Organizational Communication in the Context of Foreign Partnership and Its Relationship to Psychological Stress

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Abstract

Communication is considered one of the most important organizational elements that contribute to the success and effectiveness of organizations, due to its direct impact on employees' behaviors and attitudes, given that they constitute the foundation of the productive process and the true wealth of administrative operations. This effectiveness inevitably depends on the degree of efficiency and effectiveness of communication within the organization. Accordingly, many researchers in organizational behavior and management have focused their attention on the value of this resource, proposing strategic mechanisms aimed at achieving psychological and professional adjustment as a fundamental requirement and an indispensable need, while minimizing as much as possible the causes of psychological stress, especially in an era of turbulent transformations that have affected many Algerian administrative institutions. Indeed, numerous researchers describe this era as the "age of psychological stress".

On this basis, the present study seeks to shed light on the extent to which the prevailing pattern of organizational communication within the Fertial organization, under conditions of foreign partnership, contributes to the generation of psychological stress among middle management.

Keywords: Organizational communication, foreign partnership, psychological stress, middle management

Introduction

In recent decades, societies have witnessed numerous developments across various spheres of life. These developments have manifested in rapid economic growth, tremendous technological advancement, and the entry of many developing countries into the phase of industrialization, along with the adoption of development-oriented strategies aimed at building a better future. Such transformations have contributed to the creation of a climate of competition and challenge among work organizations of various activities, in order to keep pace with contemporary changes particularly in light of foreign investments adopted by many countries following their shift toward a free-market economy. This orientation came as a response to the economic and social deterioration left by

colonialism and its negative impact on vital sectors, with the aim of meeting development requirements, especially amid the growing demands of both global and local markets.

This situation has compelled work organizations to seek managerial approaches that abandon traditionalism and engage constructively with change, along with the readiness to adapt to its events, while striving to create an organizational climate that aligns with employees' needs, orientations, and values within a work environment characterized by security and stability, and free from various forms of psychological pressures and psychosomatic disorders such as anxiety and depression. This is in order to preserve the psychological, physical, and even social health of human resources, given that they constitute the foundation of the productive process in any organization.

Such effectiveness, however, remains unattainable without modernized and systematic communication channels that ensure interaction and harmony among different organizational levels, and facilitate rational decision-making as outlined by organizational management.

1.Research Problem

The success of any institution whether public or private largely depends on the effectiveness of its human element and the level of performance in carrying out assigned tasks. This effectiveness, in turn, is contingent upon employees' skills and job satisfaction, which are achieved through the provision of a supportive and motivating work environment. However, in light of the successive changes witnessed worldwide across economic, social, and political domains within an era of communication where stress has become a natural and unavoidable feature of human life in general, and organizational life in particular especially in organizations that have adopted foreign partnership as a managerial approach for administering their various resources, stress has come to affect all members of the organization, whether superiors or subordinates, albeit to varying degrees.

Individuals respond differently to stressful situations: for some, stress becomes a driving force toward perseverance and diligence, while for others it leads to frustration, despair, and decreased productivity. Consequently, the concept of stress has garnered significant attention from both organizations and individuals, becoming a major concern for managers and leaders alike. This is due to the negative behavioral consequences that may arise, affecting both material and moral dimensions, as well as physical and psychological well-being. Such consequences often manifest in feelings of insecurity, instability, lack of reassurance, and inner calm, resulting from pressures generated by life variables particularly within the work environment and their adverse impact on employees' behaviors.

These impacts frequently appear in the form of anxiety, tension, psychological depression, rebellion, and internal conflicts both within the individual and between individuals and others. Collectively, these manifestations indicate a decline in the sense of psychological security and professional adjustment, as well as a decrease in self-esteem. Hence, it has become necessary to study the psychological and physical conditions of employees across different levels and age groups, especially in light of current developments, competitive advantage, and the continuous race that characterizes organizations particularly those that have adopted foreign partnership as a strategy for managing their resources and to focus on the working individual as a human resource with needs that emerge, grow, and evolve.

