ENHANCING INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM PROCESS: BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Victor MORARU[1], Livia MARGINEAN[2]

[1]PhD habil, Moldova State University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
[2]PhD student, Moldova State University, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
Corresponding author: Livia Marginean; e-mail: lv_marginean@yahoo.com

Abstract

The article analyses the roles and responsibilities of the institutions involved in the deinstitutionalization process within the context of inter-institutional communication, with a particular focus on the protection of sensitive information concerning children, in accordance with international practices and security measures. It addresses the importance of effective inter-institutional communication, which must be solution-oriented to facilitate interaction within this complex process. Additionally, it highlights the barriers faced by inter-institutional communication that can lead to ambiguities in roles and responsibilities, including in the context of personal data protection. Furthermore, the article emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that integrates cooperation and inter-institutional communication strategies to ensure the protection and rights of children, in light of the evolving reforms in child protection, thereby accelerating the implementation process of deinstitutionalization programs and plans to successfully achieve the strategic objectives reiterated in national and international policy documents.

Keywords: *inter-institutional communication, communication barriers, information, personal data, child protection system, collaboration, inter-sectoral mechanism, deinstitutionalization.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication among the institutions involved in implementing reforms in the field of social assistance ensures a continuous flow of information, uniting efforts and contributing to the establishment of common practices among institutions. Generally, communication, according to experts, is the subject of an integrative science that specifies its unique difference by studying the professional and institutional circuits of information, whether this information is intended for the general public or for a specialized audience. This definition highlights the holistic and interdisciplinary approach to communication, focusing on how information circulates in various professional and institutional contexts. Thus, institutional communication is characterized, in the understanding of researcher Constantin Marin, as a programmed and permanent self-centred informational activity, an action "that aims to change behaviours and attitudes so that the public adheres to a certain idea" (Marin, 1998). It is expressed through a diverse range of actions, being an open system that establishes relationships with related systems, engaging actors from all institutions. It refers to how an institution (such as the government, a local authority, or a non-profit organization) communicates with the public and its partners, including through marketing materials, press releases, strategic documents, financial reports, websites, and so on.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND PROCEDURAL RIGOR OF COMMUNICATION

The purpose of institutional communication is to enhance the institution's image, provide information about current activities and future plans, and report on the progress made. It also serves to build relationships with the public and increase trust. In contrast, *inter-institutional communication* refers to how institutions interact with each other in order to coordinate activities, share information and resources, and collaborate to achieve common objectives.

The way communication networks are built allows for the practical realization of inter-institutional communication and generates its efficiency. A useful perspective for elucidating

this is Denis McQuail's vision, which positions communication in relation to certain needs upon which communication networks are created. Traditionally, a distinction is made between interpersonal networks ("lines of contact between people") and social networks, which are "more than just a communication network because messages are, in fact, transactional." Thus, in the case of inter-institutional communication, the transactional nature of communication is maintained due to the fact that it refers to a common field of interest among institutions, reflecting activities regulated by the institutions that, in certain respects, depend on or are related to the activities of other institutions. According to D. McQuail, when it comes to institutional communication, we must refer to "a dual system - a formal internal network, well-defined and closed, connected at certain points to an informal, open, and extensive system, with a low degree of connectivity and highly dispersed" (McQuail & Windahl, 2013). Inter-institutional communication plays the role of maintaining the formal character of the communication network, "being focused on content and solutions in the process of communicational interaction" (Năstase, 2004).

Thus, developments in the field of communication demonstrate that the functions and roles of communication depend on its social uses, and the types and techniques of communication cannot be invented or predicted; they "reveal themselves in the course of becoming through their social course and through the practices that operate (...) and respond to needs" (Pedler, 2001). In a way, it would be a plausible comparison with the three types of communication, typical of messages with a finality political message, mentioned by Brian McNair (McNair, 2003). Naturally, this communication is circumscribed within the general concept of civic dialog, and it assumes the real participation of the social partners (Moraru, 2013). In the case of inter-institutional communication, this is the path through which the necessity of communication is rationalized, applied within the rigid and challenging procedural framework of deinstitutionalization.

