THE USAGE OF INFORMAL COMPUTER BASED COMMUNICATION IN THE CONTEXT OF ORGANIZATION'S TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Agota Giedrė Raišienė

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania, agotar@mruni.eu

Steponas Jonušauskas

Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania, steponas@ecdl.lt

Abstract

Purpose of the article is theoretically and practically analyze the features of informal computer based communication in the context of organization's technological resources.

Methodology—meta analysis, survey and descriptive analysis.

Findings. According to scientists, the functions of informal communication cover sharing of work related information, coordination of team activities, spread of organizational culture and feeling of interdependence and affinity. Also, informal communication widens the individuals' recognition of reality, creates general context of environment between talkers, and strengthens interpersonal attraction. For these reasons, informal communication is desirable and even necessary in organizations because it helps to ensure efficient functioning of the enterprise. However, communicating through electronic channels suppresses informal connections or addresses them to the outside of the organization. So, electronic communication is not beneficial for

Socialinės technologijos/Social Technologies
© Mykolo Romerio universitetas, 2011
© Mykolas Romeris University, 2011

ISSN 2029-7564 (online)
https://www.mruni.eu/lt/mokslo_darbai/st/apie_leidini/
https://www.mruni.eu/en/mokslo_darbai/st/apie_leidini/index.php

developing ties in informal organizational network. The empirical research showed, that significant part of courts administration staff is prone to use technological resources of their office for informal communication. Representatives of courts administration choose friends for computer based communication much more often than colleagues (72% and 63%respectively). 93%of the research respondents use an additional e-mail box serviced by commercial providers for non work communication. High intensity of informal electronic communication with friends and familiars shows that workers of court administration are used to meet their psycho emotional needs outside the work place. The survey confirmed conclusion of the theoretical analysis: computer based communication is not beneficial for developing informal contacts between workers. In order for the informal communication could carry out its functions and technological recourses of organization would be used effectively, staff should be motivated to communicate directly face to face.

Research limitations—It can be reasonably suspected, that the real measure of informal communication with outside recipients is even higher, than the data of the research shows. In could be stipulated by the lack of analysis of other electronic communication mediums (e.g. video calls, social networks, internet forums, etc.).

Practical implications. The results of the research help to form a wider comprehension about features of organizational communication. Authors of the research state that if managers would pay more attention to the practice of employees' informal and computer based communication, they would improve the usage of information technology resources.

Originality/Value—Informal electronic communication in Lithuania's orga-nizations had not been researched yet. The chosen subject is definitely new. On the other hand, deep penetration of computer-based communication in employees' daily routine shows the relevancy of the topic.

Keywords: informal communication, computer based communication, technological resources, effective communication.

Research type: viewpoint and research paper.

The quality of organization's communication directly related to the efficiency of organization's business (Guo, Sanchez, 2005). Researchers and leaders of organizations concentrate on the formal communication. This practice is justified and understandable, because the quality of the formal communication determine the efficiency of labor (Litterst, Eyo, 1982), an amount of coordination expenses (Sine et al., 2006), a success of conflict regulating, a spread of rumors (Difonzo, Bordia, 2000) and so on.

However, it should be highlighted, that an informal communication also influences the efficiency and the quality of work (Anderson, Narus, 1984; Johnson et al., 1994). Informal communication helps to solve problems associated with teamwork, bridges different attitudes to organization's goals, joints workers' assignments, values as well as developing tolerance for different opinions (Ogaard et al., 2008; Hargie et al., 2003).

