

COMMUNICATION AS A MEANS OF RELATIONSHIP WITHIN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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The university libraries have long been recognized as the “hearts” of their universities. To fulfill their mission of supporting the educational objectives of their parent bodies, which include teaching, learning, research and cultural development, the libraries had to develop and maintain standard books, journals, and audio-visual collections and services. Today university libraries must be information systems. The library of today should not merely store documents and preserve them, it must also devise means by which the contents of such documents can be rapidly and effectively transmitted for use.

Rapid expansion of a mass of diversified information is occurring, which has received the name “information explosion”. Although traditional channels of communication will remain important, the new information and communications technologies hold great potential for broadly disseminating knowledge.

The importance of communication in the current conditions of development is constantly growing. Communication in organizations meets the goals of establishing relations and cooperation between people, without which the labor process, professional activity and management, as well as personal progress, are unthinkable.

The effective communication and the efficient use of the communication methods directly affect the performance of the organization; it is one of the basic conditions and necessity for the successful achievement of the objectives that the organization faces.

The term “communication” has a universal definition, because in modern literature we find many interpretations. At the same time, most authors perceive communication as a process in which information flows through the symbol system for its precise conception (Чамкин 2013).

Communication is the most important factor and an indispensable means of functioning of university libraries. The most successful are the libraries where the communication system is well built.

Education, as an important factor in the evolution of society, is undergoing radical changes worldwide today. The quality of education at the present stage is largely determined by the ability to access the necessary information (Cheradi 2014). The university library, being one of the active participants in the educational and scientific process, offers the user the opportunity to get the latest information in the traditional and electronic format, about documents in the library collection and about external ones needed in the educational and research process.

The university library, on the one hand, contributes to the process of studies and research, on the other - it becomes an important link between the provided information and the users. Within the communication system of the educational institution, the library represents a means of connection in the process of informational consumption that ensures the development of knowledge, but communication is one of the fundamental conditions of the good development of the educational process.

The communication model of the university library consists of the following elements (Fig. 1):

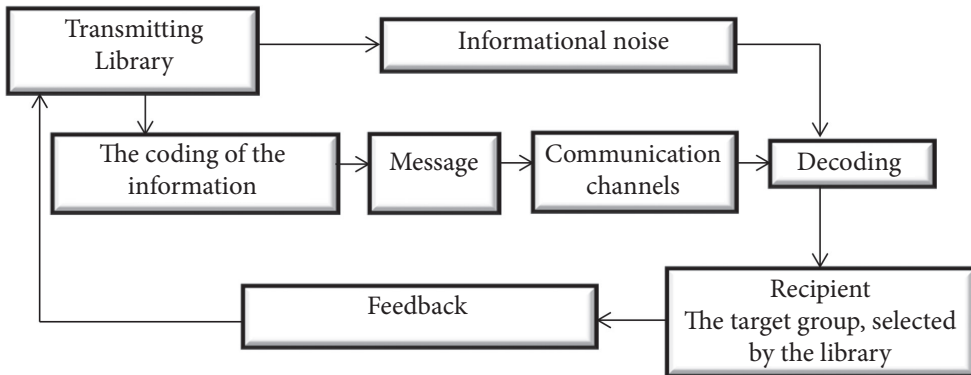


Fig. 1: The communication model of the university library
 Source: Adaptation according to sources 4 and 5

- source of information (transmitting), in this case - the library, establishes a connection both with its users and employees (internal communications) and with the external public (external communications);
- recipient - the target group, selected by the library in the communication process;

- message - the information, which the library transmits in the form of information services and products for consumers: rules, instructions, circulars, interviews, telephone calls, meetings, electronic messages, etc. for its employees; articles in periodicals, publications in the media, advertising communicated to external beneficiaries;
- the coding of the information is performed for the efficient transmission of the necessary information and for a deeper understanding by the recipient with the help of symbols, characters, image, text, etc.;
- communication channels include a variety of technical means, used to transmit information (library collections, databases, Internet, library site, social networks, telephone, advertising, etc.);
- decoding - demonstrates the effectiveness of the transmitted information.

Modern university libraries are not only repositories of knowledge, sources of ideas and ideas, but also an information center providing services for users. The main tendency in recent years is to extend the services for users based on information technologies and to provide access to different types of information.

To analyze the communication system in the university library, we identify the target audience with which the library communicates (Fig. 2).

Consumers	user: students, masters, teachers, researchers and doctoral students
Gouvernement institutions	legislative and executive authorities: Government of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Parliament
Contact institutions	organizations and individuals who are not involved in the direct activity of the library: media, civil society
Intermediaries	the institution with which the university libraries colaborate: libraries, publishers, the Book Chamber

Fig. 2: The target audience with which the university library communicates
Source: elaborated by authors

The main *consumers* of products and services of the university library are users: students, masters, teachers, researchers and doctoral students.

The communication with the users is carried out through the following sources:

- Consultation of documents in the reading rooms, supervised and equipped with adequate equipment;
- Home loan and interlibrary loan;
- Professional consultations offered to users by librarians;
- Transmission by electronic mail of files with bibliographic lists of new publications received by the library;
- Activities with students, masters and teachers at the beginning of each academic year to promote the services offered;
- Consultation of the site;
- Virtual exhibitions on the site;
- Informing users through social networks;
- Visual means: posters, leaflets, placement plans and indicators, graphic symbols that aim to meet the information and promotion requirements of library services.