Various forms of communicational interaction and mechanisms ensure the enhancement of implementing necessary solutions to be adopted for the benefit of children. The World Health Organization report examines various forms of multi-sectoral collaboration in order to promote health and well-being in the European region. In the specialized literature, the importance of multidimensional partnerships in international development is highlighted, along with how these can contribute to addressing and solving complex issues (Osborne, et al., 2005). Clarifications are provided on the elements that constitute the intensity and scope of the concept of institutional communication.

Inter-institutional communication (interorganizational communication – Shumate et al., 2017) plays a crucial role in child protection, contributing to the creation of alliances between institutions and increasing the efficiency of the actors involved in collaboration. It is vital for coordinating interventions to ensure the respect of children's rights and facilitate the transition to a safe and protective family environment, in order to achieve the strategic objectives focused on implementing child protection reforms.

It is noted that concepts such as "intersectoral cooperation," "inter-institutional collaboration," "multisectoral," or "multidimensional" collaboration refer to how different fields, sectors, or institutions work together to achieve a common goal or address a complex issue (WHO, 2018). In the case of deinstitutionalization, the collaboration, through the actors involved and various communication activities, intensifies solutions, decisions, legislative initiatives, and sectoral strategies, engaging multiple actors and institutions.

To ensure the effective protection of children's rights, all institutions must collaborate, sharing information, resources, and best practice experiences. Coordination mechanisms, such as coordination councils, national commissions, and collaboration platforms between institutions and NGOs, are essential for ensuring an integrated and holistic approach to child protection. The regulation of communication and collaboration relationships, including in this segment, is based on a series of inter-institutional and institutional documents that organize and ensure the functionality of communication: Institutional Activity

Regulations, Action Plans, Strategic Development Plans, Communication Strategies, Collaboration Agreements, Organizational Communication Policies, Annual Activity Plans, Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct, Job Descriptions, Internal and External Communication Procedures, etc. Integrated within the regulatory framework, these documents promote the implementation of social policies in the area of deinstitutionalization, which will clearly regulate the need for collaborations, the establishment of partnerships, messages, channels, and means of collaboration.

The use of communication strategies enhances the image and knowledge of institutions, simplifies and increases efficiency, facilitates communication between departments and subdivisions, and ultimately makes processes and activities more streamlined and effective. Communication strategies are a development axis rather than an end goal. They clearly establish the tasks that arise from the objectives and goals set out in the organizational development strategy and statutes; they define target groups, both internal and external; summarize key messages based on the organization's areas of activity; and outline the channels, methods, and communication tools to be applied.

These documents provide the necessary regulatory support for the formalization and legitimization of inter-institutional communication in the process of deinstitutionalizing children, with a primary focus on the protection of their rights.

3. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION IN DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION

The process of deinstitutionalizing children requires close collaboration among multiple institutions, each with well-defined competencies and responsibilities in this field. Effective and well-coordinated communication between these institutions is essential to accelerate the process and to protect the rights and well-being of children in the country.

Firstly, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP) plays a central role in developing and implementing national policies on child protection. It is responsible for coordinating national programs and monitoring compliance with the legislation on deinstitutionalization. The Ministry collaborates with other ministries and government agencies, as well as with international organizations, to ensure the resources needed for implementing child protection programs. In this context, communication between the Ministry, the Government, subordinate institutions, and external partners is vital, involving legislative proposals, development of strategies, and methodological guidelines to support the reorganization of residential care services.

Subordinate to the MLSP, the Agency for Managing Highly Specialized Social Services coordinates the activities of the public institutions that offer highly specialized social services and implements deinstitutionalization policies (Gov. md, 2023). The Agency is responsible for collecting and transmitting data on the progress of the process, directly collaborating with territorial and local authorities, as well as with NGOs and social service providers. Its communication is essential for ensuring coordination between central and local levels and for facilitating the implementation of the decisions regarding the reorganization of residential care institutions.

Public residential institutions, such as Temporary Placement Centres and Community Homes, provide temporary placement and rehabilitation services for children and individuals at risk. These institutions collaborate with central and local authorities to prepare children for reintegration into biological or extended families, placement in family-based alternative services, or adoptive families, or for their transfer to other types of services. Constant communication with authorities and partners within the social system is crucial in order to ensure the monitoring of children's progress, development of action plans, and achievement of social inclusion objectives.

