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# The Role of Information Flow in Rehabilitation Activities Based on an Example of Selected Prison Units

# Rola przepływu informacji w działaniach resocjalizacyjnych na przykładzie wybranych jednostek penitencjarnych

The aim is to present basic issues related to the flow of information, the role of information flow and to show, using selected units of the Prison Service as an example, the essence of the proper flow of information on resocialization activities. The results are based on a pilot study conducted among 20 respondents of the postgraduate studies of the Prison Service at the Academy of Justice on March 3, 2024. They show the essence of the proper functioning of a given unit and its connection with the quality of information management, which determines the construction of the strategy and the effectiveness of the actions taken. Problems in the effectiveness of the resocialization of convicts in prisons, the need to improve this process and the need to conduct proper research have been presented.

**Key words**: information flow, information, rehabilitation, Prison Service

Celem jest przedstawienie podstawowych zagadnień związanych z przepływem informacji, roli przepływu informacji oraz ukazanie na przykładzie wybranych jednostek Służby Więziennej istoty prawidłowego przepływu informacji na temat działań resocjalizacyjnych. Rezultaty bazują na badaniu pilotażowym przeprowadzonym pośród 20 respondentów studiów podyplomowych Służby Więziennej Akademii Wymiaru Sprawiedliwości z dnia 3 marca 2024 roku. Ukazują istotę prawidłowego funkcjonowania danej jednostki i jej powiązanie z jakością zarządzania

informacjami, które determinują budowę strategii i efektywność podejmowanych działań. Zaprezentowane zostały problemy w efektywności resocjalizacji skazanych w zakładach karnych, konieczności usprawnienia tego procesu oraz potrzeby realizacji badań właściwych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** przepływ informacji, informacja, resocjalizacja, Służba Więzienna

### Introduction

Information flow is a key element in the functioning of organisations including the selected Prison Service units discussed. The role fulfilled by information is becoming a key element of the management strategy and taking effective measures in modern times. The aim of this article was to present the types of communication in the selected units using a pilot study among 20 postgraduate study respondents of the Academy of Justice and to present the results showing that the respondents lack information on rehabilitation activities and that the flow of information and access to current data was not sufficient. It was demonstrated that the type of internal communication including the information provided had a significant impact on the dynamics of message delivery from a sender to a receiver and influenced the quality of the information transferred. It is important to continue research into the role of information flow in rehabilitation activities and to investigate the area of information flow in these units as well as to check the effectiveness and validity of rehabilitation activities.

## The role of information flow

Internal communication as well as its nature in organisations has changed significantly over the years, determined by the dynamic development of information technology and the globalisation of business activities<sup>1</sup>. The aforementioned communication is fundamental to the flow of information between a sender and a receiver in organisations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> T. Dyczkowski, J. Dyczkowska, Wpływ metod planowania na skuteczność przepływu informacji w polskich przedsiębiorstwach, Wydawnictwo Finanse, Rynki Finansowe, Ubezpieczenia, Szczecin 2014, nr 66, s. 27-41.

An effective information flow determines the efficiency of the various executive stages carried out by companies. Each stage of operation of the activity requires the management level to make continuous decisions, of which correctly communicated and up-to-date information is a fundamental element<sup>2</sup>.

Reliable and current information and its accurate flow plays a key role in any organisation in the context of decision-making, operations and the execution of day-to-day tasks. Communication in an organisation is an audience-driven dynamic process, the complexity of which stems from the diversity in the ways information is communicated including communication. Communication plays 4 basic functions:

- 1. "Transmission of information.
- 2. Expressing emotions,
- 3. Motivating,
- 4. Controlling"3.

Transmission of information is the simplest form of communication, focusing on the transfer of specific data or knowledge. In order to make decisions, we need to have a certain amount of knowledge about the specific topic so that, when transferring information to the recipients of the content, it is possible to recognise and evaluate solutions to a particular situation. This will result in identifying and making the best decision or solution to the situation.