Accordingly, the study of the importance of organizational communication has become an inevitable necessity in our contemporary context, dictated by the requirements of the productive process, in order to ensure survival and continuity for both the organization and the individual alike.

Based on this, the research problem of the present study is formulated as follows:

Does the prevailing system of organizational communication within the Fertial organization, under conditions of foreign partnership, contribute to the exacerbation of psychological stress among middle management?

This main question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

Does downward organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contribute to increased psychological stress among middle management?

Does upward organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contribute to increased psychological stress among middle management?

Does horizontal organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contribute to increased psychological stress among middle management?

2. Research Hypotheses

This study is based on the following general hypothesis:

The prevailing pattern of organizational communication under foreign partnership contributes to the creation of psychological stress among middle management.

From this general hypothesis emerge the following sub-hypotheses:

Downward organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contributes to increased psychological stress among middle management.

Upward organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contributes to increased psychological stress among middle management.

Horizontal organizational communication prevailing under foreign partnership contributes to increased psychological stress among middle management

3. Significance of the Study

The topic of organizational communication and its relationship to psychological stress holds considerable importance for both the organization and its employees alike, particularly within the organization under study Fertial. The significance of this study can be summarized as follows:

Identifying the nature of the prevailing organizational communication pattern within the Fertial organization and diagnosing the extent of its contribution to the creation of psychological stress contributes to enriching the scientific knowledge of organizational officials at various hierarchical levels. It also provides them with analytical and diagnostic tools for addressing critical organizational problems related to dealing with individuals within organizations and managing them in a manner that ensures organizational effectiveness and continuity.

Developing a clear policy in the field of organizational communication across its various directions (downward, upward, and horizontal), so that it becomes an effective instrument and a fundamental function upon which the organization's strategic decisions are based.

Attempting to develop strategies for managing psychological stress and reducing its intensity by reconciling individuals' requirements, values, and orientations with the organizational culture imposed by the foreign partner, which tends to view the working individual as a mere instrument for profit maximization, in accordance with the partnership agreement, without due consideration for their psychological and social needs thus widening the gap between the individual and the organization.

Identifying the positive and negative repercussions of the Spanish partnership and its effects on employees' culture and behavioral patterns.

4. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

Identifying which pattern of organizational communication (downward, upward, or horizontal) prevailing within the organization under study contributes most significantly to the creation of psychological stress among the members of the research sample.

Highlighting the relationship between the prevailing organizational communication pattern under conditions of foreign partnership and the level of psychological stress experienced by middle management.

First: Organizational Communication

The topic of communication has attracted significant attention from many scholars and researchers in the study of organizational behavior. It is inconceivable to imagine any form of organized human behavior without verbal or non-verbal communication. Communication has thus become a professional instrument that ensures organizational survival, stability, growth, and the effectiveness of employees' performance especially in light of the opening of local markets as a result of globalization, and the intense interactions and mutual influences among organizations on the one hand, and among activities and interests on the other.

It is also considered one of the means which when properly designed and effectively implemented can enable organizations to achieve outstanding results in the optimal utilization of human resources and to obtain the highest possible levels of productivity from them (Al-Salami, 1998). This is accomplished by fostering an appropriate climate of human relations, as well as by involving individuals each according to their field of work in the planning, organization, and execution of their assigned tasks (Al-Ayeb, 2008).

Given the vital importance of organizational communication within work organizations as the primary component of the administrative process, this study seeks to focus on the dimensions of this strategic process through the following:

1. Concept of Communication

a. Linguistic Definition

From a linguistic perspective, the term communication is derived from the Latin word Communis, meaning sharing. Communication, in this sense, refers to participation in information, emotions, and attitudes (Hamadat, 2008).

b. Terminological Definition

Ahmed Maher defines communication as "a continuous process that involves one party transforming specific ideas and information into verbal or written messages, which are transmitted through a communication medium to another party" (Maher, 2012).

