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EGO STATES USED IN COMMUNICATING INFORMATION ABOUT SAFE WORKING AND THE SUCCESS OF OSH TRAINING

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Abstract: *The research paper studies the concept of behavioral safety, combining in a new, but very necessary way information from the field of organizational psychology, clinical psychology with all the information related to the management of injury and illness risks. The absolute novelty of this concept is that, for the first time, the focus shifts from the mechanical application of structured parenting-style protection measures to two-way active communication based on finding solutions that influence the employee to adopt proactive behavior. Understanding the ego states of both communicators and receivers is the key to activating the triggers of behaviors that underlie both improved management of occupational injury and illness risks and increased organizational safety.*

Key words: *ego states, behavioral safety, occupational health and safety, communication, psychology.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of safety and health at work has constantly evolved over the last 150 years, requiring more and more information and knowledge to address it adequately. The development of technologies and equipment has not, however, led to such a significant decrease in the number of accidents as the specialists predicted, and sometimes has even had the opposite effect, where either staff were insufficiently trained or met the chance with psychological resistance. It has thus become clear that the most important component of occupational safety and health strategies is not technological but psychological. Empowering each employee, changing the attitude towards the work task and preventive aspects of working life, basic components of the concept of behavioral safety, obviously require a solid knowledge base in the field of psychology of the OSH experts. All these aspects imply not only changes in the paradigm of practical application of labour law but also changes in communication and the content of communication on education about the work

done but also in organizational management strategies.

The role of occupational safety and health is also paramount for strengthening the competitiveness and productivity of enterprises, through the positive effects it can produce reducing the costs of accidents, incidents and occupational diseases and increasing motivation at work.

In this context, we want to analyze the links between workers' perceptions of OSH communication and their behavior from the point of view of occupational safety and health, but also how the adoption of responsible behaviors, in compliance with OSH rules and procedures, with involvement in activities to promote safe and healthy work for their own benefit, of those around and society in general can be explained by different aspects of OSH communication.

Communication has been identified as an organizational factor with an important role in ensuring occupational safety and health. Studies in the literature highlight the fact that open communication and frequent interactions between workers and direct supervisors are characteristics that differentiate organizations

with low rates of work incidents from those with high rates.

Studies in the literature address OSH behavior, both in terms of how workers act to improve their own occupational safety and health [8] and how workers get involved in improving the occupational safety and health of others and supporting the achievement of the organization’s OSH goals and objectives [9].

2. COMMUNICATING INFORMATION ON HOW TO WORK SAFELY

2.1 Communication: definitions and concepts

A basic function of living beings, communication, is, in its most rudimentary form, the sharing of information. Paul Watzlawick, one of the leading communication specialists of the Palo Alto School theorized the five axioms of communication [1]:

- A being cannot exist without communicating in one way or another.
- Communication has both a content and a relational aspect.
- Communication is a permanent part of a causal tree.
- Human communication is based on both analog and digital modes of information transfer.
- The information transfer pattern can be complementary or symmetrical.

It should also be kept in mind that the act of communication involves four distinct and interrelated elements [2]:

- The communicator - in our case we are dealing with a primary communicator: the SSM specialist who drafts the training contents, structures and plans the training and a secondary communicator: the workplace manager, the one who takes the SSM information and disseminates it to the workers under his subordination;
- Information channel: the way in which information is transmitted from the communicator to the receiver. In this case we are dealing with two complementary types of communication channels: written information and information conveyed orally;

- Information per se, i.e. How to work correctly and safely;
- The receiver - the workers.

Narrowing down the scope of communication to communication in the field of OSH between the OSH specialist and the employees, it should be borne in mind that in most cases this is mediated according to the legal regulations through the managers of the workplaces, which will make it difficult to transfer information correctly. Structurally, communication in the field of OSH is linear. Apparently, the procedure of OSH training, according to Law 319/2006 involves a linear one-way communication process.

However, it should be kept in mind that the legal provisions related to the verification of training ownership, and especially those related to the verification of SSM training ownership and content application, imply the underlying presence of a feedback loop, which turns the receiver into a transmitter.