The expression of emotions is an emotive function, which allows us to understand the other person's intentions and undoubtedly contributes to interpreting his or her behaviour. The motivational function is demonstrated by setting of the precise goals, the presentation of the progress of previously assumed solutions. The control function can take place both formally and informally and consists of collating the objectives previously set and presenting the results along with a comparison of the plans previously prepared<sup>4</sup>. The information management system provides the management of the organisation with the information necessary to make decisions, evaluate alternatives, perform tasks and detect situations that require adjusting these actions. The elements of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> C. Szydłowski, Bezpieczeństwo informacji w logistyce, Acta Scientifica Academiae Ostroviensis. Sectio A, Nauki humanistyczne, społeczne i techniczne, Ostrów Świętokrzyski 2015, t. 1, nr 5, s. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> B. Wróbel, *Rola Komunikacji w zarządzaniu projektami*, cyt. za: S. Robbins, *Zasady zachowania w organizacji*, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2007, s. 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibidem, s. 121.

the information creation and dissemination process are the function of organisational management and governance.

At present, organisations face a major challenge to dynamically and continuously adapt to changing conditions, which is one of the most important elements of competitive advantage. A factor that affects the dynamics of these changes is the information and its proper flow, which affects the speed and value of decisions taken. The information acquired and accumulated in a given enterprise becomes valuable knowledge, due to which it is possible to build the foundations necessary for decision-making; it can then become so-called technical knowledge used at subsequent stages of the task implementation<sup>5</sup>.

Information regardless of its content has a significant impact on the developments. The addressee who holds a specific piece of information that is not available to others or has not yet been transmitted to recipients has a certain kind of advantage in accessing the information<sup>6</sup>. The adequate flow of information at all management levels is one of the most important elements for the correct functioning of a given organisation by holding a collective information system, consisting of several factors with different purposes and functions<sup>7</sup>. Information systems comprise a number of subsystems which should meet the following conditions:

- "Collect and store data that can be processed into information needed for the organisation at a later date.
- Provide, in a convenient format, the operational information necessary for employees in their daily duties in order to use their skills as quickly as possible and ensure that the company operates smoothly.
- Provide, in a convenient format, the strategic information necessary for managers to make decisions about the future of the organisation.
- Expand the company value chain. It means that the information system of the organisation should be linked to external information systems, in particular suppliers, customers, which is beneficial and provides additional information, e.g. for a manufacturer it would be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Z. S. Wąsik, Z. A. Kotulski, *Przepływ informacji w przedsiębiorstwie zarządzanym systemowo.*, [w:] *Zarządzanie przedsiębiorstwem w warunkach konkurencji*, pod red. L. Nieżurawski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warmińsko-Mazurskiego, Olsztyn 2002, s. 439-450.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> J. Lewandowski, *Projektowanie systemów informacyjnych zarządzania w przedsiębiorstwie*, Politechnika Łódzka, Łódź 1999, s.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> J. Krystek, *Zintegrowany przepływ informacji w systemie produkcyjnym*, Mechanik, Warszawa 2016, t. XX, nr 7, s. 721.

very useful to hold information and the quantity of goods recently purchased by a customer on the retail market"8.

An important factor in the development of an organisation is information; as indicated above, it is essential at each and every level and serves not only for data collection, but for ensuring proper communication between employees, helps in making important decisions and strategy building. The flow of information is an essential element in the functioning of an organisation through which it is possible to coordinate activities more effectively, avoid potential mistakes and enhance the development of creativity through the possibility to share ideas among employees. All these elements directly affect the due functioning of an organisation.

The correct flow of information is associated with the quality of information management, which often determines the construction of strategies and the effectiveness of actions taken, so from the point of view of the activities carried out, including the organisation of the Prison Service unit, it is a key element of effective functioning. It is valuable to quote the statement that "information is analysed and processed into comprehensible data and messages that inform the recipient about the situation and have a real value in the decision-making process"<sup>9</sup>.

# Prison Service, the role of information flow in rehabilitation activities

According to the *Act on the Prison Service of 9 April* 2010<sup>10</sup> the Prison Service is a uniformed and armed apolitical formation with its own organisational structure. It performs the tasks set out in the *Act of 6 June 1997, the Criminal Code*<sup>11</sup> "performs tasks in the scope of the execution of pre-trial detention and custodial sentences, coercive measures resulting in the deprivation of liberty and the sentence of deprivation of liberty under the electronic surveillance system. It implements the findings of the European Prison Rules, the Model Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Op. cit., s. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> G. Gierszewska, M. Romanowska, Analiza strategiczna przedsiębiorstwa, PWE, Warszawa 1997, s. 222.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Ustawa z dnia 9 kwietnia 2010 r. o Służbie Więziennej, Dz.U. 2010 nr 79 poz. 523.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Ustawa z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. -Kodeks karny, Dz.U. 1997 nr 88 poz. 553.