Abu Al-Nasr defines it as "a process of sending and receiving information, ideas, and opinions between two parties a sender and a receiver indicating interaction and participation between them around a particular piece of information, idea, opinion, attitude, behavior, or experience, using one or more appropriate communication channels such as discussion, lecture, interview, or telephone communication" (Abu Al-Nasr, 2009).

Organizational communication, in turn, can be defined as:

"Interaction within the organization that relies on communication insofar as it serves as a tool for transmitting information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another and from one level to another within all organizations, thereby enabling the achievement of organizational objectives" (Ghayat, 1998).

Based on the above, communication can be viewed as a means through which collective efforts are unified across different organizational levels according to the hierarchical structure of the organization from top management to middle management and down to lower-level staff. Understanding this information is essential for achieving the desired objectives. In addition, communication serves as a means for modifying employees' behavior in a manner consistent with the organization's organizational culture.

2.Importance of Organizational Communication within the Organization

The importance of communication within the organization can be summarized as follows:

A purposeful means of ensuring interactive coordination among the organization's various activities.

A fundamental necessity for directing and modifying individual and collective behavior among employees.

An essential and effective tool for accomplishing various tasks and duties within the organization.

Through communication, managers can identify subordinates' activities, exercise control, provide guidance, and motivate them.

It contributes to the transfer of information and data, thereby facilitating administrative decision-making and supporting organizational growth, development, and success (Khudair, 2010).

The importance of communication can also be viewed from the perspectives of both sender and receiver as follows:

Information: The transmission of information and ideas to recipients and informing them about surrounding events.

Education: Training and developing organizational members by providing them with information and skills that qualify them to perform specific functions and enhance their practical capabilities in line with job requirements.

Entertainment: Providing relief and recreation for organizational members.

Persuasion: Creating changes in others' viewpoints.

The importance of administrative communication and its role in management is evident in the attention it has received from management scholars. Consequently, it is incorporated into several administrative theories particularly those associated with the behavioral approach to management, which emphasizes participation as a foundation for successful management, viewing management as essentially a network of relationships and communications occurring within the administrative work environment (Reda, 2010).

Accordingly, organizational communication plays a crucial role within organizations, especially at the top management level, where managers devote a substantial portion of their time and effort to communication. It is equally important at the middle management level, which serves as a linking unit between top management and lower (executive) management. Middle administrative leadership remains in continuous communication with employees, particularly regarding directives and production methods assigned by management, as is the case in the Fertial organization, where the communication system is regarded as the organization's nervous system. This is aimed at enhancing performance levels, strengthening human relations, preserving psychological and physical health, and reducing employees' mental distraction, through the use of various types, patterns, and skills of communication

3.Elements of Organizational Communication

The communication process requires a number of interrelated essential elements, without which it cannot be carried out effectively. These elements may facilitate and streamline the communication process, or conversely hinder and complicate it. They can be outlined as follows:

1.Sender (Source of Information)

The sender represents the first element in the communication process. It refers to the individual who seeks to share ideas and emotions with others and is responsible for creating the message. The sender should possess the following characteristics:

The ability to clearly express viewpoints, ideas, and information intended for transmission.

The ability to persuade and exert influence.

Adequate knowledge of the message's subject matter, along with relevant expertise and diverse practical and scientific experiences.

2.Message

The message is the form through which ideas or emotions are transmitted from the sender to those with whom they wish to share their thoughts and feelings (Hamzawi, 2008; Arikat, 2011).

3. Communication Channel (Medium)

The communication channel refers to the method through which the message is transmitted between the sender and the receiver. There are multiple communication channels, including verbal channels such as interviews and meetings, written channels such as letters and reports, as well as electronic media, including smart devices and online platforms.

4. Receiver

The receiver is the individual or entity targeted by the communication process and to whom the message is directed. Communication is considered effective when the receiver is able to retain the largest possible proportion of the received message with accurate meaning, enabling them to translate the conveyed information into practical application without distortion.

