

Organizational Culture and Communication in the Library
A Study on Organizational Culture in the Lucian Blaga Central University Library
Cluj

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Abstract

Organizational culture and its impact on the management of an institution is a highlight in the dynamic society we live in. Understanding organizational culture is paramount for the management of a library: getting familiar with the employees' behaviour and working styles, their abilities and way of implication in the institution's development and good functioning is of assistance in designing and carrying out managerial policies and anticipating possible changes. Organizational culture research is achieved by approaching its defining elements: norms, rules, values and beliefs shared, customary practices, learning mechanisms, ways of communication, criteria of pertinence to a community, desirable and undesirable behaviours, attitude towards the library's mission undertaken and its strategy of accomplishment.

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Motto:

*The importance of the systematic development of libraries as efficient organization has never been this urgent. It is need further on of the creation of new structures and processes of staff interaction, which would reflect the realities of a world in permanent transition. The need of development is felt everywhere in libraries, both on an individual and an organizational level, a positive attitude to one's own consciousness and towards renewal.*¹

1. Introduction to the issue of organizational culture

Change is the natural order of things, and in a library it is a necessity because the external environment is permanently and rapidly evolves: libraries must answer and conform to its demands. However, managers may often remark that changes, novelties are hard to be effected, and as a rule their decisions are not easily turned into practice and/or suffer undesired changes. This is due to the fact that these decisions are conflicting with the – unknown! – organizational culture. It is widely known that any system, any order of things, any new innovation or organization which functions

¹Owens Irene, and Anghelescu, Hermina G. B., *Cultura organizațională și schimbarea* (Organizational culture and change), In *Management pentru viitor – Biblioteci și arhive*. (Management for the future – libraries and archives), Ed. Hermina G. B. Anghelescu and István Király V. Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeana, 2000, p. 30-40

exceptionally well in a certain culture, might be utterly inadequate in a different one. While this fact is quite visible in the case of national cultures (Germans work one way and Romanians work in a different way), it is neglected at lower levels, such as the institutional one, although the problem is posed in much the same way. So that it may reach its purposes efficiently, the management of an institution should be highly interested in familiarizing itself with its organizational culture and spot out the aspects to be mediated in order for the attempts of innovation and the general good functioning of things not to meet with the natural resistance inherent in any person. Schein¹ highlights the impact of organizational culture on management as follows: "Creating a climate of teamwork and openness is a common goal nowadays, but it is the rare company that figures out how cultural assumptions about individualism, about managerial prerogatives and about respect for authority based on past success may make teamwork and openness virtually impossible." He goes on exemplifying: "The structure of the reward system in most U.S. organizations is likely to be so completely individualistic that it should be no surprise that even a well-conceived and highly motivating program of team building has minimal and only temporary results." The Singapore Economic Development Board offers one of the possible solutions to this dilemma: they have continued to offer individual rewards but only to those who managed to attract others into teamwork. "The point is that they realized that the culture is embedded in the reward system and it is at that level that things have to be examined and, if necessary, changed."² Organizational culture is a pattern of learned behaviour, shared and transmitted in time among the members of the organization as one of the essential determinants of the way we act and interact within it. The routine, the traditional ways an organization works leave their mark on its culture, influencing and modelling common values, beliefs, practices, and patterns.

In conclusion, the employees' behaviour is not only a direct and exclusive result of the working rules set by the library management: organizational structure, objectives, procedures, ways of stimulation, etc. The logic of the informal also plays a role by various other phenomena which, while being unknown, escapes the direct control of the management, and has an important impact: power games, team cultures, subcultures, identity logics, etc. "Understanding organizational culture is a necessary first step in thinking about organizational change, and in reshaping organizations for effectiveness and organizational success. Changing organizations in a deep, meaningful and lasting way must involve changes to fundamental perceptions, beliefs, patterns of behavior and norms, and ways of sense-making that have developed over long periods of time."³

In order to achieve its objectives, the management of an institution must be familiarized with these phenomena which define organizational culture.

¹ Schein, Edgar H, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: Sense and Nonsense about Culture Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999).

² Schein, Edgar H, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide*.

³ Carol Shepstone and Lyn Currie, *Transforming the Academic Library: Creating an Organizational Culture that Fosters Staff Success* (...),

2. A synthetic definition of organizational culture

“Theories and definitions of organizational culture from a range of disciplines have been employed by scholars in an effort to better understand the complexity of culture and its central role in how we function in groups and create successful organizations.”¹

Generally speaking, organizational culture refers to a system of values and beliefs shared by the members of the organization, resulting in lasting homogenization of their concepts about various things, that is, finding a common denominator in how they interpret and attribute meaning to things.

In other words, organizational culture defines:

- Who we are as an organization, or “Us”
- How we became “Us”
- What makes us “Us” and not “Them”
- How we recruit new members and socialize them to become “Us”
- How we perpetuate “Us.”²

How do people get to share the same organizational culture? Again generally speaking, people share the same culture if they interiorize and fix certain axiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioural norms. Organizational culture implants stable and repetitive practices to individuals via various learning mechanisms. “Organizational culture plays a critical role in creating a work environment where employees are committed and contribute to the success of the organization. Through an analysis of workplace culture it is possible to identify required changes to values, organizational structure, leadership and management initiatives and support mechanisms that facilitate a positive, creative and rewarding work environment that will support the progress and success of library staff.”³

3. Fundamental functions of organizational culture

What we call “organizational culture” fulfills thus a series of functions that share the common characteristic of each being decisive for the efficient operation of the organization.

A. The function of internal integration of organizational culture

This function aims at creating a feeling and state of unity as a result of collectively obtained solutions. Also, organizational culture determines:

- communication methods (how employees cooperate, how information circulates, etc.)
- criteria of pertinence to a community (member insertion and exclusion)
- norms that regulate status attribution to each of the members
- rules which structure social relations (degree of familiarity allowed between members)
- desirable and undesirable behaviours (system of rewarding and sanctions).

¹ SCHEIN, Edgar H, *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide: Sense and Nonsense about Culture Change* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999)

² William Sannwald, *Understanding Organizational Culture*.

³ Carol Shepstone and Lyn Currie, *Transforming the Academic Library*.

B. The function of external adaptation

Its main objective is to establish a broad consensus relative to the organization's position in the outside environment and public space in general. It implies the mission and strategy chosen to attain the objectives established, the operational means necessary to attain these objectives, performance indicators and coercive measures that can be applied in case of failure.

However, it is decisive that all fundamental functions of organizational culture reveal a strategic, therefore managerial intentionality. Therefore it is important to note that organizational culture can be influenced in the direction and intension of achieving a preset objective.

4. Why is it important for library managers to be interested in the culture of their organization?

Management and business scholarship stresses the importance of understanding organizational culture with a view to the changes that are to be implemented, administered, and integrated so that any type of organization might function successfully.

It is highly important for a manager to know the behaviour and working style of the employees he or she coordinates, what they can really do and how they can contribute indeed to the development of the institution. Thus the change in the library can be much better anticipated, designed, and carried out.

In short, in a permanently changing world the library and its librarians are subject to the needs of adaptation, which not only takes effort and acceptance as something natural and necessary to their activity, but also creativity. If the librarian is really conscious of his or her own real value, both individual and professional, then he or she has the necessary reference marks to handle the organization's internal and external challenges. Therefore it is paramount for the good functioning of an institution that the organizational culture should encourage the formation of positive professional consciousness, and an attitude favourable to change, as well as a positive attitude to the organization (library) on the whole.

Being familiar with organization culture can decisively influence the functioning of new working methods and directions, new technologies and changes that are now a reality in the *Lucian Blaga Central University Library*, as well as the introduction of programmes for the staff and the establishment of the rewarding system. When a norm or a field of the organizational culture changes, the individual's behaviour changes together with it according to a new adaptation pattern, while the development of the organization management aims anyway at changing the whole system.

A target can be attained if we know our resources: the library's main purpose is to offer good quality services to its users, and the librarians are the human resources that make the library function. The knowledge of their values and beliefs, that is, of organizational culture means to assess the extent it focuses on the users' needs and on all the aspects in general connected to the specific functioning of a certain library; moreover, to see what can be done in order to guide the organization in the right direction, if this is the case.

5. How can organizational culture be studied?

The organizational culture of the library is outlined by studying its defining elements described above: the norms, rules, values, and beliefs shared, customary practices, learning mechanisms, ways of communication, criteria of pertinence to a community, desirable and undesirable behaviours, relating to the library's established mission and strategy of its accomplishment.

The subject is a vast one, of course, therefore the various aspects related to organizational culture can be, and is indeed more efficient to be, studied in phases.

In a first phase I propose the study of communication channels and information flow, or more precisely how the library employees receive management decisions (of all level), how they achieve cooperation for the accomplishments of their tasks, how they circulate information amongst the various hierarchical levels, and amongst and within the departments. To this can be added the ways in, and bases on, which tasks are attributed: what are the criteria by which a certain task is attributed to a certain person, etc., as these are defining elements of an organization's efficiency.

In order to achieve this, first one must analyze the group as a psycho-sociological formation: its composition, tasks, as well as responsibilities, interaction processes, group structure, collective consciousness, degree of cohesion, efficiency. Group is considered here to be the community of a department. The relation between the departments will be analyzed next. All these will be related to the formal and informal communication channels, such as the Intranet, the Informative Bulletin, task communication, the communication in the course of their accomplishment, etc.

Darlene Fichter analyzes the way institutional culture is reflected in the operation of the Intranet: "Creating an intranet that is well-used and valued by employees takes vision, hard work, and the willingness to listen to your users. The success of an intranet is not dependant on just one factor but is a combination of many factors--organizational culture; key stakeholders; content and tools; information design and focus; ease of use; and awareness. As intranet managers, we need to continually evaluate how well the intranet is doing and determine where we might need to take action. Knowing why the intranet is not living up to its potential is the first place to start in planning how to get it back on track. The fact that the intranet is a useful tool for employees may not be enough to ensure its adoption."¹

6. Research method

Based on the various centres of interest established by the library management, data collection happens by joining several research methods: document research, direct and indirect survey, graph technique (for the research of communication and preferences relations), interview.

