects the realities related to managerial communication in Dâmbovița's IMMs seeing the interest that these have towards the communication quality resulting efficiently in the company image.

Key words: *communication, managerial communication, organizational communication.*

Jel classification: D 22

1. Introduction

Each of us knows at least from the professional point of view that we live without precedent times especially if we refer to the global economical situation. There are many specialists that admit that many of the well known theories of the economy are no longer in use and this lead to searching new solutions to improve concrete situations of an organization in occupational areas with wide applicability or

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considerable age and importance in an area like human communication. This way, starting from the global concept of communication, we go due to its importance in the well being of the activity towards the organizational and managerial communication.

Any organization that has in its structure people placed on different levels of responsibility, with professional training, with different education and experience. All these communicate each moment the good development of this process influences decisively the well being of the organization they are part of. The Romanian firms have to align to the advanced experience in communication that the large foreign firms that have invested in on the territory of this country and that is why it is necessary that each manager understands the necessity of these efforts and build together with its team a communication pattern that would take into account the firm features, the organizational culture and the perception of each employee on communication.

Known as the key to the excellence and organizational efficiency (Grunig, 1992), communication is important for the firm unity and for its function. The organizational communication process knows a lot of definitions each of them keeping the important elements: the transmitter, the receiver, the message, the channel, the feedback. One of the most important aspects of the organizational communication is that it has a central axis made of the dialogue and the transmission of indications and directions (Minulescu, 2004) that can be efficiently worked through managerial communication open towards the informational flux allowed in communication. Only a lot of credible communication from the managers can earn the hearts and the minds the employees (Kotter, 2007) and can lead to the success of the firm. The style in which communication is made has to be adequate to the interlocutor in order to reach the aim and the objectives of the communication (Cândeia and Cândeia, 1996, a) and in order not to communicate at random, the firm needs a communication plan with communicative strategies realized through participative managerial processes. It is useful that from time to time there should be programs in the firm that allow perfecting the communication abilities so necessary to the organizational and managerial level and which leads to the achievement of the firm's objectives and aims, that has to communicate efficiently pursuing the general politics of communication where it becomes a complementary instrument that through communication makes the firm communicative.

1.1 Actual conceptual clarifications on the managerial communication problem

From the historical point of view you can say that studies on the communication have been made since the antiquity with the apparition in Egypt of the first books addressed to the “ambitious bureaucracy” (Reading and Tompkins, 1988). Later, in the V-IV th century B.C, the Greece give communication the status of science by creating the first schools that developed specific methods and techniques (Țiclea 2011). The father of the modern economy, Adam Smith (Smith, 1985) had related preoccupations materialized in “Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres”, courses taught at the Edinburgh University, between 1748-1763 when he established a theory for communication and linguistic functions relevant for the economical behavior. The first managerial communication courses were officially introduced in the university’s curricula in 1920 in some universities in USA and then in the European universities (Cândea and Cândea 1996, b). The beginning of the 50’s brought the introduction of another studying discipline: organizational communication which initially gathered more disciplines: rhetoric, psychology, administrative science, sociology, political science (Putnam and Cheney, 1985). The raising interest for this subject led to the appearing of a lot of theories and patterns of communications. From the linear perception: transmitter, message, receiver – up to the NLP of the third millenary, the research has gradually evolved and also the importance of communication. So, following the researches, the efficiency of the organizational was maximized through opening the communication (Indik, Georgopolos and Seashore, 1961) and that it is essential in the organizational climate to be an open channel between the superiors and the employees (Haney, 1972) especially that the right information given to the right people can be sent only through efficient communication (Johns, 1998).

A great number of researches had as aim identifying the answers to the theoretical interest related to various aspects of the organizational life. So, were analyzed from the communicative point of view:

- aspects related to communication as an occupational discipline (Applegate, 2002)
- managerial efficiency (Barge, 2004; Clampitt, 2010)
- evolutions in communication (Fidler&Johnson, 1984)
- managing crisis (Downing, 2007)

- leadership (Fairhurst, 2007)
- managing conflicts (Vorkerslkema, Bergmann, Farquhar, 1997)
- organizational programs for improving communication (Seibold, Kudsi, Rude, 1993)

Passing to the performance management in the 70's imposes managers to develop complex communication abilities both inside and outside the organization, this becoming the main role of the manager (Mintzberg, 1973). A few years later, anew characteristic is added to the manager's work -interconnection – in which the manager receives and gives information (Kotter, 1982). Another study, (Luthans and Larsen, 1986) proves that 60 to 80 % of the time is used by managers to communicate.