5. Noise

Noise refers to any element or disturbance that infiltrates the communication process and may cause alteration or distortion of the intended meaning. In other words, noise encompasses anything that compromises the clarity, accuracy, meaning, comprehension, or recall of the message.

6. Feedback

Feedback operates in the reverse direction of the communication process, flowing from the receiver back to the sender. It serves to express the receiver's stance toward the message, the extent of their understanding and assimilation, and whether they accept or reject its meaning. In organizational communication, feedback functions as both an evaluation and an assessment mechanism.

It is essential that communication between supervisors and subordinates be reciprocal rather than unidirectional. This contemporary perspective on communication contributes to the achievement of administrative objectives among leadership in general, and among middle management the focus of the present study in particular. It also helps reduce tensions and psychological stress resulting from work pressures, especially when communication is flexible and effective.

4. Barriers to Organizational Communication

Barriers to communication refer to all factors that negatively affect or hinder the flow and exchange of information between sender and receiver, delay its transmission, disrupt it altogether, or distort its meaning. Consequently, such barriers prevent communication from achieving its intended objectives. These barriers can be summarized as follows:

a. Psychological Barriers

An individual's interpretation and understanding of any message sent or received depend largely on their psychological state and mode of thinking. Personal motivations play a significant role in how individuals interpret and translate messages received from their superiors, often leading to varied

interpretations. Social biases also constitute major communication barriers, as they foster self-centeredness and emphasize personal relationships.

b. Organizational Barriers

These include the following:

Role ambiguity, lack of authority, or an inappropriate span of supervision, all of which lead to communication distortion. This situation applies directly to the Fertial organization, where the foreign partner has become a source of psychological pressure on middle management morale. Middle management has increasingly been reduced to a mere execution mechanism for orders and prohibitions, without room for dialogue or discussion. This has widened the gap between employees and their organization, which has come to be perceived as a breeding ground for injustice and corruption.

Organizational centralization, the proliferation of administrative levels, and the lack of homogeneity within work groups (Arikat, 2011).

Inappropriate selection of communication channels, as the sender must choose the most suitable medium to ensure message delivery and interaction.

Information overload, characterized by excessive and repetitive information, which increases the cognitive burden on the receiver and can be as detrimental as information scarcity.

Poor listening skills, since effective listening enables better understanding of speakers and fosters reciprocal responses between communication parties.

Time pressure, whereby leaders and managers face constraints due to insufficient time to maintain continuous communication with assistants and subordinates.

However, addressing these communication barriers through objective and periodic diagnostic processes across all communication directions and types can positively contribute to organizational growth and development within a work environment free from pathological disturbances affecting employees

Second: Foreign Partnership

1.Concept of Partnership

Foreign partnership is considered one of the most significant topics emerging from contemporary economic developments, as these changes have laid the foundations and principles of cooperation and integration across various fields. Accordingly, the emergence of the concept of foreign partnership has accompanied such transformations. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, states have adopted new policies and strategies for cooperation, among which partnership has emerged as a form of continuous collaboration between two or more parties.

This raises an essential question: What is meant by foreign partnership? And what are its objectives, particularly within the organization under study Fertial in Annaba?

Partnership is defined as the involvement of one or more local or foreign parties in producing new goods, developing markets, or engaging in productive or service-related activities. Whether

participation takes the form of capital contribution or technological input, it is considered a joint investment and one of the most distinctive forms of investment compared to production agreements or licensing arrangements, as it allows the foreign partner to participate in the management of the project (Al-Sayyed, 1999).

It is also defined as an agreement whereby two or more natural or legal persons commit to contributing to a joint project by providing a share of labor or capital, with the aim of sharing the resulting profits or achieving a mutually beneficial economic objective, such as market control or increasing sales volumes (Nasser, 2006).

2.Importance of Foreign Partnership

The importance of foreign partnership lies in its pursuit of achieving multiple long-term advantages for the countries involved. This is accomplished through the establishment of free trade zones aimed at reducing disparities between partner economies, thereby fostering growth among participating parties. Over time, and with trade liberalization, this process leads to the allocation of production factors to sectors in which each country holds a competitive advantage.