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THE RESEARCH

THE QUALITY OF COMMUNICATION

as it appears in the survey on communication in working relations conducted in February 2009 with the employees of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library

This survey has mainly aimed at the employees of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library with direct involvement in library-specific activities, including the departments of accounting and human resources. Focusing on obtaining a comprehensive image on professional communication within this institution, we have completed a sociological survey based on questionnaires presented to the library staff both in the central library and the branch libraries about general communication problems. The questionnaires, conceived with slight differences for the employees with or without superior management level functions, as well as for the staff in the central library and in the branch libraries, were completed in their great majority. The differences in the questionnaires are motivated by their different positioning in the structure of communication relations: those with decisive power, those who work in the central library and those who work at the branch libraries are differently involved in the relations of communication and have different perception on communication. The questionnaires are attached, and the presentation is structured according to these in order to make it simpler. 83 questionnaires were completed in the central library, of which 5 by heads of departments and offices, and 6 by members of superior management. 68

questionnaires were completed at the branch libraries. Some persons refused to fill out the questionnaires. I have chosen not to ask questions about the identity of the subjects since the problem addressed by the questionnaire was quite delicate, as expressing one's opinion on communication, especially if it is critical, may meet with the disapproval of some of the subjects, leading to either the distortion of the answers, or refusal to answer (non-responses, or the refusal to fill out the questionnaire). The purpose was to obtain general information as close to reality as possible on the quality of communication in the University Library, since anonymity ensures greater chances of sincerity in expressing one's opinion; therefore we have sacrificed the possibility of obtaining comparative data. Consequently we have not asked questions about the respondents' department affiliation in order not to give way to suspicion, even if the information obtained would have been interesting. The data we obtained shows how communication is perceived and which are the possible problems and malfunctions on the level of the entire institution, points out as well some of the possible solutions emerging from the situation analysis. At the same time, I have to mention that the answers regarding the departments which have the most contacts were not analyzed, being considered irrelevant for the subject of this presentation.

During data presentation I have observed the following structure for each question:

- A. a table containing the data obtained in the central library and the branch libraries, from all employees except management members (coordinating heads, economic manager, TC deputy general manager);
- B. a graph containing the answers of office and department heads in the central library;
- C. a graph containing the answers of office and department heads in the branch libraries;
- D. a graph containing the answers of the members of the University Library management.

In the cases when the question only referred to a part of the studied group, the answers only appear in some of the tables and graphs.

Tables and graphs are interpreted in each case individually in order to make understanding easier.

Since the opinions of department and office heads were treated separately, I also have to mention the great differences in the structuring of the departments: some of the coordinating heads in the central library have as many as 4 subordinated heads and 5 departments/offices, yet others only 1 department head and 4 departments/offices, while at the branch libraries there are 6 departments/offices:

- 1. Collection development, publication registry, processing, and preservation
 - A. Collection development and publication registry;
 - B. Special collections – 1 head;
 - C. Publication processing. Cataloguing and classification – 1 head;
 - D. Stacks. Publication preservation – 1 head;
 - E. Loan. Hygiene laboratory. – 1 head
- 2. Bibliographic research. Documentation. Public relations. Service promotion.

- A. Bibliographic research – 1 head;
 - B. Documentation;
 - C. Public relations;
 - D. Service promotion
3. Branch libraries – 6 heads

1. Communication on professional problems in the University Library
Up–down communication

Up–down communi- cation	Central library employees			Branch library employees		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent	Frequency	Percent	Cumu- lative percent
Very good	5	6,0	6,0	20	29,4	29,4
Good	22	26,5	32,5	27	39,7	69,1
Acceptable	18	21,7	54,2	15	22,1	91,2
Deficient	27	32,5	86,7	6	8,8	100,0
Inefficient	9	10,8	97,6			
Other opinion	2	2,4	100,0			
Total	83	100,0		68	100,0	

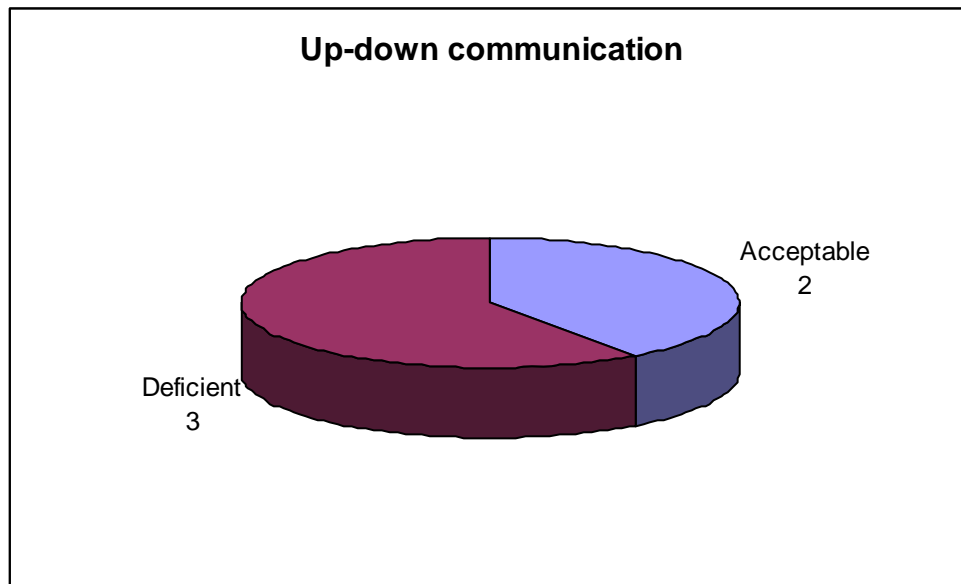
The communication from heads to employees is considered good and very good by 33 % of the central library employees and 69 % by the branch library employees.

43 % of the central library employees consider up – down communication deficient or inefficient, while at the branch libraries the percentage is considerably lower: 9 % consider it deficient, and none consider it inefficient.

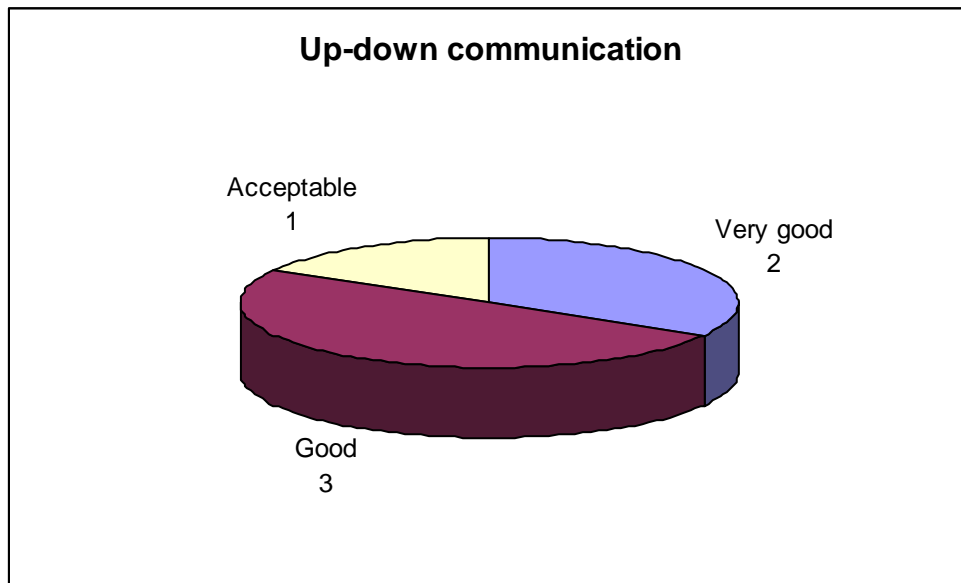
So the branch library employees seem to be much more content with the way their superiors communicate with them than the central library employees, who expressed negative opinions in quite high percent.

For department and office heads the situation is assessed similarly to the majority, both in the central library and at the branches, while the superior management makes a better assessment of the situation than the rest of the employees, considering communication better than their subordinates (see the three graphs below):

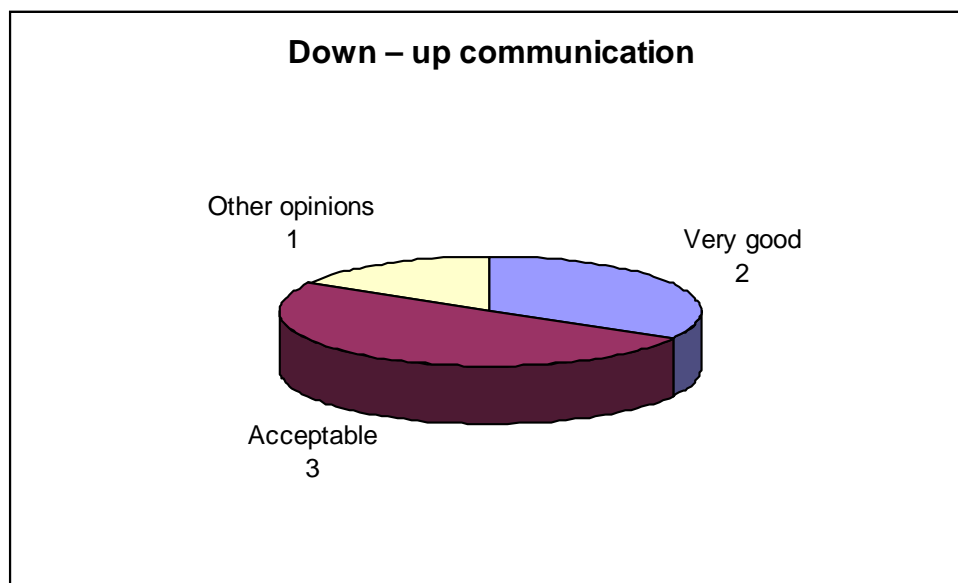
Intermediary heads – Central library



Branch library heads



Superior management



(where other opinions = depends on the department)