In the era of globalization, organizations overstep territories of the native country. Their members gather into virtual teams. Face to face communication becomes optional while trying to realize their goals. Due to economical reasons, organizations promote work in the environment of mobile information technologies. Speaking about formal electronic communication, researches show different results. In an opinion of some scientists, computer based communication leads to lower outcomes of teams than in the way of dealing directly (Carmel, 1999; Olson ir Olson, 2000; Begale et al., 2002). The other researches value computer based communication as a successful in terms of increasing of work efficiency (Whittaker, Bradner, 2000; Lau etc., 2001). Meanwhile, there is a consensus in opinion about informal electronic communication. Research show that organization suffers in case of lack of sufficient informal communication and the problem is the greater the more workers communicate by technological mediums (Whittaker, 2003; Efimova, Grudin, 2007; Thom-Shantelli et al., 2008; McFedries, 2007; Handel, Herbsleb, 2002). One of the most important notices is that workers use organization information technologies for informal communication creating theirs connections outside of organization instead of creating them inside. In that way, organization resources are used wastefully.

It should be noted that research on informal electronic communication in Lithuania's organizations has not been done yet. That is why the chosen subject is definitely new. On the other hand, deep penetration of computer based communication in workers daily routines shows the relevancy of the topic.

The goal of the article is to theoretically and practically analyze the features of informal computer based communication in the context of organization's technological resources. The tasks of the article are: 1) to ascertain the influence of informal communication to the work performance; 2) to discuss the changes of informal communication in electronic media; 3) to implement the empirical research and to assess the usage of informal electronic communication in chosen public sector organization in the context of technological resources.

Research methods: meta-analysis, survey and descriptive analysis.

In the first part of the article, the insights on informal electronic communication made by abroad authors are reviewed. In the second part, the empiric research made by the article authors is introduced. The third part submits the discussion and summarized conclusions.

1. The attitude of abroad researchers towards electronic informal communication in organizations

Organizational communication can be conditionally divided into task-oriented and relationship-oriented. Speaking about task-oriented communication, the aspect of accuracy is the most important. However, when evaluating the communication which is meant to sustain relations, politeness should be taken into consideration (Kaul, Pandit, 2008). The informal communication adjusts both aspects – oriented to tasks and oriented to relations.

The functions of informal communication covers sharing work related information, coordinating team activities, spreading organizational culture and feeling of interdependence and affinity. Researches show, that informal communication also plays a big role of enhancing group collaboration and initiating innovations in organization (Johnson et al., 1994; Nardi, 2005; Kraut et al., 1990). Nevertheless, one of the key functions of communication is to meet personal needs of individuals (Kaul, Pandit, 2008, p.1).

Informal communication widens the individuals' recognition of reality. Social psychologists state that due to the reality's complexity, people comprehend the environment by creating less complex schemes of reality. These schemes are referred both while assessing events and making decisions (Brown, 2006; Kunda, 1999). While sharing the experiences in informal environment, people learn to forecast the changes of close environment and foresee the behavior of other individuals. Workers also apply these notices in work. So it can be stated, that informal communication between workers is valuable both for their individual development and work efficiency. Knowledge of human relationship leads to better understanding, more positive outcome of interpersonal conflicts, ability to cooperate, etc.

It is also important that informal communication creates general context of environment between talkers (Zhao, Rosson, 2004). That enables people to better and faster understand each other, communicate without requiring as much efforts as communicating with people of "other context." Common ground significantly decreases the probability that information would be distorted. In example, the common ground abolishes the communicational barriers determined by specialization. It is important to say, that a common understanding forms progressively and can not be enforced (McLean, 2005; Siff, Mongeau, 2002). So, informal communication is essential for workers in the boundaries of enterprise, but it has no direct value from contacts with people outside.

Informal communication strengthens interpersonal attraction. Due to informal conversation, positive emotions are being felt and that motives to develop interpersonal relationships, sharing important information, giving mutual assistance and moral support (Nardi, 2005). In addition, informal connections between colleagues create a sense of community (Rawlings, 1992; Mayers, 2009). Unfortunately, creating connections outside the organization, additional value to the organization is not created. It has to be highlighted, that if an individual feels reliance on outer people (not inner referent group), the work colleagues are comprehended as strangers, meaning "them," but not "us." That's why it is hard to expect teamwork, loyalty to the enterprise, concern about joint results from employees, when there is a lack of informal work groups and connections.