The complexity of the implications and objectives of communication in the organizational life have imposed managerial communication managerial features related to the necessity of best interaction between manager and coworkers to fulfill its function and role. Influenced by the manifesting environment managerial communication is shaped first by the manager's personality and then by the manager's that they practice and the self respect and the respect towards the others. Now you can speak about a real interest towards improving communication abilities in all domains of activities but until a real efficient communication we still have to wait especially when we think that for this, we need a lot of science and especially a native talent.

2. The research methodology

One of the most difficult jobs of the manager is to communicate clearly and precisely his decisions to the coworkers.

The study we have made on the Dâmbovița's county managers wishes to give an image as clear as possible on the actual stage of interest and preoccupation towards the importance and improvement of the managerial communication. The empirical research quantitatively took the shape of a poll. The data was gathered through interviews using the face to face investigation technique.

The instrument used to gather data was the questionnaire which along with the identification data there were 12 questions related to the communication process in the firms that took part in the research and involved the decisive leaders on all three managerial levels. The

questionnaire has 17 preset questions (the questionnaire pattern is presented in appendix 1) and for the research the semantic difference was used, the four level type. The questions were grouped on analysis domains that allow a realistic view in the communication abilities of the interviewed managers.

The research unit is set as being the person with the leadership and decisive function in the firms that took part in the research: team leaders, supervisors, managers, department leaders, consultants, general managers and compartment managers. The observation unit is represented by a firm from Dâmbovița. The time used to gather data is 25. 01. 2012 to 31. 08. 2012 and were worked in Microsoft Excel. The appreciations on each type of answer to the 12 questions related to the communication process were evidenced by the medium score of the average media:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum x_i * n_i}{\sum z_i} \quad \text{where: } x_i = \text{is relative frequency,}$$

$$n_i = \text{is the grade given to the answer and}$$

$$z_i = \text{is the total answers to the analyzed question.}$$

The calculation tables for each question can be found in Appendix 2.
The study aimed:

- the analysis of the managers' attitude towards the communication process;
- the analysis of the managers' interest towards communication.

The research assumptions:

- I – Dâmbovița's managers show moderate interest towards communication quality in their firm,
- II – managers overestimate the communication efficiency in their firm,
- III – managers have no real preoccupations towards perfecting communication process.

2.1. The dimension and structure of the sample

The study was realized on a representative sample of 360 firms from each CAEN domain using a random simple scheme. The sample structure according to the Dâmbovița Register of Commerce data is representative for the real distribution at the county level (Diagram 1). 400 questionnaires were applied and 394 were validated.

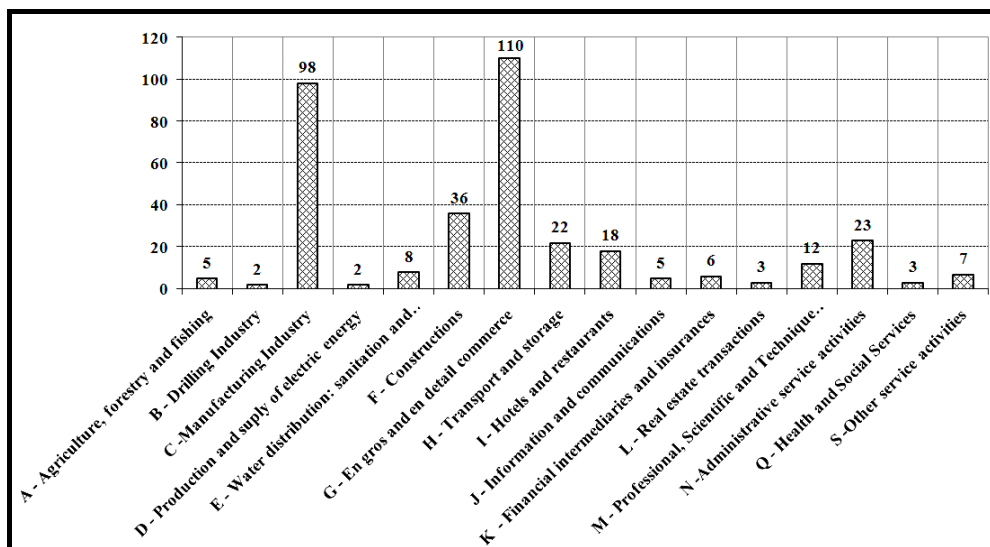


Diagram 1. The pattern structure according to CAEN

Source: own projection

To establish the size of the representative sample in order to gather significant statistical data the formula Taro Yamane, method that starts from the whole number of people without taking into account the characteristics of the population and is recommended for small groups.