Down–up communication

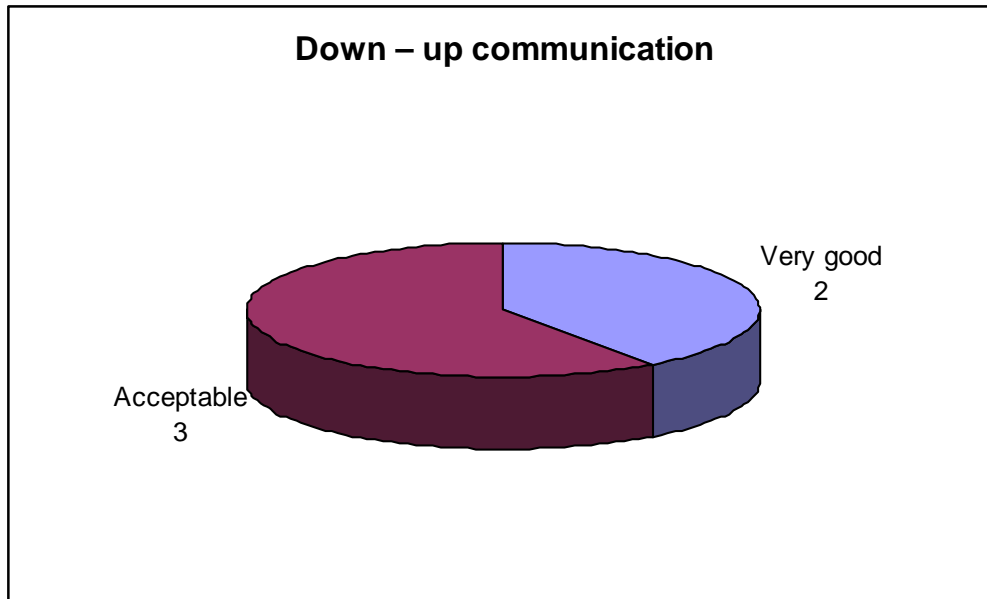
Down–up communication	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very good	5	6,0	18	26,5
Good	22	26,5	30	44,1
Acceptable	26	31,3	12	17,6
Deficient	16	19,3	5	7,4
Inefficient	8	9,6	3	4,4
Other opinions	3	3,6	-	-
Total	80	96,4	68	100,0
Non-answers	3	3,6		
Total	83	100,0		

As regards the communication from the employees to the heads the situation is more favourable at the branches, where 44 % and 27 % consider it good and very good respectively, which makes a 71 % of positive opinions, while 18 % consider communication acceptable. In the central library 27 % and 6 % consider communication good and very good respectively, and 31 % acceptable. Therefore here as well the majority of the branch library employees, 71 %, make a positive assessment, while the central library respondents are again much more critical, the opinions are divided into

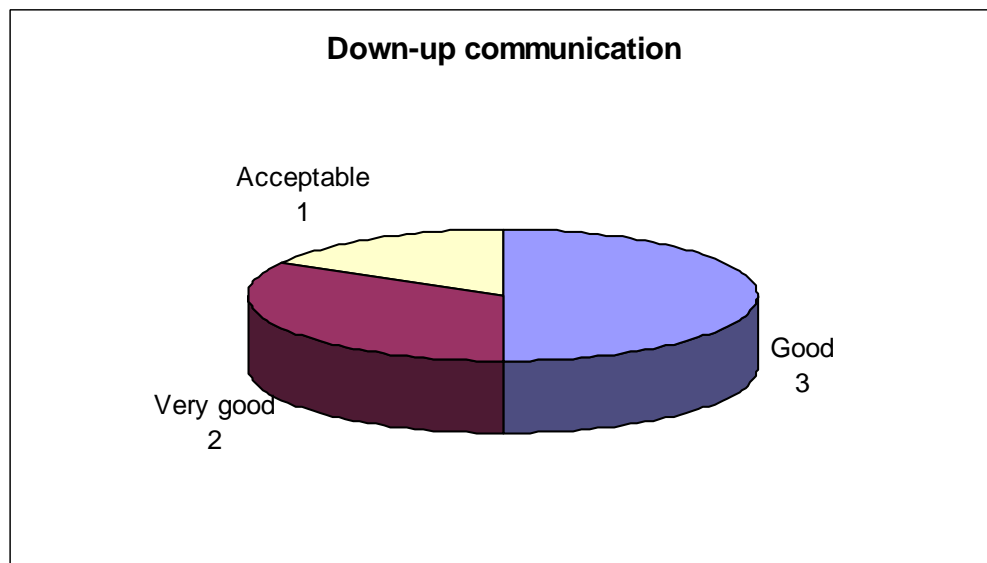
“acceptable” with 31 %, “good” and “very good” with 33 % and “deficient” and “inefficient” also 33 %.

As for the opinion of department and office heads, the branch library heads think similarly as their subordinates, while the central library heads assess the situation more favourably than the majority. The superior management’s opinions are dispersed.

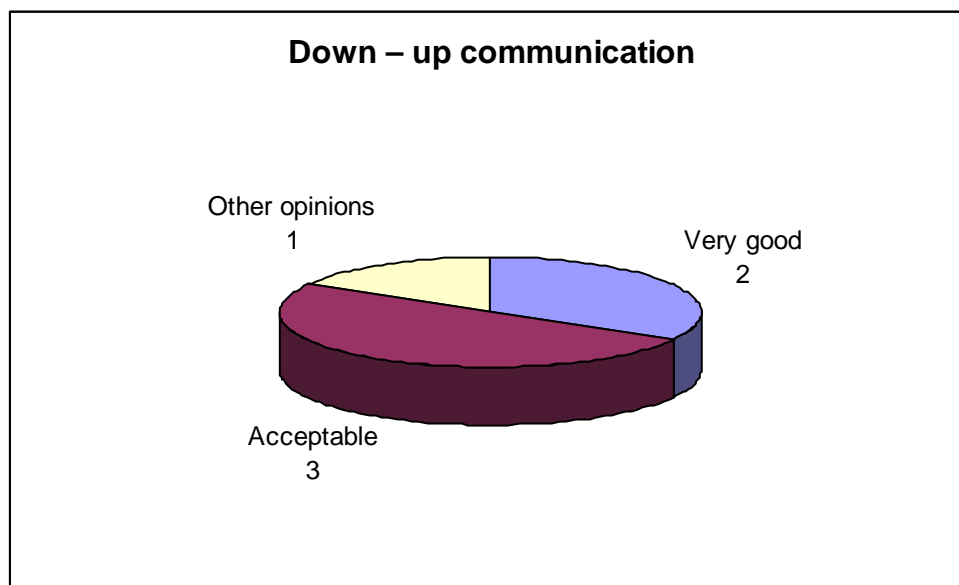
Central library heads:



Branch library heads:



Superior management:

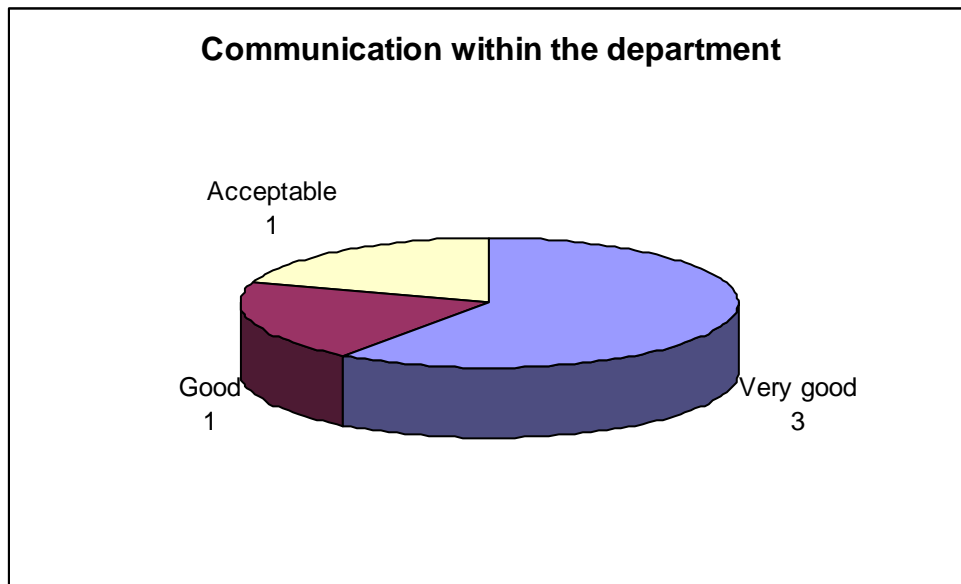


Communication within the department

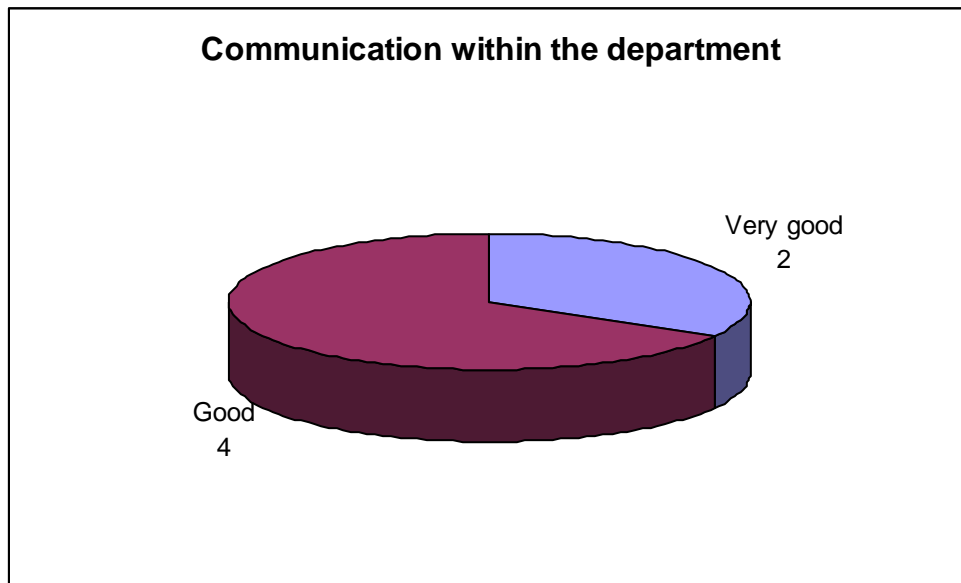
Communication in the department	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very good	17	20,5	41	60,3
Good	30	36,1	17	25,0
Acceptable	24	28,9	10	14,7
Deficient	8	9,6	-	-
Inefficient	2	2,4	-	-
Other opinions	-	-	-	-
Total	81	97,6	68	100,0
Non-answers	2	2,4		
Total	83	100,0		

Communication within the department is perceived rather as the communication between the heads and the employees, both in the central library and at the branch libraries: 57 % of the central library employees and 85 % of the branch library employees think that it is good and very good, and a majority of 60 % at the branch libraries think that communication within the department is very good. Negative opinions are insignificant in the central library and absent at the branch libraries. Department heads join the same tendency.