The model used by Berlo to explain the linear communication model, however, considers the complexity of the cognitive and biological processes that take place during communications and that mediate and modulate the percentage of information that starts from the communicator and reaches the receiver.



Fig. 1. Communication model 1 (originally estimated).

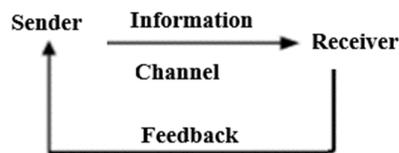


Fig. 2. Communication model 2 (applied in current practice).

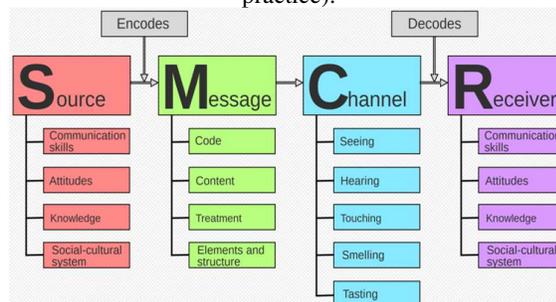


Fig. 3. The communication model proposed by Berlo.

In Figure 3 it can be easily observed that the transmission of information is not only done through words (verbal communication) but also through attitude and gestures and tonality (nonverbal and paraverbal). In addition, the stimuli used to transmit and respectively decode the information will receive a different importance from person to person, depending on various psychological aspects that define the person, but also by a sum of sociological and anthropological aspects.

Communication tools on occupational safety and health can be structured as follows: technology-mediated communication tools (electronic messages/e-mail; intranet; newsletter; graphic animations made on computers; SMS); written communication tools (written OSH programmes and policies, OSH policy statement), audio-visual communication tools (videos; OSH bulletin board; OSH signage; posters; drawings; brochures); personal and group communication tools (one-to-one discussion; toolbox talk, briefing on occupational safety; team meetings; occupational safety alerts); educational communication tools (narrative communication through stories; OSH training and training), social media.

2.2 Communication and ego states

Eric Berne, founder of the Transactional Analytic School of psychology/ psychotherapy, defined the human psyche as consisting of three ego states [3]. These are viewed as "a constant pattern of feelings and experiences directly related to a pattern of behavior: extero-psyche, neopsyche, and archaopsychic are viewed as organs, which manifest phenomenologically as extero-psyche (e.g., identifying), neopsyche (e.g., data processing), and archaopsychic (e.g., regressive) ego states. Colloquially, these types of ego states are referred to as Parent, Adult, and Child, respectively. These ego states are seldom clearly and unambiguously defined, often ego states exhibit contaminations, which affect both the way information is transmitted and the way information is received and processed.

As far as communication is concerned, the TA school considers it as an informational

transaction between two people or between different ego states of the same person (Fig. 4).

Communication can take place between any two states of the psyche of the two interlocutors; P-P & P-P, A-A&A&A-A, C-C&C-C, P-C&C-P are called parallel communications and can last ad infinitum et ad nauseam, P-C & A-A are called cross-communications and lead either to the termination of the exchange of information or to a change in the functional state of the ego for one of the interlocutors (Fig. 5).

Of course, communications consider not only the text but also the non-verbal or para-verbal information.

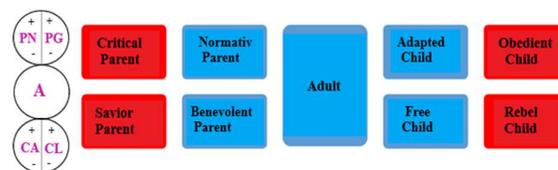


Fig. 4. Schematic and detailed model of ego states in TA.

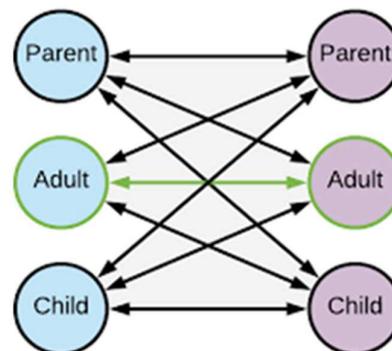


Fig. 5. The model of communication types.