Summarizing, the informal communication is desirable and even necessary in organizations. It helps to ensure efficient functioning of the enterprise. However, when communication moves to the electronic medium, workers decline direct speaking. The communication by technological channels is more like changing remarks, not meaningful dialogue (Whittaker, 2003).

Understanding the importance of the communication quality, managers have started to use auxiliary means of interpersonal connection, such as "blogs", profession

related forums, social networks, etc. (Efimova, Grudin, 2007; Thom-Shantelli, et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the modern means of communication have lots of negative sides. As information technology expert McFedries (2007) notices, mobile technologies stimulate communication processes, but the information recipients overstep boundaries of organizations and expand into a much wider area. Workers communicate with their friends, family members or even strangers who cherish similar hobbies more frequently, instead of communicating with each other. It is needed to realize, that due to the ability to communicate through world wide network, the goals of informal communication were changed. Previously, colleagues were sharing information needed to cope with assignments, given the support for each other at work. Nowadays much more time is given to emotional needs that are usually met outside the organization. The informal communication is still needed to keep good psycho emotional state of the workers, but it doesn't perform another important role: it does not bring closer the members of the collective, does not help to make new collaborative connections or create and share new ideas. Due to this fact, organization technological resource usage for workers' informal communication could be assessed as a negative phenomenon, and a damaging practice for the enterprise.

It is important to highlight that technologies in of themselves do not motivate the members of virtual workgroups to communicate informally. That guides the conclusion, that saving of expenses, which can seem obvious from first sight (e.g. the price of common work place, expenses for meetings and transport) determine higher final expenses.

The problem of communication simultaneity is another aspect, at which the influence of technologies for workers' informal communication is being analyzed in scientific literature. Not all of the technological channels enable real-time communication. For example, correspondence through electronic mail is asynchronous. Due to the delay of receiving answer, the information received may be not comprehended as adequate. The longer the delay is, the less important the information received seems and the less are the chances that new ideas would arise between communicants or help would be given (Handel, Herbsleb, 2002). On the other hand using synchronous mediums of electronic communication, e.g. web discussions, workers can immediately find answers to questions related to their work. The informal tone of these communications boosts interpersonal confidence and increases the probability of further cooperation (Cho et al., 2005; Cameron, Webster, 2005; Hrastinski, 2007).

The quality of informal communication, as well as formal communication, is negatively affected by the lack of non-verbal signals when using electronic devices of communication. When speaking directly, more than 90% of information is received though a person's mimics, body posture, speech tempo, intonation etc. (Dumbrava, Koronka, 2009). Personal meetings, direct conversations and interpersonal understanding, formed at that time is essential for ensuring efficient organizational communication (Anand, Shachar, 2007).

Speaking about informal communication, one of its negative aspects are gossips, and undesirable and uncontrolled spread of rumors. Rumors as informal communication creates social context, enables widening the limits of personal and group influence,

ensures particular social control (Houmafar, Johnson, 2003; Shahaida, Nargundkar, 2006; Fishbach, 2009). Rumors and gossip may perfectly serve while making changes, motivating workers, etc. (Robbins, Judge, 2007). It should be noted that rumors spread significantly slower through technologic channels, so in the aspect of rumor prevention, communicating through electronic mediums can be assessed positively.

Summarizing, it can be stated that informal organizational communication is important as well as formal. With the help of the informal communication, work completion could be improved, work related problems could be solved, cooperation experience could be obtained and various human needs ranging from socialization and safety to power and self-esteem could be met. However, communicating through technological channels suppresses informal connections or addresses them to the outside of the organization. So, electronic communication is not beneficial for developing ties in informal organizational networks.