Department and office heads – central library



Communication within the department – branch library heads



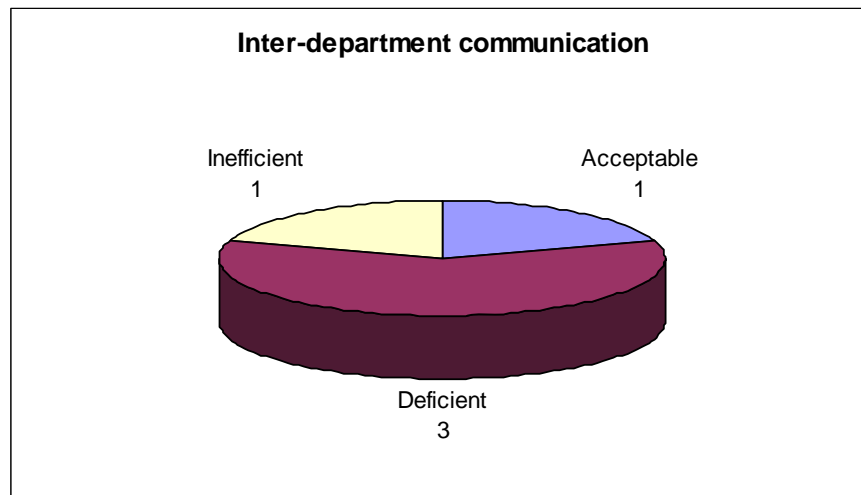
Communication between departments:

Communication between departments	Central employees	library	Branch employees	library
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Very good	1	1,2	6	8,8
Good	25	30,1	26	38,2
Acceptable	25	30,1	27	39,7
Deficient	22	26,5	4	5,9
Inefficient	8	9,6	2	2,9
Other opinions	-	-	2	2,9
Total	81	97,6	67	98,5
Non-answers	2	2,4	1	1,5
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

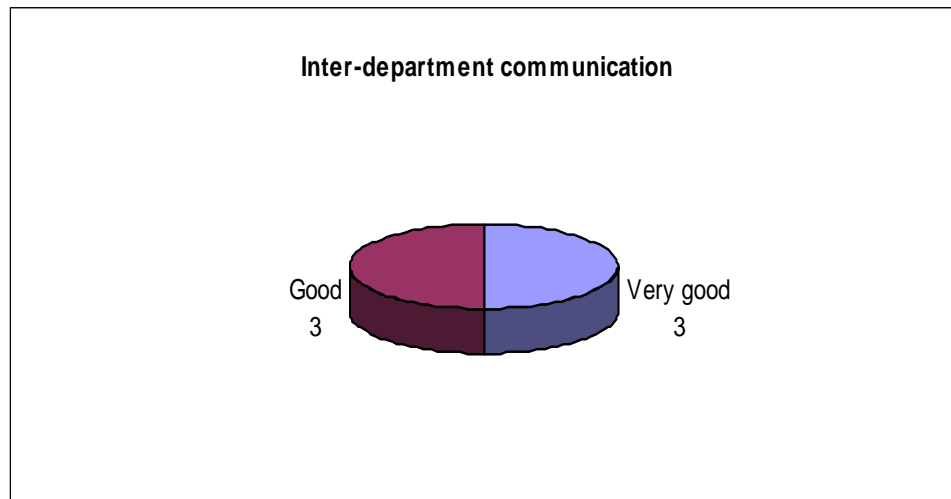
Communication between the departments is equally considered good or acceptable at the central library and the branch libraries: 30 – 30 % of the central library respondents consider it good and acceptable, respectively, while at the branch libraries 38 % think it is good, and 40 % acceptable. Critical opinions are more numerous in the central library, where 27 % consider inter-department communication deficient, and 10 % consider it inefficient. It is very probable that the relative balance of “good”, “acceptable” and “deficient” assessments in the central library are due to the differences between the departments and the branch libraries, since their relations vary from one case to the other. The general picture on the situation shows thus that communication is perceived better at the branch libraries than in the central library, where communication between the departments is not very fluent, merely functional.

Department and office heads seem even less satisfied, their assessment tend to “deficient” in the central library, and varies between “acceptable” and “very good” at the branch libraries – their points of view are probably influenced by the pertaining branch libraries.

Department and office heads – central library

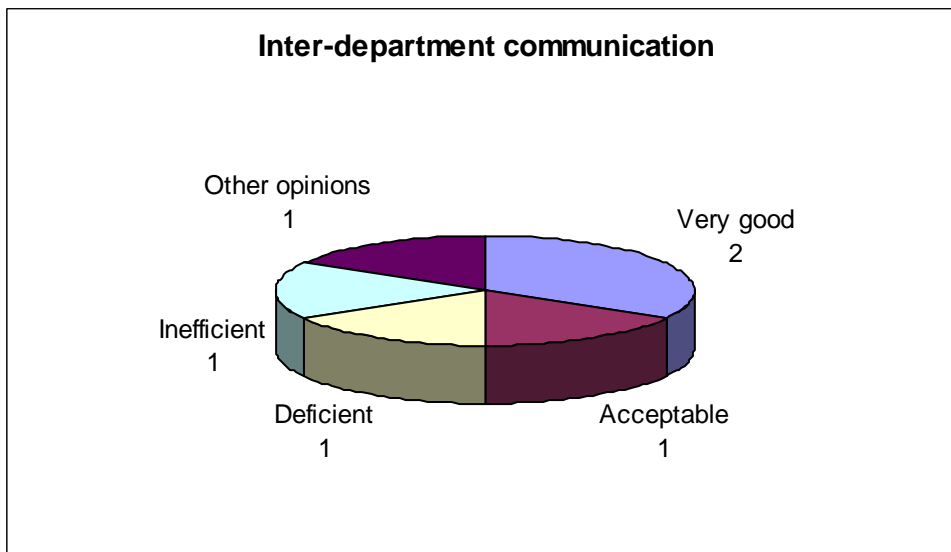


Branch library heads



As regards **superior management**, the opinions are very diverse, to the extent that **it seems they are not speaking about the same departments**, therefore they seem not to have a general assessment of the ways the departments communicate between each other.

Management



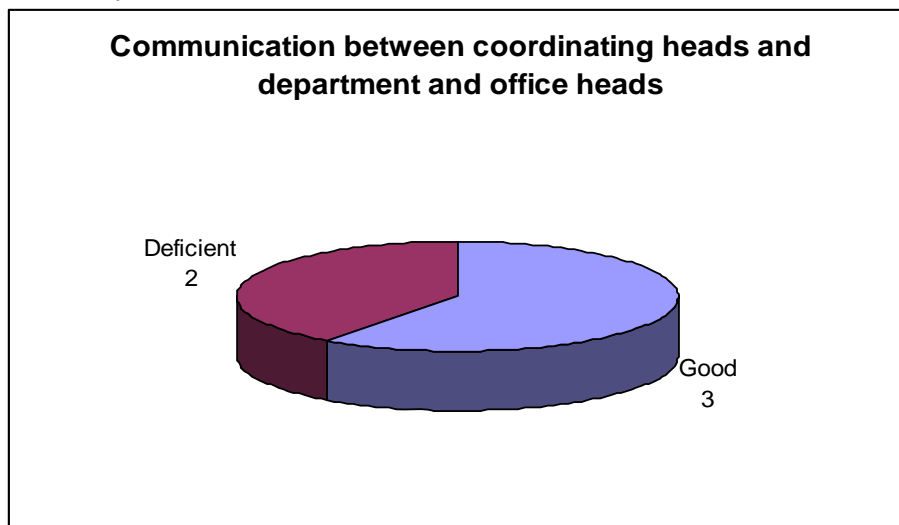
Communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads

The employees' opinion about the communication of their superiors is based on a more or less indirect perception of the situation; however, each employee is naturally very likely to have an opinion about it.

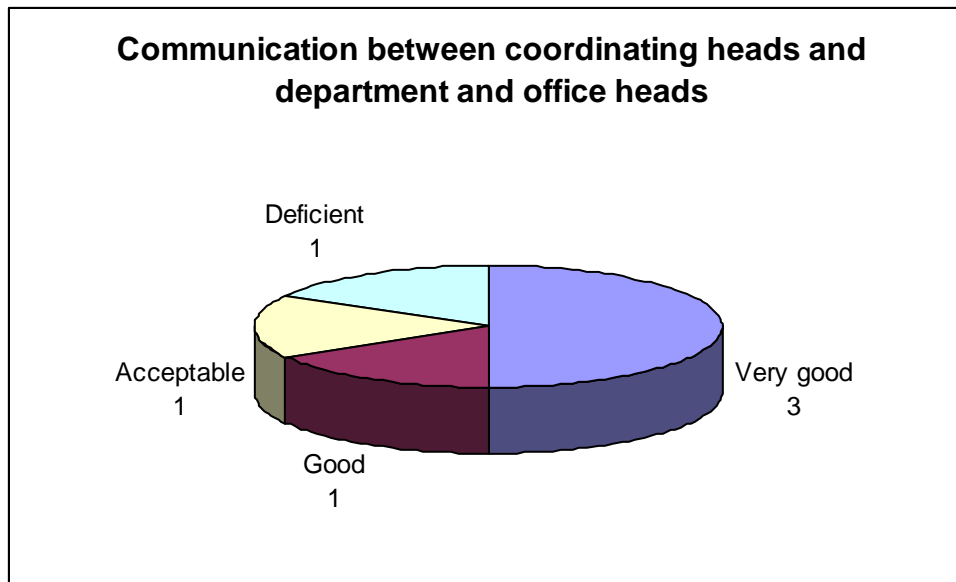
Nonetheless, 55 % of the central library employees and somewhat less, 32 % of the branch library employees chose the answer "I don't know how they [coordinating heads and department and office heads] communicate". Still, there is a **high percentage, 60 %, at the branch libraries** of those who have a **positive perception** about the way coordinating heads and department and office heads communicate, while in **the central library 21 %** perceive their communication as **good** and an equal number perceives it as **deficient**. The opinions of **department and office heads** in the central library is **similar to the employees' opinion**, dividing between **good** and **deficient**, while at the **branches** the answer is **unanimous: communication between the heads is good**. The **superior management** has a **predominantly favourable opinion**, only one of the six respondents considers the communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads deficient.

Communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads	Central library		Branch library	
	employees		employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Good	17	20,5	41	60,3
Deficient	17	20,5	4	5,9
Bad	3	3,6	-	-
I don't know how they communi- cate	46	55,4	22	32,4
Total	83	100,0	67	98,5
Non-answers	-	-	1	1,5
Total			68	100,0

Central library



Superior management



Communication between managers and coordinating heads

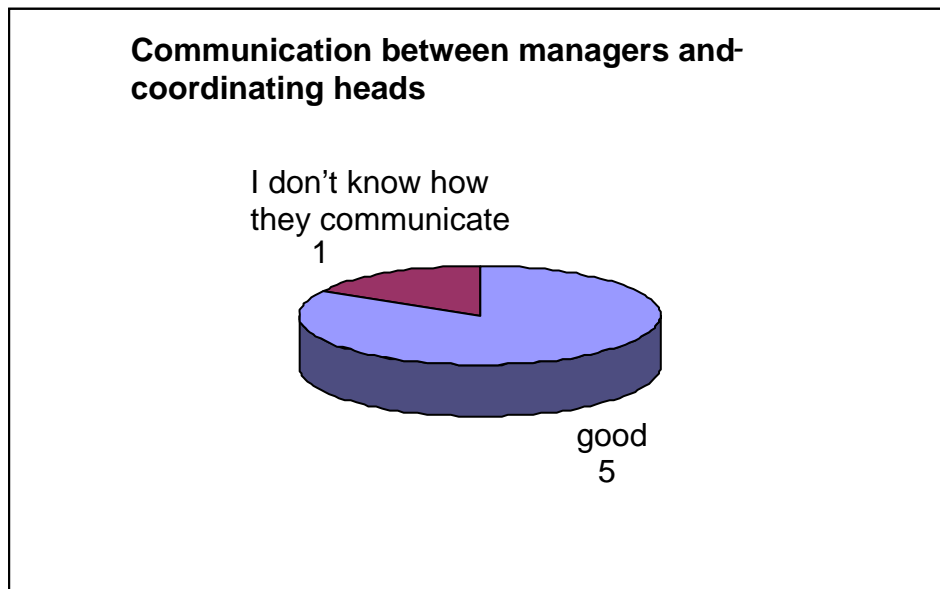
Here the percentage of those who declare not to know how coordinating heads and managers communicate between themselves is quite high, the employees refrain from commenting on situations they have no direct knowledge of. 68 % and 56 % of the central library and branch library respondents respectively declare that they don't know how their superiors communicate, only the branches show a somewhat greater number of favourable opinions: 37 % perceives the communication of the coordinating heads and the management as good. Department and office heads' opinions in the central library do not differ either: only one thinks that superior level communication is good, the rest do not know. However, at the branch libraries the majority of the heads consider that the coordinating head has a good relation with the management. The superior management's opinions (including the two coordinating heads in the central library, the one at the branch libraries, the administrative head, and two deputy managers) are dispersed.

Communication between managers and coordinating heads	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Good	12	14,5	25	36,8
Deficient	12	14,5	4	5,9
Bad	3	3,6	-	-
I don't know how they communicate	56	67,5	38	55,9
Total	83	100,0	67	98,5
Non-answers			1	1,5
Total			68	100,0

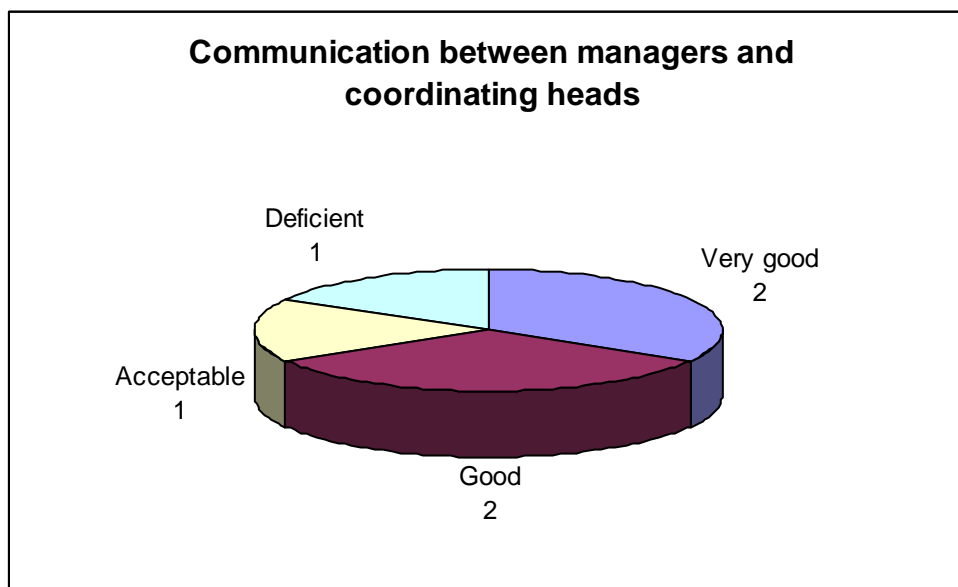
Department and office heads – central library



Branch libraries



Superior management:

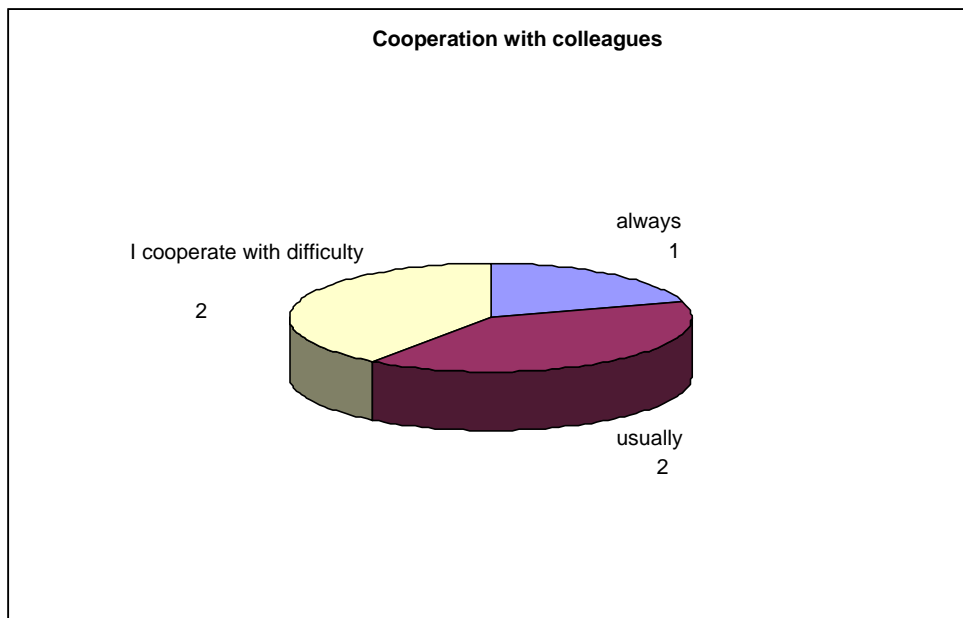


Cooperation between colleagues

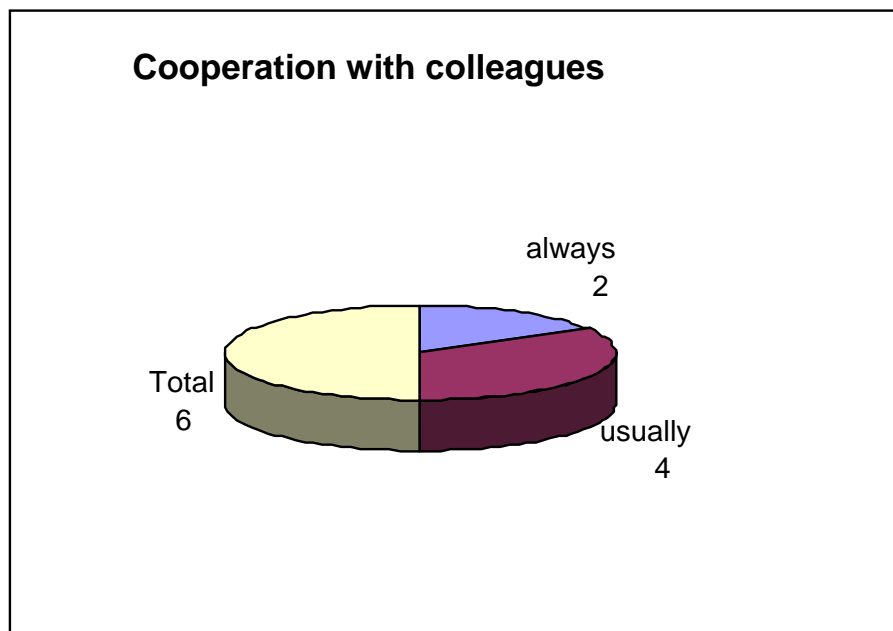
Asked how they perceive the situations when they need the cooperation or help of their department colleagues, **39 % of the central library respondents** and **50 % of the branch library respondents** said that their colleagues are always cooperative, while 36 % and 37 %, respectively, answered that they were usually cooperative. There is a quite high percentage, **a quarter of the respondents in the central library**, who say that they **have difficulties in cooperating with their colleagues**.

Cooperation between colleagues	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Always	32	38,6	34	50,0
Usually	30	36,1	25	36,8
I have difficulties in cooperating with my colleagues	20	24,1	6	8,8
Other answer	1	1,2	1	1,5
<i>I turn to my direct superior</i>	-	-	1	1,5
Total	83	100,0	67	98,5
Non-answers			1	1,5
Total			68	100,0