$$M_E = \frac{N}{(1 + N * e^2)} \quad \text{where: } e = \text{is the maximum admitted error,} \\ N = \text{is the measure of the studied group.}$$

The research group is represented by the all the firms in Dâmbovița county having a number of employees between 10 and 49 (602 firms). The maximum admitted error degree is 3.4%. The 394 managers questioned in the study form a similar sample that reflects the reality of the Dâmbovița county (diagram 2).

With the average age between 40 and 42 and the 257 men and 137 women managers, they have an average age in the firm somewhere between 8 and 10 years.

From the educational point of view, from the first line managers or supervisors (191) that took part in the research, 80.10 % graduated average studies.

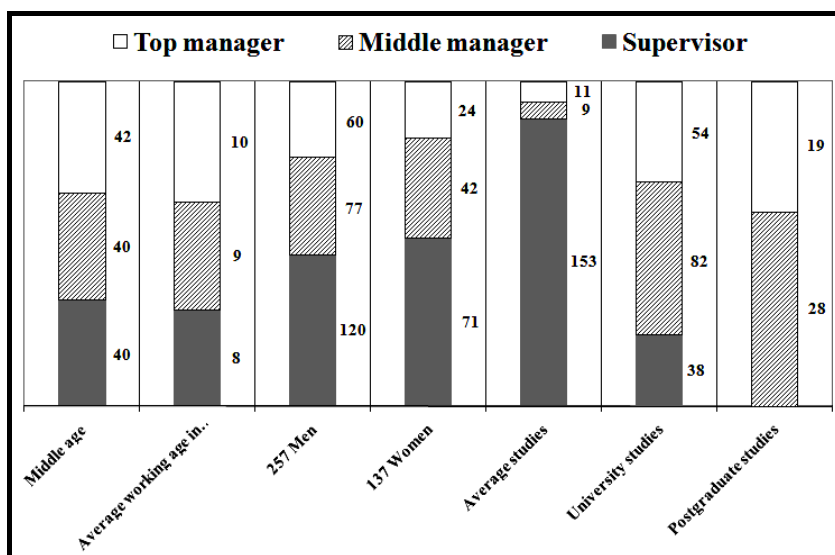


Diagram 2. The sample structure

Source: own projection

Managers of middle level (119) in 68.9 % graduated university studies or post graduate (23.52 %). From the 84 top managers 64.28 % have university studies and 22.61 % have post graduate studies.

At the level of the sample we have studied the situation is: 56.09 % have university studies, (44.16 % university studies and 11.93 % post-graduate studies) and 43.91 % have average studies.

3. The results of the research

The study made aimed by grouping questions in the questionnaire the analysis of the following domain of interest.

1. The firm image as perceived by the managers in the actions made by these to improve it (questions 1, 2 and 3).

2. The managerial attitude analysis towards the quality of communication (questions 4, 5, 6 and 7).

3. The interest shown by the managers to the results of the communication process in the firms they manage (questions 8 and 9).

4. The perception of the Dâmbovița managers towards the efficiency of the used communication (questions 10, 11 and 12).

In appendix 2 there is the sample structure according to CAEN domain that includes the activity of the firms from the sample. The average score got at each question is detailed in appendix 3-6.

3.1. The image of the firm seen by the managers and their actions taken in order to improve it: questions 1, 2 and 3 (diagram 3)

The image of a firm transmits when it is well shaped the mission and its values. Establishing and communicating the mission, the vision and the values of the firm are priority jobs for the managers that have to ensure that they were understood and learned by the employees because they are the ones that show the firm image towards the outside.