2. Traits of employee informal electronic communication in judicial courts administration

In empirical research, the presumption that informal communication is stronger with outer target groups than with colleagues when using computer based technologies (summing up the acts of both formal and informal communication) was examined. The research was pursued in juridical courts in the area of Vilnius. 43 servants of court administration took part in the survey. In order to avoid the differences of technological competence of individuals, respondents with minimal skills in computer education were selected. The criterion of the selection was ensured by questioning only the people who were getting ready for ECDL certification. The survey was made using unified question forms. The questionnaire was given directly to the participants. The received data of the survey was analyzed using statistical and descriptive analysis. Respondents were asked:

1. How many letters do the respondents usually receive every day, how many did they get yesterday and today;
2. How many letters do the respondents write ordinarily;
3. Approximately, how much time does it take for the respondents to write answers to their letters per day;
4. How quick do they react to a request for the answer;
5. From what groups do they receive letters;
6. For what groups do they send letters;
7. Do they have extra e-mail systems installed in their computers or do they use commercial e-mail systems at work;

Analyzing the answers it was found out, that the respondents receive approximately 5 new letters every day. "Yesterday" respondents had approximately received 4 letters, and when the survey was taken at noon, they had received about 2 letters. If absolute meaning of the data was evaluated, the difference between "today" and approximate

number of letters was 60%, and the difference between "yesterday" and the approximate number of letters was 20%.

The respondents usually write 4 letters everyday. 21% of those who took part in the survey need about ten minutes to answer all letters. 61% need about thirty minutes, and 12% of the survey participants took up to an hour to answer correspondence. The rest of the respondents stated, that they usually do not have to write answers to the letters in general.

47% of the survey participants answer their letters immediately when the e-mail system announces the new mail. 9% of people try to make it during the closest hour and 33% of those questioned—on the same day.

Speaking about the target groups for e-mail exchange, it was discovered that respondents receive e-mails everyday or very often from: 1) friends (49% marked this option), 2) managers (42%), 3) colleagues of one department (30%), 4) colleagues from other departments (12%), 5) clients (9%). The data is illustrated by the picture No. 1.
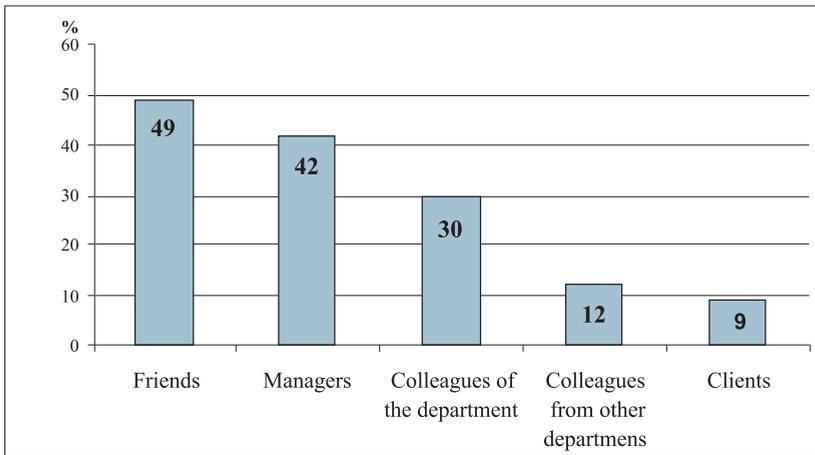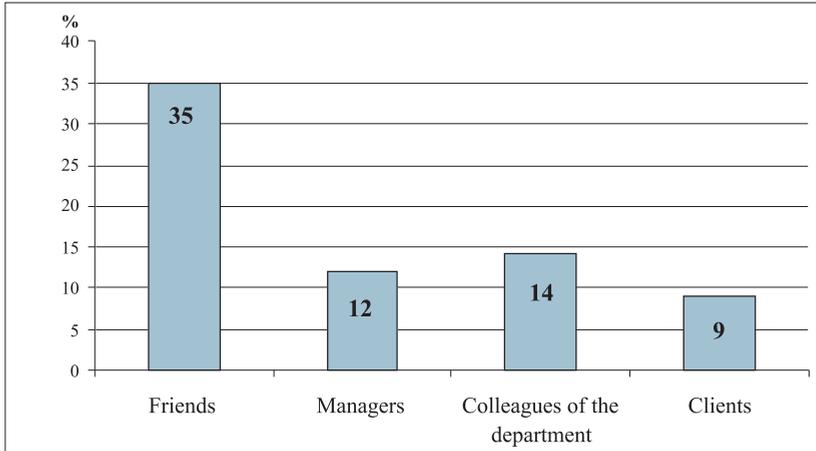