Central library department heads



Branch library department heads

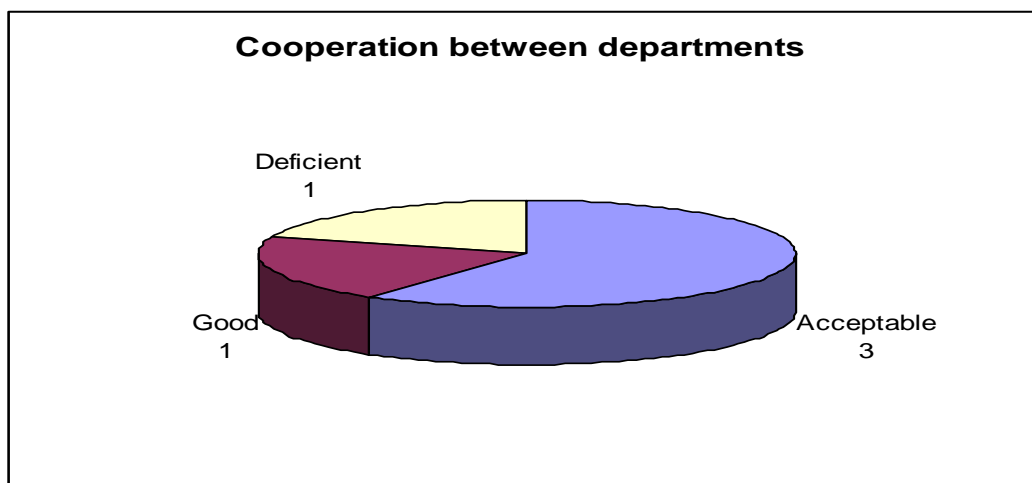


Cooperation between departments

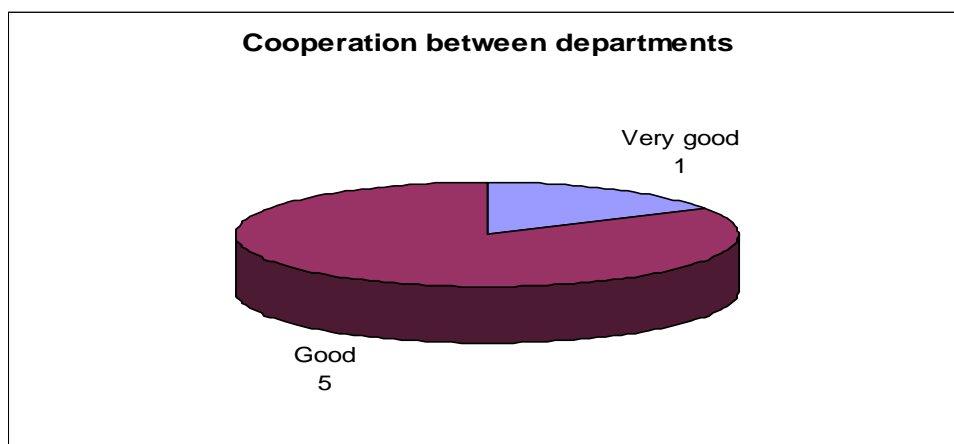
Cooperation departments	between	Central	library	Branch	library
		employees Frequency	Percent	employees Frequency	Percent
Very good		-	-	5	7,4
Good		22	26,5	36	52,9
Acceptable		39	47,0	18	26,5
Deficient		20	24,1	8	11,8
Very bad		1	1,2	-	-
Other opinion		1	1,2	-	-
Total		83	100,0	67	98,5
Non-answers		-	-	1	1,5
Total				68	100,0

While in the **central library** 47 % considers inter-department cooperation **acceptable**, 27 % considers it **good**, and 24 % considers it **deficient**, at the branch libraries 53 % considers it **good**, 27 % **acceptable**, and **only 12 % deficient**. The members of the library management also seem not to have a favourable opinion on the cooperation between departments (except the branch libraries). The overall image of this issue is that the inter-department cooperation could be amended, especially in the central library. The fact that the branch libraries seem more content may be explained by their direct connection with certain departments in the central library that have it as their duty to cooperate with the branch libraries, and this cooperation is satisfactory. Looking at ll the answers given for the questionnaire, it is obvious anyway that branch libraries in general present a higher degree of satisfaction compared to the central library. The degree of autonomy and the coordinating head of the branch libraries might also have an influence over their greater satisfaction.

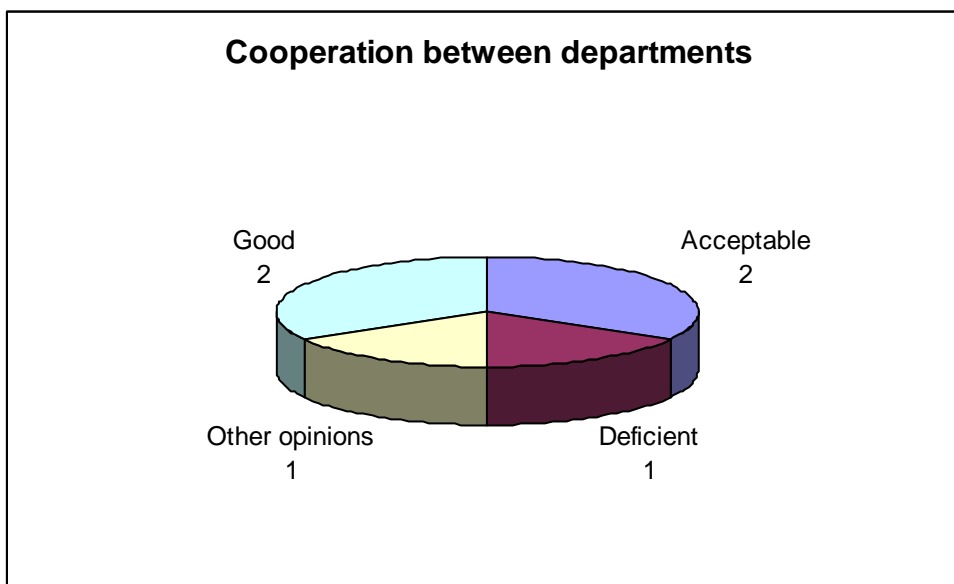
Central library



Branch libraries



Management



Central library's support for the branch libraries (*only the branch libraries*)

Asked whether the central library supports the branch libraries in solving their problems, 59 % answered yes, 31 % answered sometimes, and 10 % said that they usually don't feel supported. Variations occur due to differences between the branches, as they probably are in different relations with the central library, their experiences vary according to the needs of the branches and according to the people working there.

Does the central library support you?	Frequency	Percent
Usually yes	40	58,8
Only occasionally	21	30,9
We usually don't feel supported	7	10,3
Total	68	100,0

Phase conclusions:

The respondents were questioned about communication on several levels: up–down communication, down–up communication, within their department, between the departments, between coordinating heads and department and office heads, and between coordinating heads and superior management.

There are quite significant differences between the central library and branch library employees in the perception of communication on professional matters in the University Library; at the branches the assessment of communication on different levels is much more positive than in the central library. The branch libraries coordinating head is considered to communicate well with all parties involved. Similarly, superior management seems not to form a common body on this matter, there are as many opinions as persons, the opinions on communication are dispersed. One cannot claim to perceive one opinion on communication formulated on different levels, but several completely different opinions.

As for up–down communication – from heads to employees – the branch library employees have a mainly positive attitude, for 69 % of the respondents, while at the central library there is a higher percentage of negative opinions, 43 %. The opinion of department and office heads is similar to the majority's, only the superior management thinks more positively about this issue.

Down–up communication, from the employees to the heads, is perceived similarly to the reverse one in the central library and in the branch libraries; only the department and office heads in the central library have a more positive attitude on the matter. The superior management's opinions are dispersed.

Communication within the department is better appreciated both at the branches and in the central library, 85 % considering it good and very good in the branches (60 % saying very good), and 57 % in the central library. Negative opinions are insignificant in the central library and absent at the branch libraries.

The quality of communication between the departments seems to vary according to each department; the situation is better at the branch libraries than in the central library, where inter-departmental communication seems to be merely more or less functional.

The opinions about the communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads are clearly completely divergent: at the branch libraries the positive attitude is stronger – 60 % of the respondents, compared to a 21 % of “good” answers in the central library. The percentage of those who do not know how their superiors communicate is 55 % in the central library, but only 32 % at the branches. Department and office heads agree with the majority in the central library, while at the branches everybody considers that their communication with the coordinating head is good. The superior management's opinion is predominantly good, only one of six persons thinks that the communication between the heads is deficient.

The perception of the communication between the management and the coordinating heads is largely characterized by the answer “I don’t know how they communicate”, with a 68 % in the central library, and 56 % at the branches. The case is identical for the department and office heads in the central library as well. At the branches everybody thinks that the coordinating head communicates well with the management. The superior management’s opinions vary: deficient, acceptable, good, very good – each opinion is different.

The cooperation with their colleagues seems dissatisfactory for approximately one quarter of the respondents in the central library.

Conclusion: The communication between people and departments is perceived in positive terms at the branch libraries, whereas it comes down as bad in the central library. What difference is there between the branches and the central library that can explain this obvious distinction in the achievement of good communication? First and foremost, the branches are dispersed, they are physically distant from each other and from the library’s central management. Their autonomy is bigger, they must handle many various situations without the permanent supervision of the management. At the same time, they all have a positive assessment on the branch library coordinating head in all the aspects of communication they were questioned about.

Department and office heads share the opinion of most employees about the multi-level communication in the library, which means that they do realize the deficiencies in communication. The management members either display an opinion which is usually better than the majority’s, or have dispersed opinions; in other words, the superior management does not have a unitary view on the situation of communication in the institution, every member has a different opinion.

2. RELATING TO HIERARCHICAL SUPERIORS

The answer of one’s hierarchical superior to a suggestion regarding library activity:

Suggestion to superior	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Applied	29	34,9	47	69,1
Good, but not applied	24	28,9	12	17,6
Not good	4	4,8	1	1,5
I received no answer	9	10,8	2	2,9
Not the case	17	20,5	6	8,8
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

What kind of information can we gather from this question? The mere fact whether or not employees make suggestions is quite telling about the relationship between employees and employers, and if these suggestions are appreciated, and what’s more, put into practice, we may conclude that the relationship between employees and their superiors is satisfactory, beneficial for the functioning of the whole institution.

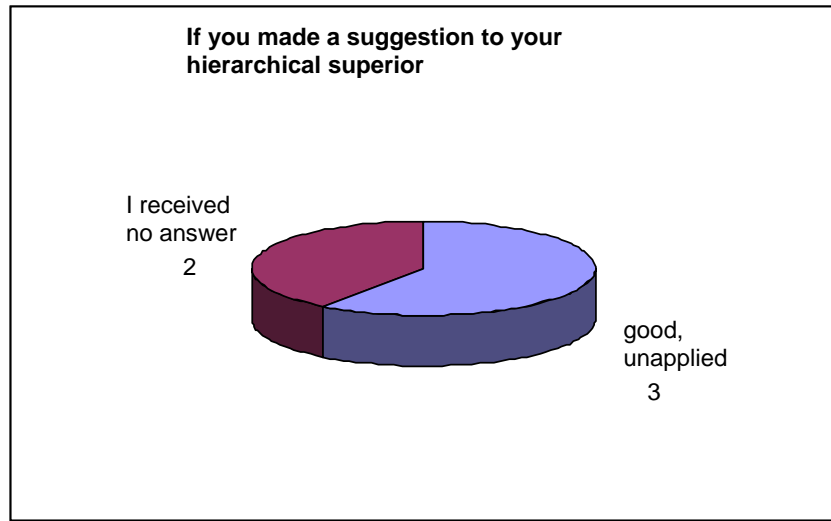
The employees’ suggestions were largely applied at the branch libraries (69 % of the respondents) or at least were appreciated, even if not applied (18 %). In the

central library 35 % of the respondents made suggestions which were noted, and 29 % made suggestions considered good, yet unapplied. There is an 11 % of those who received no answer in the central library, and only 3 % at the branches, while in the central library 21 % of the respondents made no suggestions, compared to a 9 % at the branch libraries.