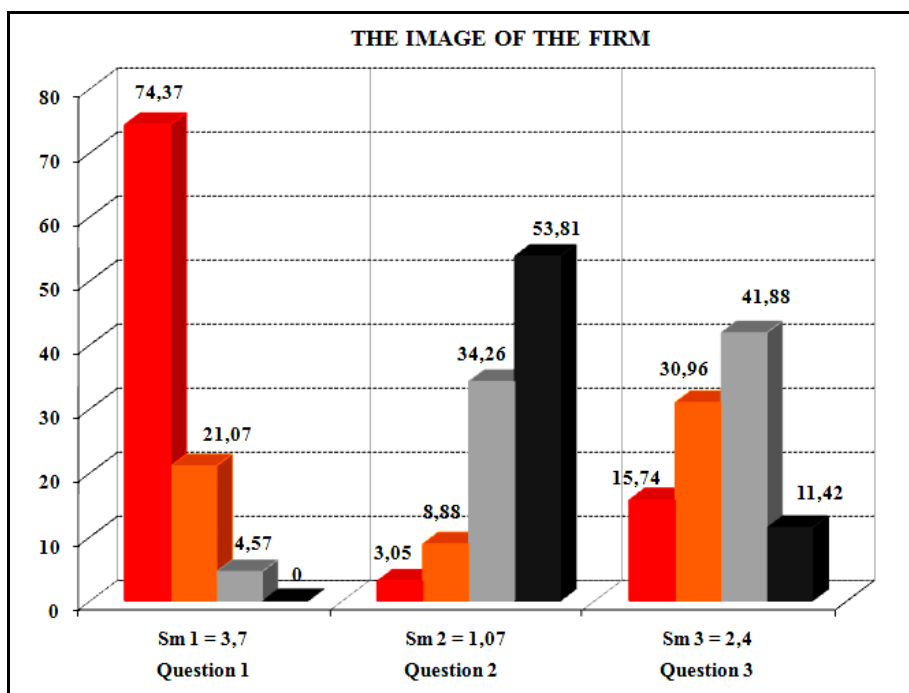


Diagram 3. The image of the firm seen by the managers and the actions taken to improve it

Source: own projection

If we speak about small firms, multinationals or consortia the image is permanently built with effort, professionalism and having a communication plan that contains acting, communicating and positioning objectives, strategies and budget.

Managers have declared in 95.44 % that the image of the firm is very important to them (74.37 %) and important (21.07 %), raising the average score of the question very close to maximum (3.7).

The obtained score to the second question is low, 1.07 because only 11.93 % of the managers work with specialists in PR in order to improve the image of the company and among these, they almost all the time 3.05 %, often, 8.88 %. Most of the managers, 53.81 % have never worked with specialists in improving the image of the firm.

In what the usefulness of any communication internal audit is concerned 53.3 % from the Dâmbovița managers think it would be useless (11.42 %) or a little useful (41.88), only 15.74 % of them think it would be very useful. The average of 2.4 got at this question shows that they are aware of the importance of the audit in communication.

3.2. The analysis of the managers' attitude towards the quality of communication: questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 (diagram 4).

A good communication in manager's case is related to knowledge of basic elements of communication, of the shapes and webs in communications, the preoccupation over the permanent perfecting of communication. The awareness of the importance of communication on the performance of the employees and the firm can make a good manager analyze carefully this aspect of his activity.

In this study 98.22 % of the questioned managers agree that communication with the business partners is very important (77.66 %) and important (20.56), these answers raising the average score of the question almost to maximum (3.76).

Only 7.87 % of the managers think necessary the improvement of the communication process in the firm they manage, 50.51 % think it little necessary and 37.56 % think it necessary. The average score of this question is 2.45 and shows the interest towards improving the communication process.