Picture 1. The contact groups from which the respondents receive e-mail the most often
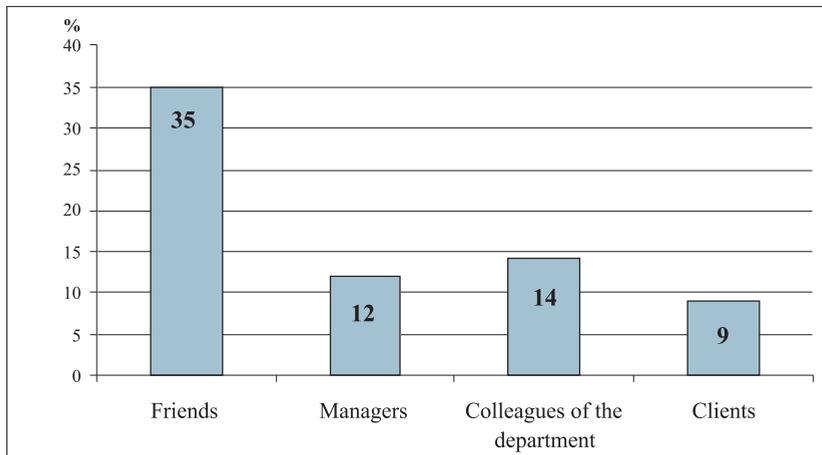
26% of the research participants do not receive e-mail from friends at all. Also 23% of respondents never receive letters from managers, 28%—from colleagues of their department, 56% from colleagues of other departments, and 40%—from clients.

While analyzing the addressees, it was discovered that 12% of the questioned people write e-mails every day or often to their managers, 35%—to their friends, 14%—to colleagues of their department, 9%—to the clients.

58% of the respondents do not send letters to their colleagues from other departments, 42%—write them occasionally. 37% of the questioned people do not send e-mails to their department colleagues, 28% of respondents never send letters to their friends. The research results are shown in pictures No. 2 and No. 3.

Picture No. 2. The contact groups to which the respondents are sending e-mails most often

Picture No. 3. The target groups to which the respondents do not keep in touch by e-mail at all

Also research shows, that 93% of the survey participants have and use the commercial e-mail systems in their work computers. 14% of the questioned people use more than one e-mail box in their work.

3. Discussion and conclusion

By the results of the research, a large part of the staff in courts administration is prone to use technological resources of their office for informal communication by

e-mail with recipients outside the organization. The survey participants, though being unskilled computer users, choose friends for computer based communication much more often (72% write e-mails to their friends) than with colleagues of their departments (63%). Almost 60% of the questioned people do not initiate an act of communication with colleagues from other departments via electronic medium at all. It implies that intergroup electronic communication is fragmented and formal. On the other hand, the face to face communication was not examined, so it could not be stated, that the respondents do not cultivate direct connections of informal communication with their colleagues. However, high intensity of informal electronic communication with friends shows that workers of court administration are used to meet their psycho emotional needs outside the work place. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that even 93% of the questioned use an additional e-mail box serviced by commercial providers. It can be reasonably suspected, that the real measure of informal communication with outside recipients is even higher, than the data of the research shows. The more because the communication was not analyzed in other electronic mediums (e.g. video calls, say Skype, social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, various internet forums).