Foreign partnership also serves as a mechanism for attracting foreign capital and constitutes one of the primary channels for technology transfer, knowledge diffusion, and the transfer of skills and expertise from developed countries to underdeveloped or developing ones.

Moreover, it contributes to improving the balance of payments by narrowing the gap between exports and imports (Doron, Françoise, & Shaheen, 1997).

Third: Psychological Stress

Stress is regarded as a complex human phenomenon and one of the longstanding concepts addressed by philosophers and scholars. However, scientific interest in this concept is relatively recent, due to changes in lifestyle, increasing complexity, and the emergence of new problems and stressful events that necessitate study and research in order to develop strategies for managing and alleviating their intensity thus preserving the physical and psychological health of human beings, who constitute the foundation of the existence and development of all private and public domains.

From this perspective, the following lines seek to shed light on the most important concepts directly related to psychological stress.

What is meant by psychological stress? What are its main causes? And what severe consequences does it entail for individuals within their work environment and for their organizations?

1.Definition of Psychological Stress

a. Linguistic Definition

The term stress is derived from the Latin verb Stringer, meaning constriction, tightening, or binding, and from the French verb Êtreindre, meaning to encircle tightly with the arms and body, leading to suffocation that causes anxiety. In other words, stress refers to intense bodily constriction accompanied by feelings of distress and anxiety.

In the Arabic language, the term carries multiple meanings, most notably: pressure, distress, exhaustion, fatigue, and nervous tension (Hanafi, 1995).

Abdel Moneim Al-Hanafi defines stress as "a state of ordeal in which tension intensifies and overwhelms the individual; it is said that a matter is severe when it affects and disturbs the person, exhausting their physical and psychological defenses as they attempt to cope with the stressful situation, thereby alleviating tension and anxiety and restoring the integration and balance previously experienced" (Al-Qadhafi, 1997).

b. Terminological Definition

The concept of stress refers to the degree of an individual's response to life events or environmental variables encountered in daily life, which may be distressing and produce certain physiological effects. These effects vary in intensity from one individual to another depending on personality patterns that distinguish individuals from one another.

The concept was first clearly articulated by psychologists in the early twentieth century and became widely used in mental health and psychiatry literature through the work of physician Hans Selye. The topic of stress has since attracted the attention of numerous researchers across different disciplines, resulting in a multiplicity of definitions. Below are some of the most significant definitions and concepts directly related to this variable, given its sensitive role in human life both as a motivating and stimulating force on one hand, and as a frustrating and unsatisfying factor on the other.

Lazarus defines stress as an external condition that imposes excessive demands and burdens on the individual, threatening their well-being and exposing them to danger (Farouk, 2001).

Petrovsky and Yaroshevsky view stress as a concept widely used to describe human states arising as reactions to powerful external influences, such as information overload leading to emotional exhaustion particularly when threat and danger are perceived. Such conditions result in changes in the nature of cognitive processes, and the interaction between emotional and cognitive components often leads to deficient verbal and motor behavior (Abbas, 2008).

2.Elements of Psychological Stress

Numerous studies have confirmed that work-related stress is a phenomenon experienced by individuals during the performance of their professional duties, leading to disturbances in their psychological and physiological balance. The feeling of stress may arise due to environmental factors, organizational factors as observed in the Fertial organization, particularly with regard to imposed values and standards and cultural discrepancies between Algerian human resources and the directives of top management dominated by the Spanish foreign partner or due to factors related to the individual themselves and their distinctive personality traits.

Accordingly, occupational stress comprises three core elements that manifest through various forms of interpersonal relationships within the organization. These elements constitute its fundamental components and can be identified as follows:

Stressor (Stimulus):

This includes the forces that generate stress and lead to the experience of psychological pressure. Stressors may originate from the environment, the organization, work groups, or the individual themselves (Wasfi, Abdel Mohsen, & Abdel Qader, 2008).