3. COMMUNICATION IN OSH TRAININGS

3.1 Law and IPSSM contents of communication issued from the state of the Parent ego

Within any organization, regardless of its size or object of activity, the Romanian legislation requires the establishment of "measures to ensure the protection of workers' health and safety, the elimination of risk and accident factors, information, consultation, balanced participation according to the law, training of workers and their representatives, as well as

general directions for the implementation of these principles" [10].

Creating and developing a healthy and safe work environment is the responsibility and obligation of every employer. "The employer has the obligation to ensure the safety and health of workers in all aspects related to work", to carry out the communication and promotion of OSH, using as communication tools "materials necessary for informing and training workers, such as posters, leaflets, films and slides on occupational safety and health"[10].

Workers have the obligation to immediately communicate "to the employer and/or the designated workers in any work situation that they have good reason to consider a danger to the safety and health of workers, as well as any deficiency in the protection systems".

Communication on occupational safety and health topics is described in the literature as the process of exchanging information on occupational safety issues between two or more people, as activities through which occupational safety information is generated and transmitted between team members, as the process of communication on occupational safety issues or as a process by which individuals who have knowledge in the field of occupational safety are generated occupational safety are shared with others.

Occupational safety communication is described as "the collective means by which information about occupational safety is disseminated to workers, through courses, meetings of occupational safety departments and means of written communication, such as posters, newsletters and information containing the results of controls/inspections of the competent institutions.

Communication in OSH trainings aims to convey the safe way of working from the OSH specialist to the employee. The basic ideas of the IPSSM regarding the management of occupational risks of accident and illness derive directly from Law 319/2006, HG 1425/2005, HG 955/2010, the rest of the HG in the field of OSH, the European Directives in the field of OSH, the OSH standard, Codes of good practice in the field. All of them have as their objective at least the maintenance of human health and safety, and where possible, even the

improvement of the quality of life, both professionally and in general (by reducing some stressors that can affect the quality of life in general). However, reading all these normative acts, we will notice that although it should be possible to substitute a state of the ego of a normative parent (and sometimes contaminated with a benevolent parent), both being positively oriented states of the self, by the lack of direct responsibility of the employee regarding the quality of his own professional life, in fact they replace the voice of the critical parent contaminated with the savior parent who aims to eliminate all risks in professional life which is a utopian and especially dangerous ideal.

Both the introductory training that is carried out directly by the OSH specialist and the on-the-job and periodic training carried out by the managers of the workplaces in collaboration with the OSH specialist tend to be done at present from the state of the parent ego. And since it is essentially a dialogue (not only through the verification of the training but especially through the part of verifying the way of working), for this dialogue to exist, the feedback line from the employee must also be observed. The absolute novelty brought by the concept of behavioral safety is related to the employee's responsibility for their own quality of life, not just that of employers, and to the organic cultivation of safe behaviors in the workplace.

3.2 The employee and his training in OSH communications from the state of the Rebel, Obedient or Adult Child ego

The worker's behavior from the point of view of occupational safety and health is assessed in the thesis by two dimensions: participation which expresses those behaviors that contribute to the development of a safe working environment and through which occupational safety and health actions are supported – voluntary involvement in OSH activities, manifestation of concerns about problems related to occupational safety, supporting colleagues in ensuring occupational safety, attending OSH meetings, promoting OSH programmes in the organization and compliance, behavior relating to the basic activities that

workers need to undertake to maintain occupational safety

In general, communication issued from the state of the parent ego, in the case of a continuous dialogue will generate a response from the state of the employee's Child ego. Which is favorable for sustaining dialogue but tends to move easily from linear communication to triangular communication specific to Karpman's dramatic triangles.