While analyzing the data of the research, it was discovered, that the respondents spend from 10 to 60 minutes of their work day for electronic communication. Considering that an average salary is paid for the time spent on communication not related with work, a conclusion can be made, that represented organizations suffer loss due to this worker behavior, and the resources of organizational information technologies are used inefficiently. The situation is cushioned by the fact that the overall number of sent and received e-mails is not high. On the other hand, respondents state that usually they receive many more e-mails than in recent days. In the opinion of scientists, the perverted perception that the mail flow is greater than it is in reality shows, that employees undergo stress due to the usage of technologies in everyday life work (Jarvenpaa et al., 2005).

In conclusion, it should be highlighted that informal communication, as well as formal communication is a vital and integral element of every organization. With the help of informal communication, the accomplishment of job tasks could be improved, work related problems could be solved, cooperation experience is obtained and various human needs are met. However, the empirical research confirms the conclusion of abroad researchers, which asserts that communication through informal channels diverting informal connections of employees to the outside of organization. So computer based communication is not beneficial for developing informal contacts between workers. In order for the informal communication could carry out its functions and technological recourses would be used effectively, staff should be motivated to communicate directly face to face.

The results of the research helps to form a wider comprehension about the employees' communication needs and the features of organizational communication. Employers and managers should pay more attention to the practice of informal communication, and improve the usage of information technology resources. In the scientific context, the authors of the paper invite to perform interdisciplinary investigations on the efficiency of organizational activity in electronic medium, in order to create a value to the business.

Literature

Anand B. N., Shachar R. (2007) *Noisy Communication. Journal of Quantitative Marketing and Economics*, Vol. 5, p. 211–237.

Anderson J. C., Narus J. A. (1984) *A model of the distributor's perspective of distributor-manufacturer working relationships. Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 48, Iss. 4, p. 62–74.

Begale J., Tang J. C., Smith R. E., *Yankelovich N. (2002) Work rythms: analyzing visualizations of awareness histories of distributed groups*, CSCW, New Orleans.

Brown C. (2006) *Social Psychology*, Sage.

Cameron A. F., Webster J. (2005) *Unintended consequences of emerging communication technologies: Instant massaging in workplace.* Computers in Human Behaviour, Vol. 21, Iss. 1, p. 85–103.

Carmel E. (1999) *Global Software Teams*, Prentice Hall.

Cho H. K., Trier M., Kim E. (2005) *The use of instant massaging in working relationship development: A case study.* Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, Vol. 10, Iss. 4.

Difonzo N., Bordia P. (2000). *How top PR professionals handle hearsay: corporate rumors, their effects, and strategies to manage them.* Public Relation Review, 26(2), 173–190.

Dumbrava G., Koronka A., Cucu I (2009) *Actions speak louder than words: body language in business communication.* Annals of the University of Petrosani, Economics, Vol. 9, Iss. 3.

Efimova L., Grudin J. (2007) *Crossing Boundaries: A Case study of emploee blogging*. Proceedings of the HICSS-40. Los Alamitos: IEEE Press.

Fishbach K., Gloor P. A., Shoder D. (2009) *Analysis of Informal Communication Networks—A Case Study,* Business and Information System Egineering, Vol. 1, Apr., p. 140–149.

Guo L. Ch., Sanchez Y. (2005) *Workplace communication. Organizational Behavior in Helth Care* (Borkowski N. Ed.) Jones and Bartlett publications, p. 77–110.

Handel M., Herbsleb J. D. (2002) *What is Chat Doing in the Workplace?* CSCW, New Orleans.

Hargie O., Dickson D., Nelson S. (2003). *Working together in a divided society. A study of intergroup communication in the Northern Ireland workplace.* Journal of Business and Technical Communication, Vol. 17, Iss. 3, p. 285–318.

Houmanfar R., Johnson R. (2003) *Organizational implications.* Journal of Organizational Behaviour Management, Vol. 23, Iss. 2, p. 117–138.

Hrastinski S. (2007) IM support of informal synchronous e-collaboration. In: Kock (ed.) *Encyclopedia of e-collaboration*, p. 349–354, Hershey, PA: Idea Group.