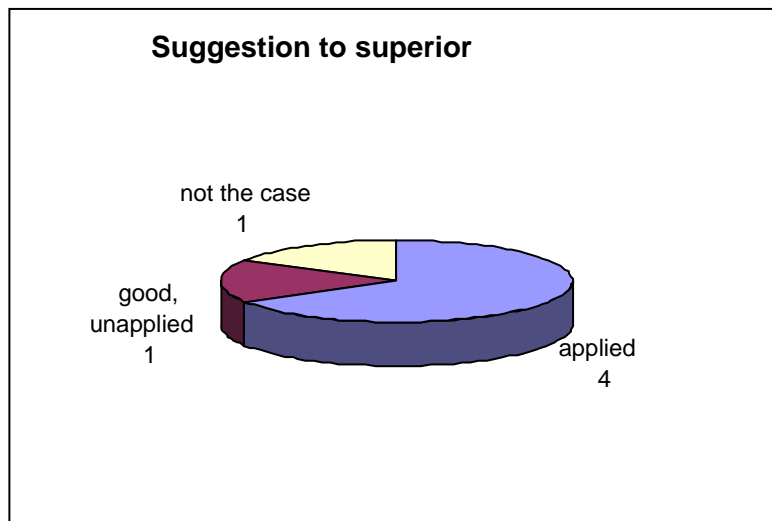
As regards department and office heads, it seems that they were taken more seriously at the branch libraries. In the central library their suggestions were either not applied, or left without answer.

The relationship between employees and heads appears to be better at the ranches in this respect as well.

Central library



Branch libraries

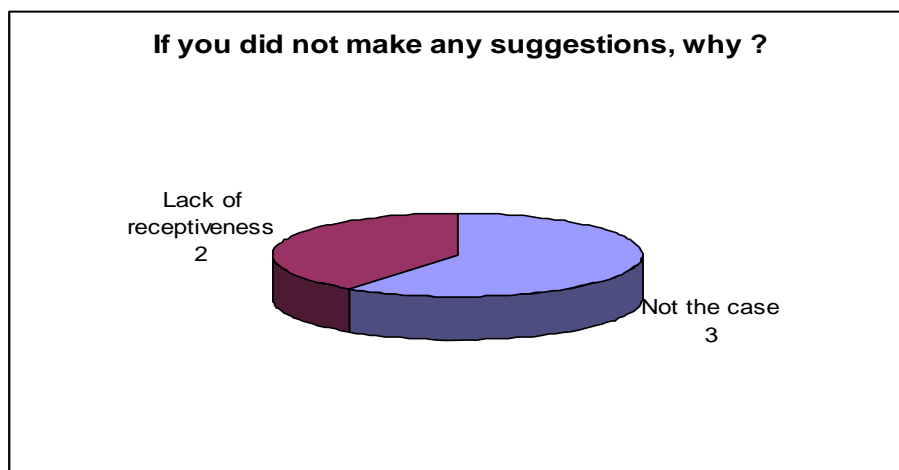


No suggestions:

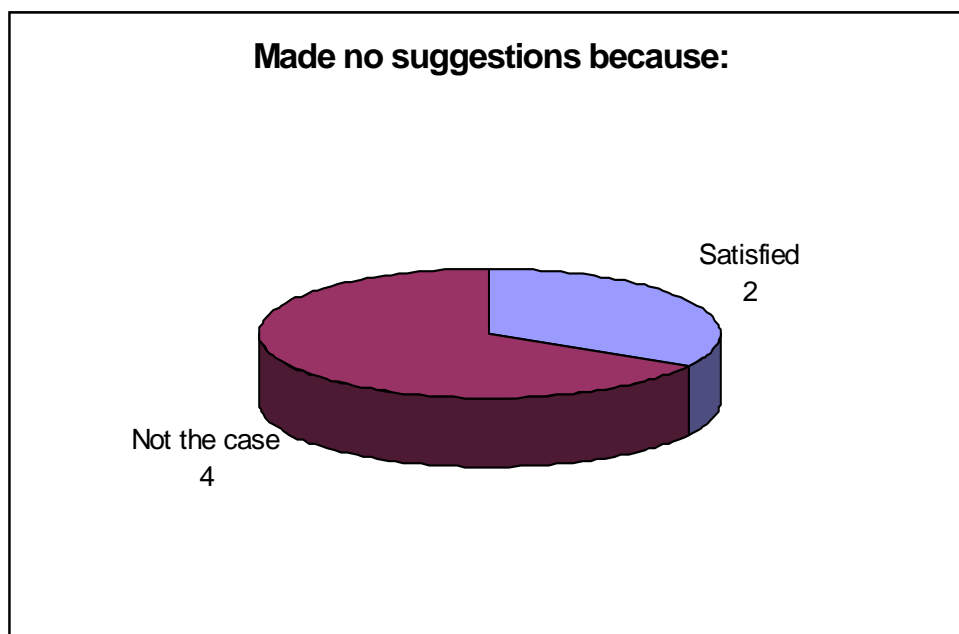
Made no suggestion	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Satisfied	21	25,3	28	41,2
Lack of receptiveness	25	30,1	7	10,3
Other reason	4	4,8	2	2,9
Not the case	33	39,8	31	45,6
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

The reason for not making any suggestions about the library activity in the central library is the mistrust in the receptiveness of their superiors for 30 % of the respondents, and the relative satisfaction with the state of things for 25 % of the respondents. At the branch libraries 41 % claim that they did not make suggestions because they are satisfied, and only 10 % are not confident that their suggestions will be listened to. Two of the department and office heads in the central library made no suggestions because they did not expect them to be answered; the other three made theirs. At the branches 4 heads are not in the position not to have made suggestions, and the other two are satisfied, so they had nothing to suggest. Those who did make suggestions are listed in the table under “not the case”. By “satisfied with the present state of things” we understand that there was no reason to make any suggestions. The percentage of those who had no confidence in the receptiveness of their superiors is quite high in the central library, almost a third of the respondents.

Central library – department and office heads



Branch libraries – department and office heads

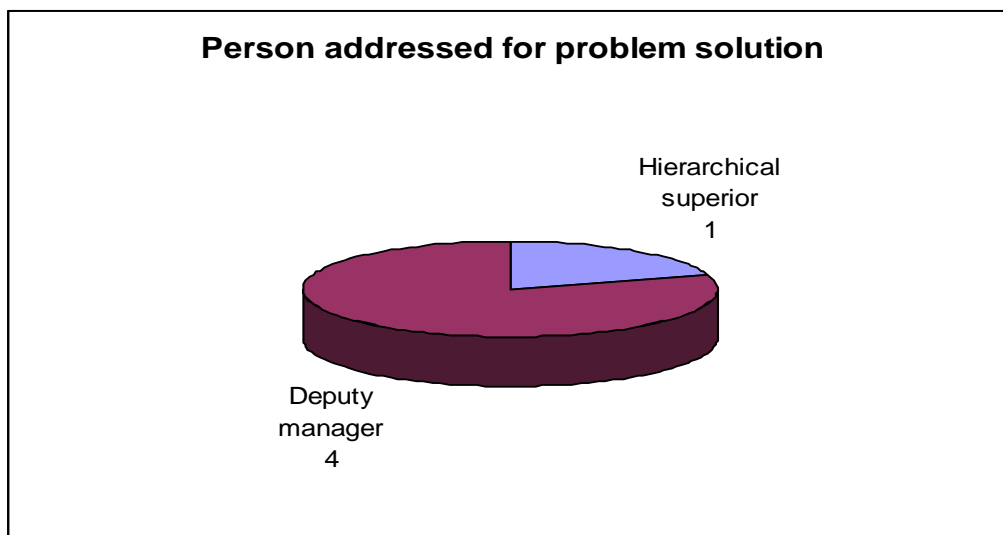


Person addressed in case of problems to solve or discontentment about work issues:

In case of problems to solve or discontentment about work issues that are supposed to be solved by the superiors, the employees turn in the first place to their hierarchical superiors both in the central library and at the branch libraries. 77 % of the central library employees and 74 % of the branch library employees do so, while 16 % of the respondents in the central library prefer to accept the situation as it is. 24 % of the branch library respondents choose to address the coordinating head. Department and office heads also respect the hierarchy, with one exception in the central library, who addresses the deputy manager.

Person addressed for problem solution	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Hierarchical superior	64	77,1	50	73,5
Deputy manager	3	3,6	1	1,5
General manager	3	3,6	-	-
Situation accepted	13	15,7	-	-
Other answer	-	-	1	1,5
Addressing to the coordinating head	-	-	16	23,5
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

Central library:



Does the work you actually do correspond to your job description?

23 % of the central library respondents and 27 % of the branch library respondents consider that their job description only partially covers the work they actually do. Even some of the department and office heads consider that their tasks do not correspond completely to their job description: 2 of 5 heads in the central library and 1 of 6 at the branches.

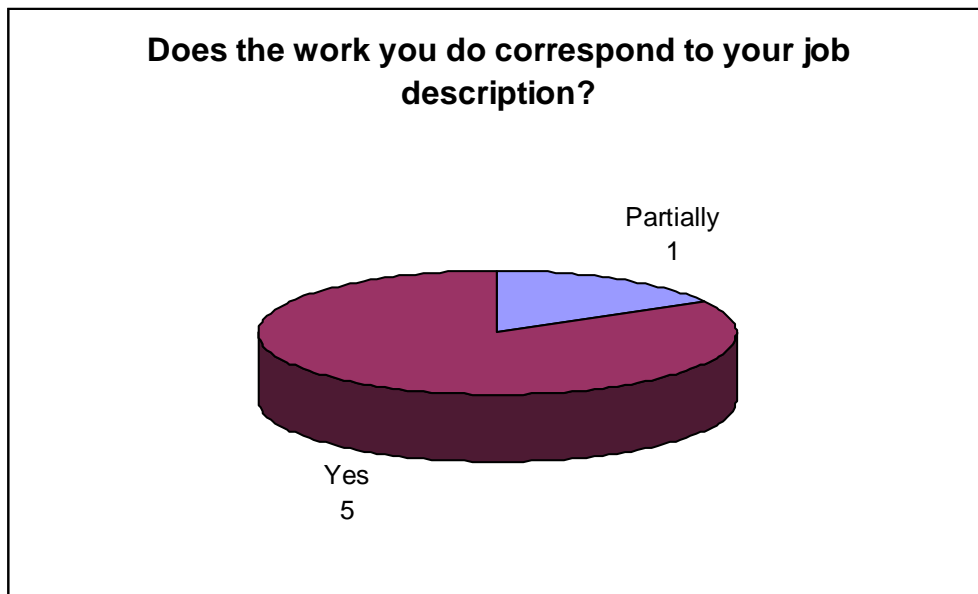
Does the work you do correspond to your job description?