Response:

This refers to the reactions exhibited by individuals when exposed to stressful stimuli. These responses may be psychological, physiological, or behavioral in nature. They may take the form of frustration resulting from obstacles hindering goal-directed behavior, or manifest as anxiety and a perceived lack of readiness to confront stressful situations (Mohamed Ben Ahmed & Mahdoud, 2008).

Interaction:

This denotes the interaction between stressors whether organizational, environmental, or interpersonal and emotional and the responses they elicit (Al-Nabulsi, 1991).

3. Stages of Exposure to Psychological Stress

According to Hans Selye, the human physiological response to stress unfolds across three stages, as outlined in his work The General Adaptation Syndrome (Syndrome Général d'Adaptation). These stages are as follows:

1.3 Alarm Stage

Also known as the warning stage, this phase begins when an individual is exposed to a specific internal or external stressor. The organism becomes activated to confront the threat, triggering hormonal secretion and increased heart rate and respiration. At this stage, the individual enters a state of readiness for confrontation or escape (Selye & Wallace, 1991).

2.3 Resistance Stage

During this phase, the organism attempts to resist the threat. As stress intensifies, the individual transitions into the resistance stage, characterized by feelings of anxiety and tension, indicating active resistance to stress. This resistance may result in accidents, weakened decision-making, and increased susceptibility to illness, as the individual becomes unable to maintain effective control over the situation (Laareet, 2007).

3.3 Exhaustion Stage

When resistance collapses, stress-related illnesses begin to emerge. Prolonged exposure to stress weakens resistance mechanisms, rendering them incapable of coping. Among the illnesses associated with immune system exhaustion are gastric ulcers, headaches, and hypertension, all of which pose a significant threat to the individual's psychological well-being (Al-Sayrafi, 2007).

4.Types of Psychological Stress

Stress can be classified according to its impact into two main types:

1.4 Positive Stress

Positive stress refers to beneficial or desirable stress, whereby individuals feel capable of productivity and task accomplishment with efficiency. It may have positive psychological effects in the workplace, such as stress experienced during examinations or training programs aimed at promotion or job advancement (Zeroual, 2008).

Forbes identified several indicators associated with positive stress among employees, including:

Increased intensity and level of activity

Enhanced work motivation

Development of calmness and emotional regulation under pressure

Improved problem perception and analysis

Greater capacity for memory, concentration, and recall

Optimism toward the future

Thus, positive stress serves as a supportive tool that motivates individuals to resolve conflicting situations with others while minimizing potential harm (Al-Sayrafi, 2007).

2.4 Negative Stress

Negative stress refers to harmful stress with adverse effects on an individual's mental, physical, and emotional health. When feelings of anger, frustration, fear, and depression resulting from stress remain unresolved, they may trigger a range of symptoms particularly psychological ones manifesting as apathy, indifference, negligence, boredom, insomnia, and pessimistic outlooks. From an occupational perspective, negative stress leads to decreased productivity, increased absenteeism, and other unsatisfactory negative behaviors (Sheikhani, 2002).

5.Sources of Psychological Stress

Sources of psychological stress vary according to the environments to which individuals belong and may be external or internal in nature (Kashroud, 1995).

a. External Stressors

Physical environment: Noise, bright lighting, heat, and confined spaces.

Social interaction: Harshness, dominance, or aggression from others.

Organizational factors: Rules, regulations, routine, and unhealthy organizational climates.

Occupational factors: Workload, role ambiguity, role conflict, career growth and development, incentive systems, limited or absent participation in decision-making, and the nature of relationships with subordinates or superiors.

b. Internal Stressors

Negative self-talk: Pessimistic thinking, self-criticism, and overanalysis.

Cognitive distortions: Unrealistic expectations, personalization, exaggerated thinking, rigidity of opinion (stubbornness or cognitive inflexibility).