Jarvenpaa S. L., Lang K. R., Tuunainen V. K. (2005) Friend or Foe. Ambivalent Relationship between Technology and Its Users'. In: Sorensen C. et al. (eds.) *Designing Ubiquitous Information Environments: Socio-Technical Issues and Challenges*, New York, Springer, p. 29–42.

Johnson J. D., Donohue W. A., Atkin C. K., Johnson S. (1994) *Differences between formal and informal communication channels,* Journal of business communication.

Kaul A., Pandit A. (2008) *Playing the Game of Communication: Enhancing Skills through a Reading of Literature.* Journal of Vikalpa, Vol. 33, Iss. 2, p. 1–13.

Kraut R. A., Fish R. S., Root R. W., Chalfonte B. L. (1990) Informal Communications in Organizations: Form, Function and Technology, In: Oskamp S., Spacapan S (eds.) *Human reactions to technology: Claremont symposium on applied social psychology,* CA: Sage Publications.

Kunda Z. (1999) *Social Cognition: Making Sense of People*, The MIT Press.

Lau T., Wong Y. H., Chan K. F., Low M. (2001) *Information Technology and the Work Environment – Does IT change the way people interact at work?* The Journal of Human Systems Management, Vol. 20, Iss. 3, p. 267–279.

Litterst J. K., Eyo B. (1982). *Gauging the Effectiveness of formal communication programs: a search for the communication-productivity link.* Journal of Business Communication, Vol. 19, Iss. 2, p. 15–26.

Mayers D. G. (2009) *Social psychology*, 10 edn., McGraw-Hill.

McFedries, P. (2007) *Technically Speaking: All ATwitter.* IEEE Spectrum, Vol. 44, Iss. 10, p. 84.

McLean S. (2005) *The Basis of Interpersonal Communication*, Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Nardi B. A. (2005) *Beyond bendwidth: Dimentions of connection in interpersonal communication*, Journal of Computer Supported Cooperation Work, Vol. 14, p. 91–130, Springer.

Ogaard T., Marnburg E., Larsen S. (2008). *Perception of organizational structure in the hospitality industry: Consequences for commitment, job satisfaction and perceived performance.* Tourism management, Vol. 29, Iss. 4, p. 661–671.

Olson G. M., Olson J. S. (2000) *Distance Matters.* Human-Computer Interaction, Vol. 5, Iss. 2-3, p. 139–179.

Rawlings W. K. (1992) *Friendship matters: Communication, dialectics, and the life course,* NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Robbins S. P., Judge . A. (2007) *Organizational Behavior,* Pearson, Prentice Hall.

Shahaida P., Nargundkar R. (2006) *Training Managers for „between you and me" experiences.* The Journal of Business Perspective, Vol. 1o, Iss. 2, p. 21–27.

Siff J. B., Mongeau P. A. (2002) *Persuasive Communication,* The Guilford Press.

Sine W. D., Mitsuhashi H., Kirsch D. A. (2006). *Revisiting Burns and Stalker: formal structure and new venture performance in emerging economic sectors.* Academy of Management Journal, Vol. 49, Iss. 1, p. 121–132.

Thom-Shantelli J., Muller J. M., Millen D. R. (2008) *Social Tagging Roles: Publishers, Evangelists, Leaders,* ACM, p. 1041–1044.

Whittaker S. (2003) Theories and methods in mediated communication. In: Graesser A. et al. (eds). *The Handbook of Discourse Process,* Mahwah, NJ.

Whittaker S., Bradner E. (2000) *Interaction and Outeraction: Instant Masassaging in Action.* Journal of ACM, Vol. 2/6, p. 79–88.

Zhao D., Rosson M. B. (2004) *How and Why People Twitter: The role that micro-bloggin plays in informal communication at work,* Journal of ACM, Vol. 1–2.