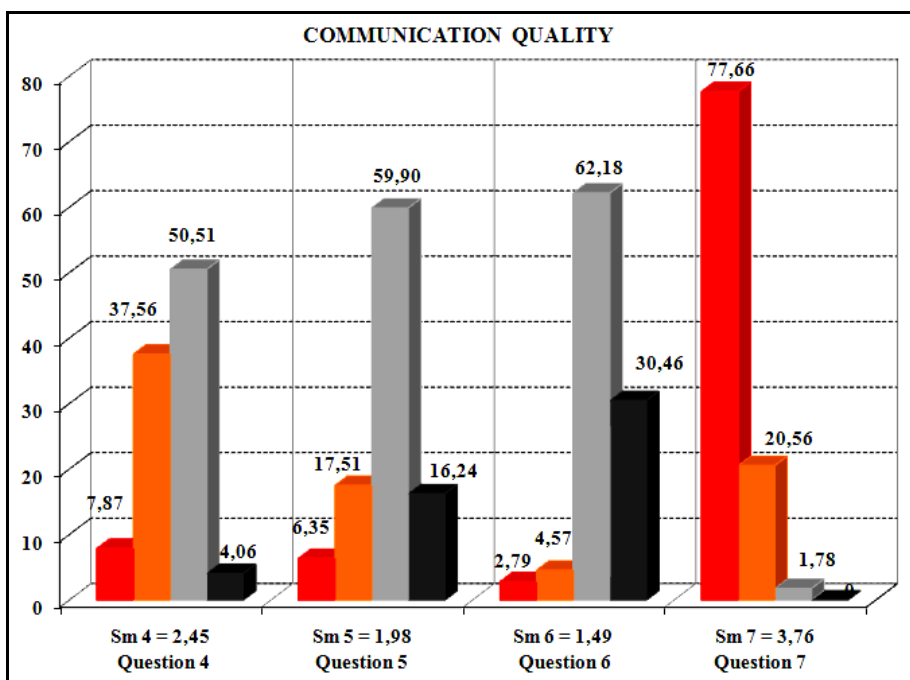


Diagram 4: The analysis of the manager's attitude towards the communication quality

Source: own projection

In what training courses for building communicative abilities are concerned are concerned, 59.9 % of the managers think they are a little useful. Almost equally they think these courses useless (16.24 %) or useful (17.51 %). The low score of this question (1.98) shows a low interest for the training courses. The Dâmbovița managers in a percentage of 92.64 % think it little necessary (2.18 %) and even unnecessary (30.46 %) the existence of a communication course in the firm they manage.

3.3. The interest shown by the managers to the results of the communication process within the firms they manage: questions 8 and 9 (diagram 5)

Often ignored, the problems emerging from a bad communication can lead to big damage to the firm by decreasing productivity, lack of interest for the professional activities that can lead to neglecting the obligations set in the job's description.

The loss that the firm may suffer can be of wide range, from loss of unmotivated personnel, loss of customers and clients, capital of image and in the end loss of financial nature. All these can be prevented in time with the help of the managers and also employees that master efficient communication techniques.

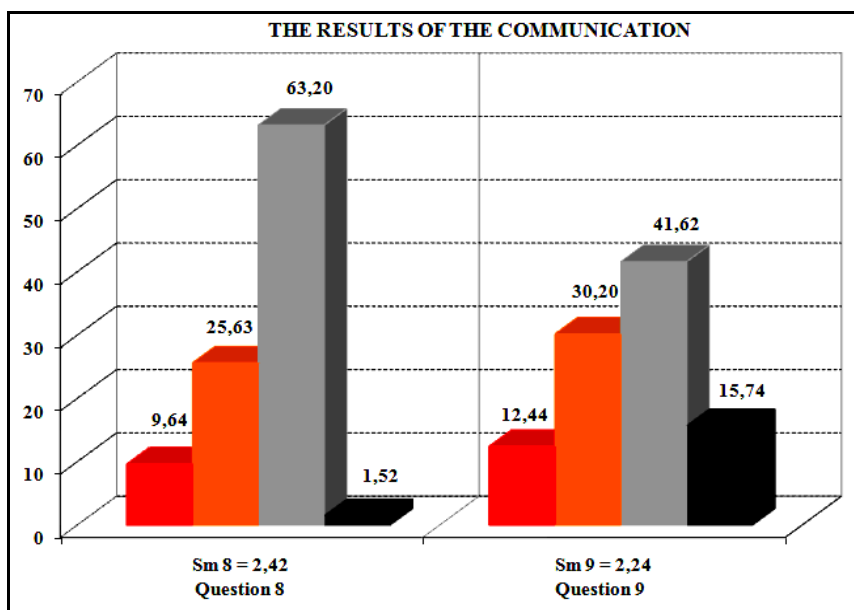


Diagram 5. Interest shown by the managers, the results of the communication process within the firms they manage

Source: own projection

To the question regarding the decrease in performance due to the damaging of the transmitted message, most of the managers, (63.2 %) appreciate that this rarely happened. “Often” was the answers for 25.63 % and 9.64 % of the managers have confronted the situation almost all the time. The average score of this question (2.24) shows that damaging the transmitted message does not seriously affect the firm.

Losses due to inefficient communication were seen by the managers as being “some” (41.62 %) or “more” (30.20 %). Very close as average were the opposite answers “never” (15.74 %) and “very often” (12.44 %). The average score of this question (2.24) show that the loss due to the inefficient communication reflects a serious problem for the managers in question.