"Stress-prone" personality traits: Type A personality, characterized by perfectionism and work addiction.

6.Effects of Psychological Stress

Psychological stress affects multiple dimensions of an individual's personality, which can be categorized as follows:

a. Behavioral Dimension

This refers to various individual behavioral changes resulting from stressful situations, reflecting a cognitive (intellectual) aspect. These behaviors may include:

Acceptable actions, such as problem-solving and task completion; or

Unacceptable actions, such as aggression, professional conflicts, concentration disorders, avoidance of responsibility, negligence, indifference, family disputes, substance abuse, and chronic smoking (Kashroud, 1995).

b. Psychological Dimension

When individuals fail to cope with stressful situations through behavioral responses, or when such responses exacerbate rather than resolve problems, psychological stress intensifies. Consequently, individuals may exhibit psychological and behavioral symptoms such as fatigue, low vitality, withdrawal, exhaustion, insomnia, heightened anxiety when confronting minor problems, irritability, emotional instability, and depression. In severe cases, acute psychological stress may lead to mental or neurological disorders, including complete nervous breakdowns (Zeroual, 2008).

c. Physical Dimension

The impact of psychological stress on the physical dimension manifests through a range of somatic or psychosomatic symptoms, including tension in neck, shoulder, and back muscles; abdominal pain leading to constipation or diarrhea; sexual dysfunction; shortness of breath; sleep disorders; muscle weakness; heart disease; gastric ulcers; and bronchial asthma (Qassem, 2001)

Fourth: Middle Management

Definition of Middle Management

Middle management represents the second level of administrative leadership within the organization. It consists of a group of specialized managers responsible for translating the goals, policies, and plans approved by top management into concrete operational practices. Middle management thus serves as a vital link between top management and lower (executive) management, while also overseeing and supervising the performance of lower-level management.

In the present study, this category includes all executives and supervisory leaders responsible for managing human resources within the Fertial organization in Annaba.

Field Study Procedures

First: Research Methodology

Methodology refers to the systematic approach adopted by the researcher in studying a research problem with the aim of uncovering the truth. The selection of an appropriate research method depends on the nature and objectives of the problem under investigation, as well as on the availability of relevant information.

Given that this study is correlational in nature and seeks to identify the prevailing pattern of organizational communication within the Fertial organization under conditions of foreign partnership, and to determine the extent of its contribution to the creation of psychological stress among middle management, the descriptive method was adopted. This method is defined by Mohamed Shafiq as "the systematic approach used to study new facts or to verify the validity of existing facts, their effects, the relationships linking them, their interpretation, and the identification of the governing aspects" (Hlayli, 2008). It is considered the most appropriate for studies of this type.

Second: Study Boundaries

The study was confined to the following limits:

Human boundaries: The study was conducted on middle management personnel.

Spatial boundaries: The study was carried out at the Asmidal organization, Fertial Branch (Annaba).

Temporal boundaries: The study was conducted during the 2023–2024 academic year.

Third: Study Sample

The study sample consisted of all middle management staff working within the Human Resources Department of the Asmidal Institution (Fertial Branch – Annaba), totaling 50 executives. This number was determined after excluding the pilot sample used to assess the reliability of the research instrument, which consisted of 10 individuals.

Fourth: Data Collection Instruments

1.Interview

Aziz Ibrahim defines the interview as "a face-to-face verbal exchange conducted by the interviewer to obtain information, opinions, and attitudes from another person" (Shafiq, 1995).

In this study, the researcher relied on the interview technique to collect the largest possible amount of information from the research sample regarding the objectives of foreign partnership within the Fertial organization and the extent to which its organizational communication system contributes to the creation of psychological stress among middle management. This approach also assisted the researcher in outlining the general framework for constructing the items of the research questionnaire.

2.Questionnaire

To measure the dimensions of organizational communication (downward, upward, and horizontal) prevailing in the field of study, a questionnaire consisting of 36 items was developed.