NEFORMALI ELEKTRONINĖ KOMUNIKACIJA ORGANIZACIJŲ TECHNOLOGINIŲ IŠTEKLIŲ KONTEKSTE

Agota Giedrė Raišienė

Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Lietuva, agotar@mruni.eu

Steponas Jonušauskas

Mykolo Romerio universitetas, Lietuva, steponas@ecdl.lt

Santrauka. *Straipsnio tikslas – teoriškai ir praktiškai panagrinėti bei technologinių išteklių kontekste įvertinti neformalios elektroninės komunikacijos reikšmę organizacijoms. Straipsnio išvados suformuluotos remiantis atliktos metaanalizės bei empirinio tyrimo rezul-*

tatais. Besigilinančių į elektroninės organizacinės komunikacijos klausimus užsienio tyrėjų darbų analizė parodė, jog neformali komunikacija yra ne mažiau reikšminga nei formali, siekiant darbuotojų ir organizacijos veiklos efektyvumo. Neformalia komunikacija darbuotojai plečia gyvenimišką patirtį, kuria vėliau remiasi taip pat ir darbe, dalijasi darbine informacija, teikia vieni kitiems paramą, įveikiant kilusias darbo problemas, tenkina asmeninius psichoemocinius poreikius, pvz., bendravimo, pripažinimo, valdžios ir pan. Vertinant iš organizacijos perspektyvos pažymėtina, kad tinkamai valdoma neformali komunikacija palengvina komandų veiklos koordinavimą, organizacijos kultūros sklaidą, sumažina pasipriešinimą naujovėms, taip pat atlieka tam tikrą individualios bei grupinės elgsenos kontrolės funkciją. Vis dėlto elektroniniai kanalai silpnina neformalius ryšius, o dar dažniau — perkelia juos už organizacijos ribų. Todėl elektroninė komunikacija nėra priemonė, leidžianti kurti ir palaikyti neformalius tinklus tarp darbuotojų.

Empirinis tyrimas, atliktas tiesiogiai apklausiant Vilniaus miesto ir rajono teismų administracijos darbuotojus, parodė, kad tarnautojai aktyviai naudojasi organizacijos technologiniais ištekliais neformalios komunikacijos tikslais. Apklausai tikslingai buvo pasirinkti palyginti menko kompiuterinio raštingumo asmenys (dar tik besirengiantys ECDL testavimui), tačiau elektroniniais laiškais su draugais jie bendravo gana intensyviai: 72 proc. apklaustųjų teigė, jog su draugais jie susirašinėja kasdien arba dažnai. Be to, 93 proc. tyrimo dalyvių pažymėjo savo darbo kompiuteryje turį papildomą — komercinę — pašto dėžutę, o 14 proc. respondentų — net daugiau nei vieną. Plataus masto neformalus elektroninis bendravimas su draugais ir pažįstamais rodo, jog teismų administracijos darbuotojai savo psichoemocinius poreikius linkę tenkinti už darbovietės ribų. Tad empirinio tyrimo rezultatai patvirtino teorinės analizės išvadą, jog bendravimas kompiuteriu nėra vertingas plėtojant neformalius tarpusavio ryšius tarp organizacijos darbuotojų. Straipsnio autorių nuomone, neformalios komunikacijos už organizacijos ribų mastas būtų reikšmingai didesnis, jei būtų įvertinta ne tik elektroninio pašto vartojimo praktika, bet ir kiti elektroninio komunikavimo kanalai: socialiniai tinklai, videoskambučiai, realaus laiko pokalbių svetainės, interneto forumai ir pan. Prielaidai patikrinti reikalinga atlikti tolesnius neformalios darbuotojų elektroninės komunikacijos tyrimus.

Apibendrinant pažymėtina, jog norint, kad neformali komunikacija atliktų savo funkcijas organizacijose, o technologiniai ištekliai būtų naudojami efektyviai, vadovai turėtų darbuotojus skatinti neformaliai bendrauti tiesiogiai.

Raktažodžiai*: neformali komunikacija, elektroninė komunikacija, technologiniai ištekliai, komunikacijos efektyvumas.*