Fundamental Freedoms"<sup>12</sup>. The prison system plays an important role in ensuring public safety and order through the isolation of offenders, but it also fulfils a key role in the rehabilitation of convicts held in prisons and detention centres and the provision of correctional interventions.

The rehabilitation of convicted prisoners is a key preparatory element before they leave the prison or the detention centre and re-enter the society. The rehabilitation objectives of the custodial sentence are set out in the *Act of 6 June 1997*, the Executive Criminal Code<sup>13</sup> in Article 67:

- "§ 1. The execution of a custodial sentence is aimed at arousing in the convicted person the will to cooperate in shaping his or her socially desirable attitudes, in particular his or her sense of responsibility and the need to observe the legal order and thus to refrain from returning to crime.
- § 2. In order to achieve the objective set out in § 1, individualised treatment of convicted persons shall be carried out within the framework of the sentencing regimes laid down by law, in the various categories and types of prisons.
- § 3. The influence on convicted persons, while respecting their rights and requiring them to fulfil their obligations, shall take into account, in particular, work, especially that which promotes the acquisition of appropriate professional qualifications, teaching, cultural, educational and sporting activities, maintaining contact with the family and the outside world, and therapeutic measures"<sup>14</sup>.

Rehabilitation activities are primarily aimed at preparing the inmate to leave prison after serving his or her sentence and to prevent recidivism. As A. Nawój-Leszczyński aptly states, "the measure of success of the execution of a custodial sentence is the recidivism rate"<sup>15</sup>.

On the third of March 2024, a pilot study was conducted among postgraduate students of the Academy of Justice in Warsaw. Topics included the management in the Prison Service. The aim of the pilot study was to obtain information on issues related to management in the Prison Service from the perspective of those working in the Prison Service. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Zob. Służba Więzienna, https://www.sw.gov.pl/strona/zadania-i-uprawnienia-sw [dostęp: 20.06.23 r.].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Op. cit., art. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

A. Nawój-Leszczyński, Systemy wykonywania kary pozbawienia wolności i ich potencjał redukcyjny, Przegląd Więziennictwa Polskiego, Warszawa 2016, nr. 92, [w:] A. Leszczyńska, Powrót skazanych do zakładów karnych, Przegląd Więziennictwa Polskiego, Warszawa 2017, nr 96, s. 61.

pilot study involved 20 respondents with different positions and length of service within the Prison Service. The positions occupied by the respondents taking part in the pilot study are presented in (Table 1).

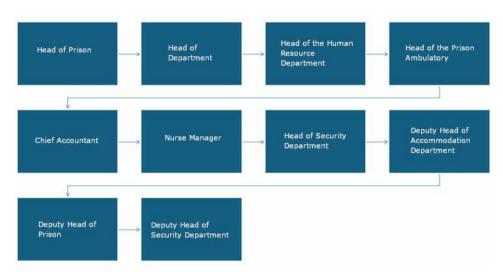


Table 1. Positions held in Prison Service units

Source: Own study based on a pilot study conducted on 3 March 2024 among post-graduate students of the Prison Service at the Academy of Justice.

The pilot study involved people holding different positions and representing other areas of activity within the Prison Service. This allowed for obtaining information from various perspectives of the functions regarding the effectiveness of rehabilitation measures for persons deprived of their liberty. Respondents also featured different length of service in the Prison Service units, which allowed for more accurate information to be obtained from the perspective of years worked and experience gained as presented in (Figure 1).

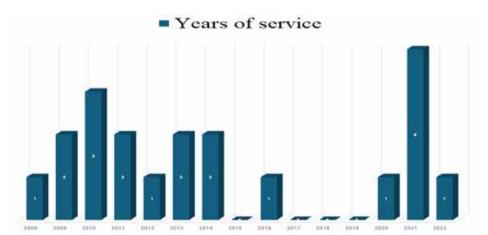
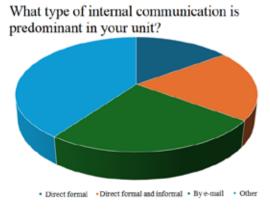


Figure 1. Years of service in Prison Service units.

Source: Own study based on a pilot study conducted on 3 March 2024 among post-graduate students of the Prison Service at the Academy of Justice.

Communication in any organisation is a key element at every stage and level. The type of communication is one of the elements of adequate and effective transmission of information. During the pilot study, respondents indicated the type of internal communication dominating in their units; the results are shown in (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Results of a pilot study on the type of internal communication present in the respondent's unit.