Depending on the employee's own triggers, during the training he can exist in the state of "Child ego" or of the "Adult ego". From my point of view, the communication of OSH information should be done from the state of "Adult ego" by both the communicator and the receiver. In this case, the structuring of the content should focus not so much on prohibiting certain actions, however dangerous they may be, but on:

- Establishing a correct way of working
- Requesting adequate feedback (reasoned) on how practical or not the established measures are
- Adequate dissemination of information on the consequences of incorrect actions
- Making each employee responsible for their quality of life.

The primary advantage of the interaction in the state of the Adult ego between the communicator and the receivers is that of a dialogue based on mutual respect and especially on the real solution of existing problems. It can be the basis for the development of organizational civic behaviors through which not only better manage the level of risk, but especially to increase the state of security at work.

The major disadvantages of the interaction in the state of the ego of the parent of the communicator and of the child or even of the parent of the receivers are related to the formalism of the training act, the triggering of the triggers responsible for non-civic behaviors to the point of organizational antisocial.

4. TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

The way of conducting the OSH activity is the determining factor not only in the success or

failure of risk management, but also in establishing all the components of organizational culture associated with protecting the life and health of employees. The cultivation of aspects that allow the implementation of an OSH management system based on the concept of behavioral safety, through the allocation of resources, education and training of employees can only have its roots in the behavior of the leader and the type of leadership behavior of the representative of the prevention and protection service [4].

Leadership is manifested when a person influences followers to freely and willingly accept requests without any apparent exercise of power. Through the ability to influence, the leader creates and uses the power and authority received from followers/subordinates.

It can be said that the leader is the one who has the skills and knowledge that allow him to influence the activity of other people to perform actions that they would not have performed on their own. The efficiency or inefficiency of the leader is evaluated by his subordinates by measuring the satisfaction obtained from the actions carried out under his leadership. [5]

Organizational leadership involves actions in two basic directions:

- Guidance for adapting to constant changes. This requires leaders who embrace change; who do so by clarifying and communicating the strategic intention or vision; and who build their organization and shape its culture to match opportunities and challenges;
- Possessing the necessary management skills to cope with organizational changes. This means identifying and equipping your organization with support managers who are ready to provide operational leadership and vision like never before.

The most important difference between managers and leaders is not represented by the leaders or managers themselves or by their skills and abilities, but employees relate to them. In the case of leadership, followers freely decide whether to follow the leader or not.

The study of the leadership styles carried out by Kurt Lewin, together with Ronald O. Lippitt and Ralph K. White led to the definition of the first three categories of leadership [6]:

- Authoritarian (autocratic) leadership,
- Participatory (democratic) leadership and
- Delegative leadership (laissez-faire).

In addition to this, the following categories have been theorized and added over time:

- Charismatic leadership
- Transactional leadership
- Transformational leadership.

Tables from 1 to 3 present the strengths/weaknesses, limits and opportunities of the types of leadership.

Table 1

Authoritarian leadership.
Authoritarian leadership
Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A clear chain of command with a single point and quick decision - One-man ownership of events - Fast communication to all levels of the organization - Clear establishment of employee responsibilities - Clear regulations - Good productivity - Can reduce stress at work through paternalistic attitude - High competitiveness
Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A single point of view, undeniable, but which can lose essential details - Micromanagement - Unfairly assuming other people's successes - Few employees' rights - Lack of employee co-interest - Employees are not encouraged to provide feedback or alternative solutions - Can increase stress at work through a critical attitude - The creation of professional communities is discouraged - Poor cooperation due to lack of trust between employees and teams - Hiding and/or denying issues
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapid reactions that can ensure very good management of crisis situations
Limits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If the leader has limited knowledge, crisis management will be flawed - The organization is disproportionately dependent on the leader's abilities - The public image of the organization can be bad because of the way employees present it

Table 2

Participatory leadership.
Participatory leadership
Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A good organizational culture is created - Good intra-group communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intra-group cooperation - Delegation of responsibility - Co-interest of employees in the production process and in assuming responsibilities - Employee loyalty
Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decreased ability to react quickly to changes in the environment - Prolonged discussions, which implies increasing the likelihood of conflict in discussions - Personal opinions may carry equal weight with professional opinions - If employees do not feel sufficiently co-opted, they may not participate adequately
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The organization can be represented by several middle managers who can make decisions on the spot
Limits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The process of adapting to change can be too slow and if middle management does not cooperate properly, there can be too many development directions that rely on too few/the same resources