These items were distributed across three dimensions, and the researcher employed a five-point descriptive scale based on the Likert five-point scale, as illustrated in the following table:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
+2	+1	0	−1	−2

In order to measure and identify the level of psychological stress among the study sample, the researcher developed a questionnaire based on the relevant literature addressing the major effects resulting from work-related stress. The instrument comprised 20 items distributed across three dimensions: the psychological dimension, the physical dimension, and the behavioral dimension. Responses were structured according to a four-point Likert scale for attitude measurement (Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never), with the following weights assigned respectively, as illustrated in the table below:

Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
4	3	2	1

Fifth: Statistical Methods

The following methods were employed:

1.Quantitative Methods

These included:

Percentages

Pearson correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure the reliability of the questionnaire

2.Qualitative Method

This involved qualitative and descriptive processing and analysis of the collected data.

Sixth: Analysis and Discussion of the Study Results

The findings indicate that downward communication, manifested in rigid orders and decisions imposed without employee participation, represents the prevailing communication pattern within the Fertial organization under conditions of foreign partnership. This pattern has intensified psychological stress among middle management and generated feelings of humiliation and frustration, negatively affecting their self-perception. This situation is primarily attributed to the suppression of personal freedoms and the eradication of creativity and innovation, thereby widening the gap between middle management and top management.

The results reveal a high (acute) level of psychological stress among middle administrative leadership, as reflected in the overall arithmetic mean value estimated at +3.06, which exceeds the threshold distinguishing the presence or absence of psychological stress. This is particularly evident in the physical dimension, as indicated by respondents' reports of frequent feelings of distress, digestive disorders, persistent headaches, muscular pain, and chronic modern-day illnesses. Respondents primarily attributed these conditions to the organizational culture adopted by their institution, characterized by the imposition of unjust laws and authoritarian directives without involving employees in decision-making. In this context, employees are perceived merely as productive machines, and nothing more.

Regarding the relationship between organizational communication patterns and psychological stress among middle management in the field of study, statistical analysis revealed a weak positive correlation, with an overall correlation coefficient of r = +0.40. This indicates that the Fertial organization, under Spanish partnership, constitutes a source of exhaustion and fatigue for human resources. The primary objective of this partnership appears to be rapid profit maximization and adherence to total quality standards (ISO–OHSAS), without consideration for the moral and psychological dimensions of the Algerian workforce. This has negatively affected their physical and psychological well-being, leading to psychosomatic disorders, as reported by 80% of the study sample. Consequently, feelings of frustration, failure, psychological and physical imbalance between personal needs and job demands have emerged, undermining morale, stifling creativity and innovation, and ultimately impacting levels of organizational loyalty and job satisfaction.

Proposed Recommendations

In order to reduce the intensity of psychological stress in Algerian organizations that adopt foreign partnership as a management strategy while preserving human resources the following recommendations are proposed:

Creating a favorable communication climate across all directions, characterized by:

The application of participatory management principles

Clarity of organizational policies

Effective systems for addressing employee complaints

Promoting teamwork among employees

Ensuring integration among departments

Encouraging employee initiatives and innovative thinking

Such measures can only be effective through the commitment of top management to strengthening the communication system, which constitutes the beating heart of organizational success. Activating this system effectively reduces psychological stress among employees and executive management alike, contributes to the success of other administrative functions, enhances organizational performance, and supports functional growth.

Conclusion

Through the theoretical and applied examination of this topic, a critically important conclusion has been reached: the success of any organization public or private depends fundamentally on the effectiveness of organizational communication across all its directions and among all organizational levels. This effectiveness has a profound impact on the psychological health of employees, particularly at the level of middle management, which serves as the connecting link between top management and executive management.

Effective organizational communication enhances feelings of reassurance, self-esteem, successful interpersonal relations, psychological and professional adjustment, and openness toward others. Consequently, it enables employees to perform their duties free from rigidity and psychological strain especially within organizations governed by foreign management of organizational resources, which in contemporary contexts increasingly resemble new forms of political and economic colonialism

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