Source: Own study based on a pilot study conducted on 3 March 2024 among post-graduate students of the Prison Service at the Academy of Justice.

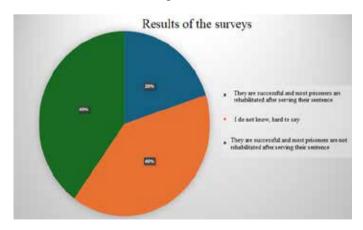
The type of internal communication including the information provided has a significant impact on the dynamics of message delivery from a sender to a receiver and influences its quality. In the figure, it can be seen that among the respondents there is a predominance of types of communication other than those mentioned above, it can be concluded that there are mixed types of communication depending on the relevance of the information transferred as well as the mail route significantly prevails over formal or informal communication.

During the pilot study, respondents answered one of the questions on the rehabilitation of convicts and the evaluation of its effectiveness, which was as follows: *How do you assess the rehabilitation activities carried out in prisons*? In the questionnaire, it was possible to respond by ticking one of the answers:

- I don't know, it's difficult to say.
- They are successful and the majority of inmates are rehabilitated after serving their sentence.
- They are unsuccessful and the majority of inmates are not rehabilitated after serving their sentence.

The results of the pilot studies were plotted on a pie chart showing the percentage of responses obtained (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** The result of the pilot study related to the evaluation of rehabilitation activities carried out in prisons.



Source: Own study based on a pilot study conducted on 3 March 2024 among post-graduate students of the Prison Service at the Academy of Justice.

The results of the pilot study presented in Figure 2 illustrate the problems in the effective operation of the prison system by 40% of the answers provided stating that rehabilitation measures for convicted prisoners are not successful and that prisoners are not rehabilitated after serving their prison sentence. It can be assumed that the flow of information between Prison Service officers or between the management level and officers is not managed properly and the data transmitted does not reach the recipients effectively as indicated by 40% of the responses, (do not know, difficult to say). 20% of respondents provided an answer indicating that rehabilitation measures have an effect and that the majority of inmates are rehabilitated after serving their sentence. On this basis, it is possible to formulate several hypotheses:

- It is presumed that the flow of information among the respondents does not work properly and that the information submitted by the sender does not reach the recipient.
- It can be assumed that the flow of information is not managed accurately, as it is apparent that the respondents do not hold the information.
- There is an indication that there are problems in the flow of information, the reason for which is the failure to keep or update statistics of rehabilitated persons who do not return to prison.
- It is presumed that the information on the process of preparing the convict for life at liberty in the case of respondents was not effectively communicated.

## Final conclusion

The pilot study does not enable to draw meaningful conclusions in Prison Service units of Prisons due to the fact that the group of respondents is not representative. However, the survey makes it possible to identify several areas for future research, among others, the area of research towards information management and its flow in Prison Service units and research towards the process of preparing the convict for life at liberty and conducting in-depth statistics on rehabilitated persons. The study demonstrates the importance of research in these areas and of taking further research steps in this direction in order to fill the research gap

and to test during the surveys the adequate role of information flow in rehabilitation activities in Prison Service units.

These issues will be addressed and developed in future publications in this area, undoubtedly the role of information flow is an important issue present in the field of organisational management as well as in the subject matter of the Prison Service units covered. Further directions of the publication may include examining of the Prison Service units as part of the qualitative and quantitative studies with representatives of the management level and officers on active duty in the units. The extent of the effectiveness of the rehabilitation of people deprived of their liberty and in prisons is also an area for further research.

Gaining in-depth information on the flow of information within the Prison Service units as well as demonstrating the importance of officers holding information on re-socialisation activities and their effectiveness will be of cognitive value. In the case of respondents, information on the information flow process was not effectively provided. It will be crucial to ask specific questions about the role and flow of information in rehabilitation activities:

- 5. Do you have access to information on current statistics of rehabilitated persons?
- 6. How do you assess the rehabilitation activities of persons deprived of their liberty in your unit?
- 7. How do you assess the flow of relevant information in your unit?
- 8. Is all the information provided in the unit clear for you?

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#### **Attachments:**

- Table 1. Positions held in Prison Service units
- Figure 1. Years of service in Prison Service units.
- Figure 2.Results of a pilot study on the type of internal communication present in the respondent's unit.
- Figure 3. The result of the pilot study related to the evaluation of rehabilitation activities carried out in prisons.