Another key actor in this process is the Territorial Social Assistance Agencies, which are subordinate to the MLSP and ensure the uniform

application of social protection policies at the territorial level. These agencies collaborate with local public authorities and social service provider organizations to ensure the necessary support for children in need. They are responsible for forming multidisciplinary teams and coordinating interventions within the deinstitutionalization process. Effective communication with all involved parties, including residential institutions and guardianship authorities, is essential to guarantee the efficient implementation of services.

The State Social Inspection, under the MLSP, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of legal provisions and assessing compliance with social service standards by ensuring the accreditation process of service providers. It collaborates with central and local authorities to ensure that providers adhere to the legislative norms. Through its reports and evaluations, the Inspection contributes to ensuring the quality of services and improving the achievement of deinstitutionalization objectives.

The reorganization of the social assistance system, within the context of the RESTART reform, aimed to ensure better coordination between the central and local levels in implementing national social assistance policies. The General Directorate for Child Rights Protection in Chişinău and the Main Directorate of Health and Social Protection of the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia (as decentralized structures) implement national policies and coordinate the activities of municipal services and organizations that protect children's rights. These directorates are responsible for direct intervention and collaborate with local authorities to ensure child protection. Their communication includes the development of local strategies, regulations, and reports necessary to facilitate collaboration between different institutions involved in child protection. In this regard, an Order was approved on January 12, 2021, regarding intersectoral cooperation between the Directorate under the Municipal Council to facilitate the early identification, referral, and assistance of street children in Chişinău municipality.

Private organizations, including NGOs and philanthropic organizations, play a crucial role in supporting children at risk. Some of these organizations develop and implement social inclusion programs, providing financial and human resources for the development and delivery of social services. In the deinstitutionalization process, they collaborate with national and international public authorities, ensuring direct services for children and their families. Effective communication with authorities and external partners is essential for the successful implementation of support programs and ensuring continuity in the care of children.

Therefore, the deinstitutionalization process involves an ecosystem of public and private institutions that must communicate and collaborate effectively to ensure the successful reintegration of children into families and communities or their placement in alternative family-type services. Each institution has a well-defined role, and their responsibilities overlap and complement each other within an integrated child protection system based on policies.

The responsibilities of institutions towards families, as institutions, as well as towards the direct child beneficiaries of programs, involve providing multidimensional support: legislative, financial, psychological, social etc. Social workers are the key actors in this process, with the role of identifying the problems faced by the family, mediating relationships with the involved institutions, and facilitating the family's access to the necessary resources to improve their situation and prevent family separation. Relational skills play a crucial role in social work, considering that professionals in this field work directly with individuals and their complex issues (Candea, 1996). Research shows that the relational aspect is critical for the success of social interventions, but the quality of relationships is significantly influenced by communication skills. A functional relationship is based on mutual trust, collaboration, understanding, effective communication, adaptability, patience, empathy, and unconditional involvement. These elements contribute to a successful professional relationship and the achievement of social intervention objectives.

However, in some cases, dysfunctional relationships are often caused by factors such as

a lack of adaptability skills, workplace stress, high caseloads, and excessive bureaucracy, all of which reduce the effective time a professional can dedicate to building a direct relationship with the beneficiary. These factors create pressure and overload, hindering the establishment of an authentic connection. Another important aspect that affects relationships is the lack of responsibility or cultural differences between beneficiaries and professionals, which can hinder effective communication. Therefore, communication remains the central element of relational competence, directly influencing the quality of the relationship between the professional and the beneficiary and the success of social interventions.

Despite its importance, interinstitutional communication in the field of child protection faces numerous barriers. These include a lack of intersectoral coordination, which leads to unclear roles and responsibilities, cultural barriers between various institutions and NGOs, as well as confusion regarding partnership objectives. These obstacles can hinder the implementation of necessary deinstitutionalization reforms and obstruct the development of effective solutions to ensure the protection and rights of children.

Effective and coordinated communication among all parties involved is essential for the success of the deinstitutionalization process. An analysis of the evolution of this process shows how policies and the legal framework have developed due to interinstitutional dialogue. Strategic communication has contributed to strengthening a protection framework at both national and international levels, in the context of the EU Association Agenda and globalization. Inter-organizational partnerships have demonstrated positive practices and sustainable results for the future of child protection. Moreover, leveraging national and international analyses and practices is crucial for integrating this communication into current policies.