3.4. Dâmbovița managers' perception towards used communication efficiency: questions 10, 11 and 12 (diagram 6)

The relation between the managers and the employees, a very delicate relation, can severely affect the well being of a firm by lowering the professional performance, the appearance of frustrations and professional lack of satisfaction that emerge from the lack of feedback from the direct boss.

The preoccupation for the given feedback is the urgent solution for solving a lot of problems related to communication. If the employees periodically receive information that shows they are valuable, that things are under control and go well, that business goes well because and for their benefit, they will be motivated and productive.

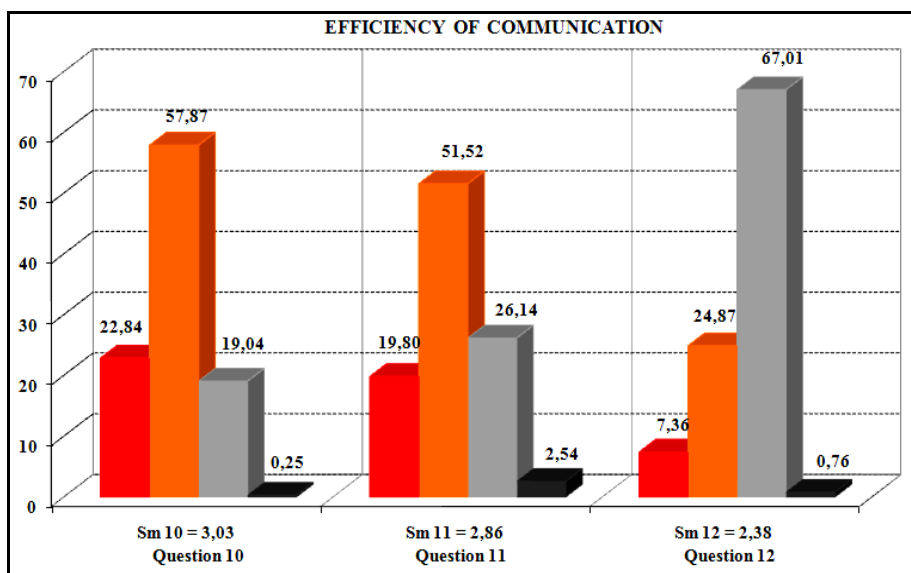


Diagram 6. Dâmbovița's manager's perception on the efficiency of used communication

Source: own projection

Most managers (80.71 %) think that in the firms they manage, communication is very efficient (22.84 %) or efficient (57.87 %). Only 19.04 % of the managers appreciate communication as being effective. The average score of the question (3.03) shows that managers are content.

Asked about the necessity of using feedback in communication, most managers (71.31 %) consider it necessary (51.52 %) or very necessary (19.80 %). At the other end, 2.54 % of the questioned managers don't think feedback is useful. The average score of the question (2.86) shows interest for this aspect of communication.

Related to the feedback received from the internal public, most managers (67.77 %) are little interested (67.01 %) or not interested (0.76 %), only 24.87 % declared that they were interested and 7.36% were very interested. The average score of the question (2.38) show interest for this aspect of communication.

3.5. The interest shown towards the questioned problem:

From the comparative analysis of the average score of the questions from the questionnaire, you can find out the level of interest of the Dâmbovița's managers towards the problems raised by each question. This analysis is useful in estimating the importance level given to the communication process.