Today it is recognized that access to information in the university library is ensured by the creation of digital libraries, not only due to the presence of a collection of electronic documents, but through a system that implements a unique way of storing and accessing information.

Currently, electronic catalogs have been created and operate in university libraries - a tool with which users can access information about the location and availability of copies, on the basis of which they consult and borrow publications found in library collections. At the same time, users have the opportunity to refine the search results by choosing different criteria: language, creation date, author, subject. Electronic catalogs allow you to personalize your work environment by saving resources for creating personal bibliographic lists, saving information search results on an electronic shelf with the ability to search them at any time.

Online catalogues provide additional searching possibilities, such systems can communicate with one another about which books are held in the libraries and use the computer to borrow various materials from many other libraries through interlibrary loan systems.

Information and communication technologies allow the dissemination of information about new acquisitions in library collections for members of the university community. At present the university libraries offer to

its users through the websites online reference services, open electronic archives (institutional repositories), visualization of information related to the loan situation, electronic document delivery, etc. Many sites offer users to participate in the development of collections, to propose books, magazines and databases.

The collections are completed according to the study plans in close collaboration with the teachers and users. For a better understanding of the users' needs, communication is considered to be the most effective alternative (dialogue with teachers, close links between different university services, relations with other profile libraries at national and international level).

The websites of the university libraries are also used as a means of training the students. In their menus are presented various online training programs, tests for verification of knowledge, guided tours, online trips, etc.

As a result of this communication the library expects from its consumers the more active use of the information products and services offered. For the librarian it is very important to listen and hear the user. Continuous communication with users generates a feed-back. Information received from users (opinions, thoughts, appreciation, dissatisfaction, proposals) is the basis of new development policies, in order to keep everything good and to create a prospective model of university library appropriate to the current and potential requirements of its users. The librarian must aim to find a different communication path for each type of user in order to solve questions and problems that may arise during the communication process within the library. The partnership between users and librarians is ensured by the library manager, who will determine them to understand each other, to act in a team, to communicate permanently.

The success of a university library depends to a large extent on its relations with government institutions, local communities, the media, etc. A library cannot operate outside of the business environment, without maintaining public relations. In this case, libraries use several methods of Public Relations. Public Relations as a form of communication has an informative character, being in fact a personalized and appropriate communication, with a unique and credible message through: spokesperson, press conferences, advertising materials, special events associated with involvement in sponsorships, donations. The choice of methods depends on the target audience and the purposes of library communication.

Government institutions - legislative and executive authorities (Government of the Republic of Moldova, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Parliament). From this institutions the library expects to establish an extremely favorable relationship.

Contact institutions - organizations and individuals who are not involved in the direct activity of the library. These are the media, civil society and others that the library informs about possible services provided, draws their attention to the events of the library activity with the help of the means used by public relations: symposia, speeches, interviews, book launches, conferences, briefings and others. The library delivers personalized, trustworthy messages. The collaboration of the university libraries with the contact institutions should contribute to the most active development of the library, to create a positive image and sympathy towards the library and its products and services.

Intermediaries - the institutions with which the university libraries collaborate (libraries, publishers, the Book Chamber). In this case, the library demonstrates productivity and cooperation through such communication tools as presentations, exhibitions, round tables. As a result, a response is expected from this recipient in the form of a partnership, an atmosphere of mutual understanding, a common assistance in performing the functions of the library.

One of the main factors in the communication process is the *library staff*. In direct relation with the public the library staff must have a special training of a psychological and didactic nature, aiming at the way of presentation and inter-personal communication. The librarian must demonstrate a broad horizon of general culture, ability to clearly and systematically expose knowledge and information in different fields of science, be well-oriented in social-political events, master the theory of education and teaching methods, cultivate pedagogical skills and aptitudes, to prove much pedagogical tact, patience, intellectual balance, creativity and sense of humor.

Professionally, communication is an indispensable component of career success. In this context, the act of communication becomes more than an element inseparable from our existence - an instrument for the promotion of one's own qualities, abilities and knowledge. A librarian, a good professional, cannot be conceived today outside the interaction process, the latter manifesting itself both within the served community and the professional one (knowledge, skills in the field of communication

being important in the context of building the Information Society and Knowledge). The staff of the must increase the productivity, to improve the psychological climate in the team.

University libraries have always been, and will be, areas of intense communication. The university library today is a vital center of the institution, a living and dynamic body, which goes beyond the simple function of document storage, and is a real support for the educational process and for research, an active center of information circulation, both inside the university, as well as within the national academic space, an instrument for training and professional and cultural perfection of the staff. The importance of the library in carrying out valuable academic activities remains overwhelming, but the functions and services offered by it are rapidly diversifying.

The role of the university library increases in connection with the modernization and continuous computerization of higher education, changing the demand for educational services.

The library is obliged to respond to changes in the requirements for full user satisfaction. The university libraries can be transformed in to a new information services unit, providing electronic cataloguing, electronic on-line, public access catalogue, electronic acquisition and serials control, electronic inter-library loan and electronic circulation functions. Effective communication is an important factor for the successful development of university libraries.

Communication becomes for the university libraries, for their staff, more than an instrument for development and ascension; it becomes a new philosophy of the existence of the Library and the Librarian. The future of libraries depends on the existence of demand for their services. We can say with certainty that there are absolutely no perfect communication systems. The university library must build its own communication model in order to achieve its mission and objectives. Such a model should become a dynamic system, in which participants constantly interact through communication, creating the necessary contacts, transposing the processes of change. Successful communication can be realized where all the components of the communication model will be carefully analyzed.

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