Promoting networks, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration are essential strategies for ensuring the efficiency of joint actions aimed at achieving systemic objectives that uphold children's rights and the priority right to family-based care. These strategies reflect various levels of commitment and resource exchange among organizations, and the exchange of information through communication creates opportunities to achieve a common goal - ensuring a strategic transition from residential care to family- and community-based care for children. Communication and collaboration among organizations, with or without expertise in the field of child protection, are facilitating factors for accelerating deinstitutionalization programs.

Aruna Koneru, in her work, identified numerous classes of communication barriers (Koneru, 2008), particularly analysed in relation to the effectiveness of organizational communication, which could be adapted and further developed for inter-institutional communication to define ways to avoid or overcome them (Lesenciuc, 2017). According to the author, barriers in organizational communication are determined by message distortions, delays in collecting information, and communication from certain or limited sources (Koneru). A study conducted by researchers at the Child and Family Research Centre at the National University of Ireland in 2021 reflects a series of inter-institutional communication barriers in the field of child protection and the facilitating factors for their elimination (Devaney et al., 2021). The researchers highlight the deficiencies in inter-institutional collaboration in implementing government policies to ensure children's well-being, based on experiences from five countries: Northern Ireland, England and Wales, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The study reveals a number of barriers identified in these countries, which align with the real experiences of institutions' obligations to collaborate in this area. The research found misconceptions about information sharing and ensuring compliance with confidentiality principles, resulting from a lack of clear guidelines and procedures in protocols, as well as from different organizational cultures. Additionally, a lack of mutual listening and the absence of significant and ongoing connections are considered barriers to inter-institutional collaboration in the field of child protection. The researchers also suggest that for effective collaboration among different entities, it is essential to have coordinated planning, a clear

set of approved and endorsed rules and procedures at a higher level, and the active involvement of decision-makers in establishing these rules.

In the child protection system, there is a significant diversity of information managed within institutions, in relation to institutions, and concerning institutions, which has strengthened efforts to classify and systematize this information. The classification of information highlights its diversity, thus underscoring the importance of "responsibility in managing it, as well as the quality and efficiency of communication for each type" (Tomescu, 2020). The issues and solutions regarding children's rights are at the core of the messages that structure inter-institutional communication, which is conducted participatively, with decisions resulting from cooperative interactions among subjects with competencies and responsibilities in the deinstitutionalization process. To avoid overlap or inaction, each institution, whether public or private, will establish its own communication channels, ensuring that actions aim to eliminate risk factors for children's well-being. Thus, the tools and policies will provide an organizational framework and guide professionals in this regard.

Despite its importance, inter-institutional communication in the field of child protection faces numerous barriers. Among these are the lack of inter-sectoral coordination, leading to unclear roles and responsibilities, the existence of cultural barriers between different institutions and NGOs, as well as confusion regarding partnership objectives. These obstacles can hinder the implementation of necessary reforms and impede the development of effective solutions for ensuring the protection and rights of children (Iovu et al., 2020). Good practices reaffirm that open and transparent communication between authorities and civil society facilitates the effective implementation of policies.

Considering that professionals involved in the deinstitutionalization process use information that is sometimes strictly confidential and sensitive, it is worth mentioning international practices, specifically those of the Government of the United Kingdom, summarized in the eight Caldicott Principles (Eight Caldicott Principles, 2020). These principles provide recommendations to guide organizations and staff regarding the use and sharing of confidential information. This reference to the Guideline is relevant due to the lack of a culture of information confidentiality within institutions operating in the context of child protection in the Republic of Moldova. The need for data security and the confidentiality of information regarding private life, as well as the necessity to protect children from abuse, violence, etc., leaves room for improvement and greater awareness among the vast majority of professionals. Until recently, there were broadcasts in the media that openly presented confidential data on a large scale. Although some progress has been made in this regard and certain regulations to protect confidential data have been established, the society, and often professionals involved in child-related activities, may overlook the confidential nature of this information. According to this guideline, the following principles are recommended to be respected:

Principle 1: Justify the purpose(s) for using confidential information. Every proposed use or transfer of confidential information should be clearly defined, scrutinized and documented, with continuing uses regularly reviewed by an appropriate guardian.