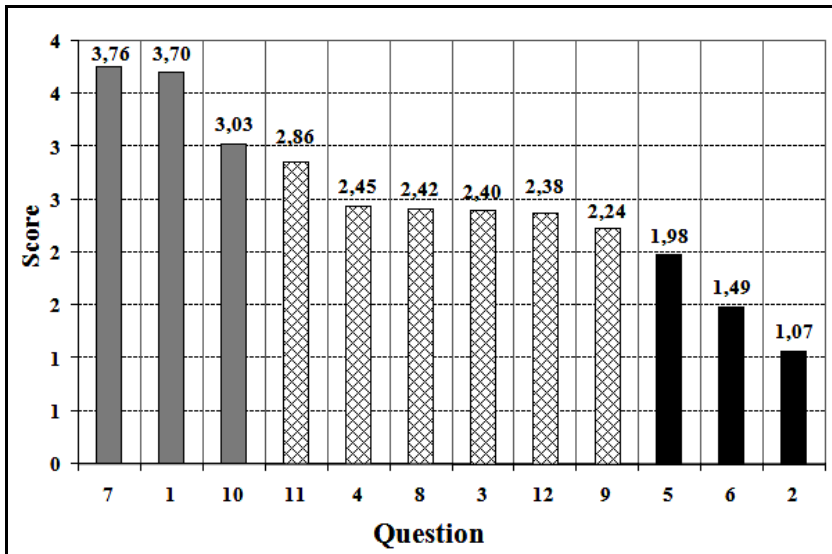


Diagram 7. Interest towards the problem related to questions

Source: own projection

Dâmbovița's managers show a great interest towards communication in business (3.76), to the image that is received outside of the firm (3.70) and the efficiency in communication in the firm they lead (3.03) and about which they think improvement is not necessary (2.45).

At the opposite end, managers are very little interested in working with specialists to improve the image of the firm (1.07), in the necessity of an internal communication program (1.49) and in organizing communication training programs. (1.98).

Aware of the necessity of using feedback in communication (2.86) are a few interested in the given feedback. (2.38).

4. Conclusions

The study made among the managers in Dâmbovița's IMM's has as main conclusion that they have total faith in their communicative abilities. Even if we live times of intense changes in all activity levels and even if the advanced technology that we have access to can facilitate and ease the communication process, there is a block in communication that affects us all. There is a lot of speaking about communication but communication itself is more and more difficult. In this context we think that the impression of the managers that took part of this research is an illusion and that there are few that really have certain communicative abilities. This study confirms that:

Hypothesis 1 is confirmed

Dâmbovița's managers show a moderate interest towards the communication quality in their firms. The conviction that the communication process in the firms they manage is **good** and needs no improvement shows they are not interested in this process.

Hypothesis 2 is confirmed

Managers overestimate the efficiency of communication in the firms they manage. Apparently preoccupied with feedback and uninterested in evaluating communication through audit, Dâmbovița's managers have no preoccupations connected to optimization of communication in the company.

Hypothesis 3 is confirmed

Managers have no real preoccupations for perfecting the communication process. Without recognizing the importance of the program of communication inside the firm, the communication training courses and the lack of collaboration with the specialists shows that this aspect is neglected.

In conclusion, for the firms that are aware of the importance of the communication, we **recommend**:

- developing a new quality communication culture, with benefit to the outside image of the firm, developing the team spirit and the professional performance,
- adapting the communication procedures in elaborating a communication program,
- periodical evaluation of the internal communicating through communication audit.

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Appendix 1**QUESTIONNAIRE**

In any kind of organization, communication is a determinant element of the organizational efficiency. Of course we communicate all the time in one form or another but the quality of communication influences its efficiency. The way in which the organization is seen from the outside depends on the way extra organizational communication is made and the well being of the activity depends on the quality of the internal communication. These are the arguments that determined us to ask you to give a little of your time to complete this questionnaire by ticking a single answer for each question.

No	Question	Possible answers			
		Very important 5	Important 5	A little important 5	Not important 5
1	How important is for your firm the image that it has for the outsiders?				
2	Are you working with PR specialists in order to improve the image of your firm?	Almost all the time 5	Often 5	Rarely 5	Never 5
3	Do you think a communicative audit in your firm would be useful?	Very useful 5	Useful 5	A little useful 5	Useless 5
4	Do you think improving the communication process in your firm would be necessary?	Very necessary 5	Necessary 5	A little necessary 5	Not necessary 5
5	How useful for your firm would be the organization of some training courses in order to achieve communication abilities?	Very useful 5	Useful 5	A little useful 5	Useless 5
6	Do you think it's useful in your company the existence of a communication program?	Very useful 5	Useful 5	A little useful 5	Useless 5
7	How important is for your firm to communicate with the business partners?	Very important 5	Important 5	A little important 5	Not important 5
8	Have you ever encountered in your activity situations in which the alteration of the transmitted message led to lowering the performance of your organization?	Almost all the time 5	Often 5	Rarely 5	Never 5
9	How often has your company lost because of the inefficient communication?	A lot of times 5	Often 5	Rarely 5	Never 5

No	Question	Possible answers			
10	What do you think about the form of communication that your firm uses for the moment?	Very efficient 5	Efficient 5	Corresponding 5	Inefficient 5
11	Do you think the use of feedback by the managers in communication as being necessary?	Very necessary 5	Necessary 5	A little necessary 5	Not necessary 5
12	How interested are you in the feedback that you get when communicating with the intern public?	Very interested 5	Interested 5	A little interested 5	Not interested 5

13) To what socio-professional category do you belong?