Table 3

Delegative leadership.
Delegative leadership
Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational culture with a history - Co-interest of employees in the production process and in assuming responsibilities - Employee loyalty - Opportunities for highly motivated employees by themselves - A high autonomy of employees
Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The perceived absence of the leader can harm employee morale in times of crisis - A low degree of assumption of responsibility by the leader - If individual skills and performance are not high enough, the organization suffers - Low team cohesion and implicitly low speed of adaptation of the organization
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees identify and capitalize on opportunities in the business environment themselves
Limits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Low speed of adaptation of the organization to the business environment

It is therefore observed that from the point of view of the organizational culture of occupational safety and health, the participatory leadership applied both by the top management structures and by the prevention and protection services offers the most possibilities to expand the existing organizational culture in order to harmoniously integrate the concept of

behavioral safety. On the other hand, authoritarian leadership is based on the reduced exercise of critical thinking skills and the execution of orders received without filtering through the employees' staff, which not only leads to the implementation of an organizational culture lacking added value towards employees, but also to an increase in job-related stress and implicitly in the level of risk.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The successful implementation and maintenance of a management system that focuses on the care for the life and health of the organization's employees is therefore based on the ability to correctly communicate OSH information. The correct and organic communication of information related to the concept of behavioral safety can categorically improve the security status within an organization and can contribute significantly to the development of sustainable occupational risk management measures.

The results of the studies included in this paper can help company managers understand the concept of occupational safety and health communication and the fact that effective OSH communication can empower workers to comply with the rules, labor protection procedures, but also determine them to voluntarily get involved in activities that promote safe and healthy work environments.

The positive links identified between the worker's OSH communication with the direct manager and the worker's OSH behavior suggest that good OSH communication with the direct manager is associated with responsible OSH behavior. Involving and providing communication training to team leaders can be a first step in companies' efforts to support workers to behave responsibly in the workplace.

Based on the results of the study, it is noted that the need for managers of organizations to encourage direct managers to get involved in developing quality communication relationships with workers, who would be encouraged to express their ideas, fears and possible problems identified in relation to occupational safety, good communication leading to responsible

OSH behaviors of them. The managerial implications are consistent from the perspective of the suggested directions on which companies' occupational safety and health communication efforts should focus, to improve workers' behaviors in terms of occupational safety and health.

The statement you present suggests that a deep understanding of the ego states of both communicators and receivers can play a crucial role in improving workplace safety and managing the risks of professional injury and illness. In the context of transactional psychology, ego states are categories of mental behaviors and reactions that reflect the way a person thinks, feels, and acts at a given moment.

Understanding these states in interpersonal communication can help identify and activate behavioral triggers that lead to better risk management and increased safety within the organization.

Therefore, to increase the effectiveness of risk management and organizational safety, it is essential that leaders develop the ability to recognize these states in themselves and others and adapt their communication and behaviors to activate ego states which promotes a safe and responsible work environment.

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Stările Eului folosite în comunicarea informațiilor privind modul de lucru în siguranță și succesul instruirilor SSM

Lucrarea studiază conceptul de securitate comportamentală, combinând într-un mod nou, dar foarte necesar, informații din domeniul psihologie organizațională, psihologie clinică cu toate informațiile referitoare la gestionarea riscurilor de accidentare și îmbolnăvire. Noutatea absolută a acestui concept este că, pentru prima dată, accentul se mută de la aplicarea mecanică a măsurilor de protecție structurate în stil parental, la comunicare activă bidirecțională bazată pe găsirea de soluții care să influențeze angajatul să adopte un comportament proactiv. Înțelegerea stărilor ego-ului atât ale comunicatorilor, cât și ale receptorilor este cheia pentru activarea declanșatorilor comportamentelor care stau la baza atât a managementului îmbunătățit al riscurilor de accidentare și îmbolnăvire profesională, cât și creșterea siguranței organizaționale.

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