Access to confidential information should be restricted, granted only to a limited number of individuals who, in a professional capacity, need to understand how to utilize it appropriately. Each proposed use or transfer of confidential information should be clearly defined, analysed, and documented within well-formulated protocols. Additionally, the ongoing use of data requires oversight and periodic review by a specialized and competent individual in the field of personal data protection to ensure compliance with confidentiality principles.

Principle 2: Use confidential information only when it is necessary Confidential information should not be included unless it is necessary for the specified purpose(s) for which the information is used or accessed.

Confidential information should only be used when absolutely necessary and indispensable for achieving the specified purposes within the legal procedures of deinstitutionalization. Furthermore, each step taken in which confidential information has been used must be

subjected to evaluation to reinforce the conviction that it was a mandatory exercise contributing to the achievement of the objective. At the same time, it is advisable to identify alternative methods and minimize reliance on confidential information as much as possible.

Principle 3: Use the minimum necessary confidential information. Where the use of confidential information is considered to be necessary, each item of information must be justified so that only the minimum amount of confidential information is included as necessary for a given function.

Principle 4: Access to confidential information should be on a strict need-to-know basis. Only those who need access to confidential information should have access to it, and then only to the items that they need to see. This may mean introducing access controls or splitting information flows where one flow is used for several purposes.

Personal data and other information that fall under the category of confidentiality should not be at anyone's discretion but only accessible to those who, directly and by virtue of their job responsibilities, need access to more comprehensive and detailed information to identify the best and most suitable solution. At the same time, it is suggested to implement access filters or restrictions on the sharing of information flows when a flow is used for multiple purposes and could be accessed by several interested parties.

Principle 5: Everyone with access to confidential information should be aware of their responsibilities. Action should be taken to ensure that all those handling confidential information

understand their responsibilities and obligations to respect the confidentiality of patient and service users.

In accordance with this principle, measures are proposed to ensure that individuals employed in institutions understand and recognize their direct responsibilities and obligations regarding the confidentiality of information pertaining to children, their families, and so on.

Principle 6: Comply with the law. Every use of confidential information must be lawful. All those handling confidential information are responsible for ensuring that their use of and access to information complies with the legal requirements set out in statute and under the common law.

In the context of public authorities, we have two distinct ways in which this principle must be addressed. From one perspective, in accordance with the principles of good governance, public authorities must be transparent and provide citizens with access to information of public interest. On the other hand, there are provisions arising from the Law on the Protection of Personal Data (Cis legislation, 2011), which necessitate a balance between these two aspects. In this case, however, we explicitly indicate that communication between institutions regarding the topic of deinstitutionalization and the protection of children's rights occurs under the impact of regulations in the field and the obligation to comply with them. Each use of confidential information must be lawful.

Principle 7: The duty to share information for individual care is as important as the duty to protect patient confidentiality. Health and social care professionals should have the confidence to share confidential information in the best interests of patients and service users within the framework set out by these principles. They should be supported by the policies of their employers, regulators and professional bodies.

This principle reflects child assistance by emphasizing the importance of balancing the protection of information confidentiality and sharing such information when it is in the best interest of the child. In the context of social and medical assistance for children, this principle encourages professionals to share relevant information with other institutions and specialists to ensure appropriate care and protection for the child, especially in cases where there are risks of abuse, neglect, or other health and safety concerns. Thus, while the confidentiality of information about the child and their family must be respected, this principle acknowledges that, in certain situations, sharing confidential information becomes essential to providing effective care and taking prompt protective measures. The policies and regulations of the involved institutions ensure that this sharing is done responsibly, only when necessary to protect the child's best interests.

Principle 8: Inform patients and service users about how their confidential information is used. A range of steps should be taken to ensure no surprises for patients and service users, so they can have clear expectations about how and why their confidential information is used, and what choices they have about this. These steps will vary depending on the use: as a minimum, this should include providing accessible, relevant and appropriate information - in some cases, greater engagement will be required.