- a) top manager
- b) middle manager
- c) supervisor (chief of department, workshop, etc.)

14) Working age in the firm.....years.

15) Gender: F 5 M 5

16) Studies: a) high school

- b) university studies
- c) postgraduate studies

17) identification information about the firm: (approximately):

- domain of activity

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Thank you!

Appendix 2

THE IMAGE OF THE FIRM AS SEEN BY THE MANAGERS IN THEIR ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE IT					
1. How important is in your firm the image that it has for the outside?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very important	4	293	0,744	74,37
	Important	3	83	0,211	21,07
	A little important	2	18	0,046	4,57
	Not important	1	0	0	0
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm1 =	3,70			
2. Do you work with PR specialists to improve the image of your firm?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Almost all the time	4	12	0,030	3,05
	Often	3	35	0,089	8,88
	Rarely	2	135	0,343	34,26
	Never	1	212	0,538	53,81
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm2 =	1,07			
3. Do you think it's useful to have an audit in communication in your firm?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very useful	4	62	0,157	15,74
	Useful	3	122	0,310	30,96
	Little useful	2	165	0,419	41,88
	Useless	1	45	0,114	11,42
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm3 =	2,40			
THE ANALYSIS OF THE MANAGERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION					
4. Do you think necessary the improvement of the communication process in your firm?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very necessary	4	31	0,079	7,87
	Necessary	3	148	0,376	37,56
	Little necessary	2	199	0,505	50,51
	Not necessary	1	16	0,041	4,06
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm4 =	2,45			
5. How useful do you think it is for your firm to organize some training programs in order to achieve abilities in communication?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very useful	4	25	0,063	6,35
	Useful	3	69	0,175	17,51
	Little useful	2	236	0,599	59,90
	Useless	1	64	0,162	16,24
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm5 =	1,98			

6. Do you consider necessary a communication program in your firm?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very necessary	4	11	0,028	0,00
	Necessary	3	18	0,046	0,00
	Little necessary	2	245	0,622	0,00
	Not necessary	1	120	0,305	0,00
	TOTAL		394	1	0
Sm6 =		1,49			
7. How important is for your firm communication with the outside partners?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very important	4	306	0,777	0,00
	Important	3	81	0,206	0,00
	A little important	2	7	0,018	0,00
	Not important	1	0	0,000	0,00
	TOTAL		394	1	0
Sm7 =		3,76			
INTEREST SHOWN BY MANAGERS TO THE RESULTS OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS IN THE FIRMS THEY MANAGE					
8. Have you ever encountered situations in which the alteration of the transmitted message led to lowering of performance in the organization?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Almost all the time	4	38	0,096	9,64
	Often	3	101	0,256	25,63
	Rarely	2	249	0,632	63,20
	Never	1	6	0,015	1,52
	TOTAL		394	1	100
Sm8 =		2,42			
9. How many times did your firm loose because of inefficient communication?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	A lot of times	4	49	0,124	12,44
	Often	3	119	0,302	30,20
	Rarely	2	164	0,416	41,62
	Never	1	62	0,157	15,74
	TOTAL		394	1	100
Sm9 =		2,24			
DAMBOVITA'S MANAGERS INTEREST IN USED COMMUNICATION EFFICIENCY					
10. What do you think about the communication that your firm uses at the moment?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very effective	4	90	0,228	22,84
	Efficient	3	228	0,579	57,87
	Appropriate	2	75	0,190	19,04
	Ineffective	1	1	0,003	0,25
	TOTAL		394	1	100
Sm10 =		3,03			

COMMUNICATION ABILITIES OF DAMBOVITA'S MANAGERS

11. Do you think that the use of managers' feedback is useful in communication?	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very necessary	4	78	0,198	19,80
	Necessary	3	203	0,515	51,52
	Little necessary	2	103	0,261	26,14
	Not necessary	1	10	0,025	2,54
	TOTAL		394	1	100
12. How interested are you in the feedback that you get after communicating with the intern public.	Sm11 =	2,86			
	Answer	Grade given	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency	Average (%)
	Very interested	4	29	0,074	7,36
	Interested	3	98	0,249	24,87
	Less interested	2	264	0,670	67,01
	Uninterested	1	3	0,008	0,76
	TOTAL		394	1	100
	Sm12 =	2,38			