It is important to note that a series of measures have been taken to ensure that service beneficiaries are informed about work practices, intervention mechanisms that will be applied, and the solutions provided by authorities, so that they can have clear expectations regarding how their confidential information will be used, as well as possible alternatives. Even if there are divergences regarding solutions and possible actions, clarity, accessibility, relevance, and appropriateness of the information being used remain crucial.

All these principles provide a clear perspective on the current conditions of diverse communication channels, trends of engagement, and active participation in the decision-making process by various public and private institutions. However, there are certain dangers related to the protection of personal data, which is a crucial part of children's rights. The lack of clear and secure information-sharing practices can hinder collaboration among different institutions involved in the deinstitutionalization process, leading to wasted time, resources, and inefficient solutions. More importantly, it may expose vulnerable children to additional risks such as stigmatization, discrimination, or even abuse.

In this context, there is a need for both the development of institutional policies aligned with priority objectives and compliance with legal requirements that restrict the flow of information being used while providing additional leverage to protect children. Adhering to confidentiality principles is essential to safeguard children's rights, maintain trust in the social protection system, and ensure a safe and effective transition during the deinstitutionalization process.

An effective and coordinated communication among all parties involved is essential for the success of the deinstitutionalization process. The analysis of the evolution of this process shows that policies and legal frameworks have evolved due to inter-institutional dialogue. Strategic inter-institutional communication has contributed to the strengthening of a protective framework at both national and international levels, in the context of globalization. Responsible inter-organizational partnerships have demonstrated positive practices and sustainable results for the future of child protection. Additionally, leveraging national and international analyses and practices, as reiterated in the UN Guidelines (**UN General Assembly,** 2017), is crucial for integrating this communication into current policies. The implementation process of sustainable development policies for the child rights protection system is supported by the approval of the National Child Protection Program for 2022 – 2026 and its Action Plan (Legis, 2022), which aims to ensure the continuity of implemented measures and respond to current challenges in the child protection system.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, to ensure a safe and protective family environment for children, a systemic, intersectoral approach is necessary, based on open and effective communication among all institutions and organizations involved. Inter-institutional communication fulfils key functions in ensuring an efficient collaboration process. It enables coordination among various entities involved in child protection, providing a framework in which policies and practices can be harmonized. By maintaining a shared focus on priorities and clearly identifying roles and responsibilities, it is possible to ensure the effective implementation of protection measures and family reintegration, thereby accelerating the implementation of deinstitutionalization reforms and successfully achieving the strategic objectives outlined in policy documents.

References

Candea, R. (1996) *Managerial communication: Concept. Skills. Strategy*. Bucureşti: Expert Publishing House.

Cis legislation (2011) Protection of Personal Data. Law John Wiley & Sons, No. 133 of July 8, 2011. In: Official Monitor No. 170-175, 2011, October 14. Available from:

https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=51097 [22 September, 2024]

Devaney, C. et al. (2021) *A review of international experiences in relation to the implementation of a statutory duty for interagency collaboration to ensure the protection and welfare of children*. Galway: UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway.

Eight Caldicott Principles (2020) NDG for health and social care / *service.gov.uk*. Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fcf9b92d3bf7f5d0bb8bb13/Eight_Caldicott_Principles_08.12.20.pdf [April, 13 2022].

Gov.md (2023) Regarding the establishment, organization, and operation of Territorial Social Assistance Agencies. Government Decision No. 957/2023 from December 6, 2023. In: *Official Monitor*, 2023, December 8th. Available from: https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/subiect-10-nu-949-mmps-2023_0.pdf [22 September, 2024]

Iovu, M.B. et. al. (2020) *Professional Competencies of Social Workers*. Bucharest: Tritonic Books.

Koneru, A. (2008) *Professional Communication*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, Pvt limited.

Legis (2022) Regarding the approval of the National Program for Child Protection for 2022-2026 and the Action Plan for its implementation. Government Decision No. 347/2022. **In:** *Official Monitor* No. 194-200, 2022, July 1st. Available from: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=145280&lang=ro [22 September, 2024]

Lesenciuc, A. (2017) *Communication Theories*. 2st Edition. Braşov: "Henri Coandă" Air Force Academy Publishing House.

Marin, C. (1998) *Institutional communication*. Chisinau: Presa.

Mcnair, B. (2003) *An Introduction to Political Communication*. 3st edition. London and New York: Routledge.

Mcquail, D. & Windahl, S. (2013) *Models of Communication for the Study of Mass Communication*. Second edition. New York: Routledge.

Moraru, V. (2013) *Europenization: facets of the process*. Chişinău: Institute of European Integration and Political Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova.

Năstase, M. (2004) *Organizational and managerial culture*. Bucharest: ASE Publishing House.

Osborne, S.P. et al. (2005) Government/non-profit Partnerships, Public Services Delivery, and Civil Society in the Transitional Nations of Eastern Europe: Lessons from the Hungarian Experience. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 28(9-10):767–86.

Pedler, E. (2001) *Sociology of Communication.* Bucharest: Cartea românească.

Shumate, M. et al. (2017). *Inter-organizational Communicatio*n. In: Craig R. Scott, Laurie Lewis (Editors). The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication. New Jercy: John Wiley & Sons.

Tomescu, M. (2020) *Public Management*. 2nd edition, revised and expanded. Bucharest: ProUniversitaria.

UN General Assembly (2017) *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. A Framework of the United Nations*. New York: International Social Service.

WHO (2018) *Multisectoral and intersectoral action for improved health and well-being for all: mapping of the WHO, European Region. Governance for a sustainable future: improving health and well-being for all: final report*. Copenhagen: The Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization.

EMOTIONAL LABOUR. COMMUNICATION AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Ilinca MANOLIU[1]

[1]psychologist, "Apollonia" University of Iasi
Corresponding author: Ilinca Manoliu; e-mail: ilincamanoliu@yahoo.com

Abstract

Emotional labor refers to the conscious and unconscious efforts individuals make to manage their emotions and behaviors in social interactions in accordance with cultural or occupational expectations. The concept, popularized by Arlie Hochschild, emphasizes how people manage emotions to create positive impressions and maintain harmonious relationships, especially in professional contexts such as customer service, education, or health care. This form of work involves techniques such as suppressing genuine emotions, adopting desirable emotions, and creating the appearance of empathy. Its psychological impact can range from the development of social skills and resilience, to negative effects such as emotional exhaustion, self-alienation or chronic stress. Recent studies explore the role of individual differences, such as emotional intelligence, and organizational strategies that can support the healthy management of emotional labor.

Keywords: *emotional work, positive relationships, emotions, social norms, well-being, impression of management*.

1. THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF EMOTIONAL LABOUR

As a first conceptualization, *emotional labour* appeared when the sociologist Hochschild (1983), referred to a worker's effort to display emotions in accordance with the accepted social and cultural norms, rather than what he or she actually felt. Thus, emotional labour is perceived as a process by which nurses adopt a "work personality" in order to express their autonomous, surface or deep emotions during the meetings with their patients (Huynh et. al, 2008).

The concept of emotional labour refers to an ideal differentiation between the emotions and thoughts that nurses should feel in theory and those that they have in fact, but cannot express in practice.

Although the concept of emotional labour originated in the field of sociology, the analysis and synthesis within the theoretical-empirical-conceptual system (C-T-E) can bring some clarification on the pragmatic interpersonal, intrapersonal and organizational factors influencing the theoretical model regarding the healthcare system. The concept can be seen as the human aspect of the practice in the case of nurses, considering the entire spectrum of human experience, that is, the situation in which every human being needs care and the nurse is the one who provides this protection; the immense emotional effort of the nurses is taken into account, as well as the aspect of imperfection, of human error during meetings with individuals that they have to take care of in the service (Huynh et. al, 2008).

The trajectory of the concept of "emotional labour" in the literature was targeted, and it was found that there was no specific mention of the concept before 1990. A preliminary search of the keywords in question showed that there were no indexed works until this year; for the period 1990-2007 the search generated 317 papers in the field of healthcare, medicine, psychology and management (Huynh et. al, 2008).

Goffman's (1967) concepts of "impression management" and "presentation of self," which describe workers' efforts to adopt a desirable outward attitude toward their displayed emotions while their actual emotions remain hidden, have not been extensively cited in the literature. Building on Goffman's work, Hochschild (1983) has been credited with being the first to develop and refine the concept of *emotional labour* in the study of flight attendants.