	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	63	75,9	46	67,6
No	1	1,2	3	4,4
Partially	19	22,9	18	26,5
Total	83	100,0	67	98,5
Non-answers			1	1,5
Total			68	100,0

Department and office heads – central library



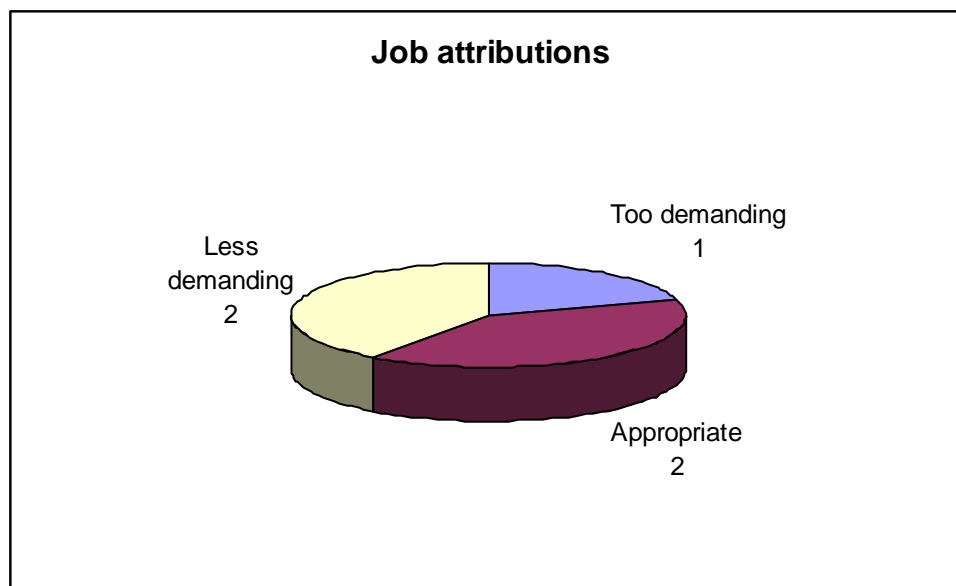
Department and office heads – branch libraries



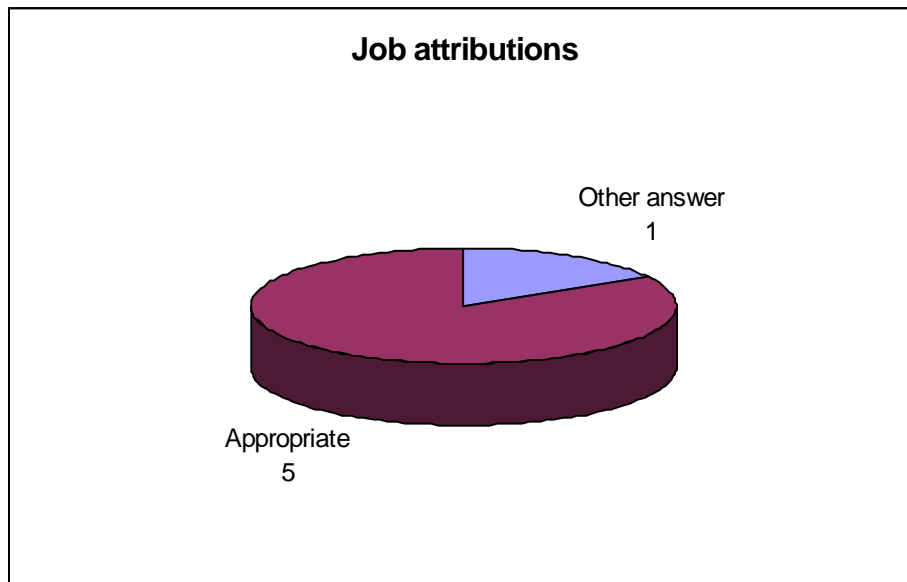
As expected, these are considered acceptable by most respondents. There is an 11 % of those who find their tasks less demanding, and another 7 % find it too demanding (in the central library), compared to a 9 % at the branches who consider it too demanding, and an insignificant percent of those who find it not demanding enough. The opinions of department and office heads are divided: 2 considers their tasks less demanding, 2 appropriate, and 1 too demanding in the central library, while at the branches 5 out of 6 heads choose “appropriate” and one claims to spend too much time with the users.

Job attributions	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Too demanding	6	7,2	6	8,8
Appropriate	65	78,3	60	88,2
Less demanding	9	10,8	1	1,5
Other answer	-	-	1	1,5
Total	80	96,4	68	100,0
Non-answers	3	3,6		
Total	83	100,0		

Central library heads



Branch library heads



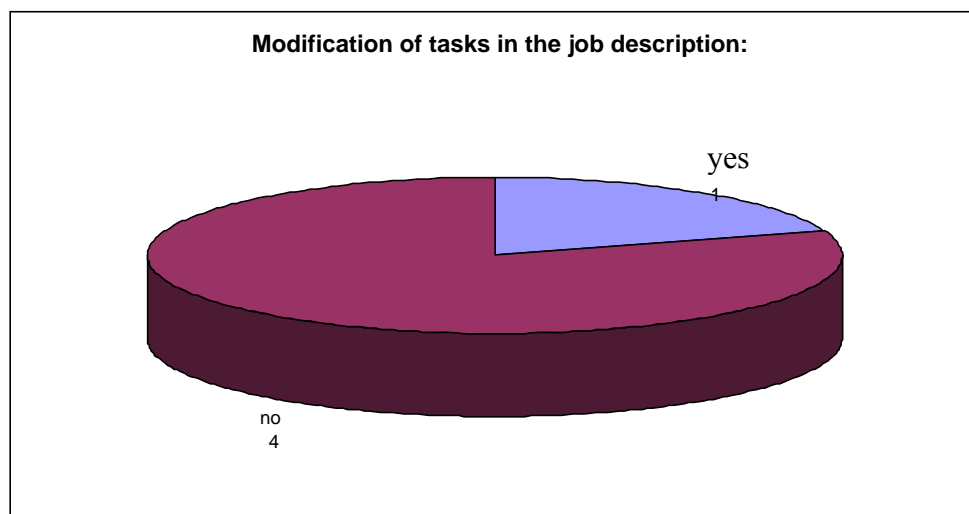
Where “other answer” = “too much time with the users”

Was your job description modified?

Modification of job description	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	39	47,0	27	39,7
No	42	50,6	41	60,3
Modified tasks but not job description	1	1,2	-	-
Total	82	98,8	68	100,0
Non-answers	1	1,2		
Total	83	100,0		

During the past year many job descriptions were modified, for 47 % of central library respondents and 40 % at the branch libraries. As regards the department and office heads, one had his/her job description modified in the central library, and 3 out of 6 at the branch libraries. Therefore several changes have been made in the tasks of many employees both in the central library and at the branches; this usually meant an effort to adapt to the new tasks as well.

Central library



Branch libraries



Modifications as consequence of a discussion with one's hierarchical superior?

Half of the central library employees and a third of the branch library employees whose job descriptions have been modified in the central library declare that it was done without any previous discussion with their hierarchical superiors.

As a consequence of discussions with the hierarchical superior?	Central library	library	Branch library	library
	employees		employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	20	24,1	19	27,9
No	19	22,9	10	14,7
Not the case	42	50,6	39	57,4
Total	81	97,6	68	100,0
Non-answers	2	2,4		
Total	83	100,0		

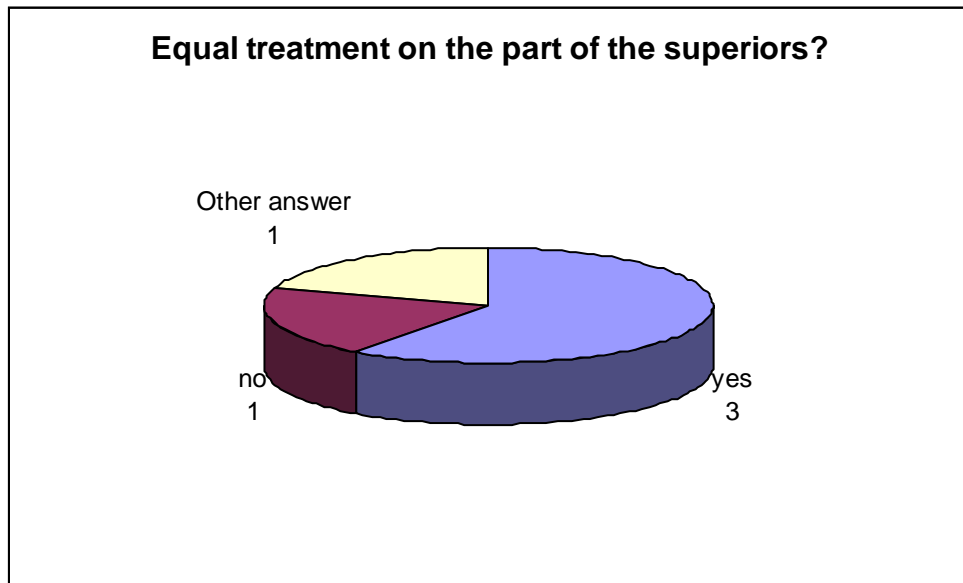
Equal treatment on the part of the superiors

Asked whether they think they are treated equally with their colleagues by their superiors, 30 % in the central library and somewhat less, 13 % in the branch libraries answered no. Some chose the variant “other opinion”, but unfortunately failed to express this opinion, only one branch library respondent specified that “*the criteria of activity assessment are not consistent*”. There are two answers in the central library, one “I don’t know”, and another “usually yes, but in certain situations it may differ”. Naturally, the perception of equality is subjective, there could be discontentment on this issue deriving not only from a real basis, but 30 % is too high not to have a real motivation.

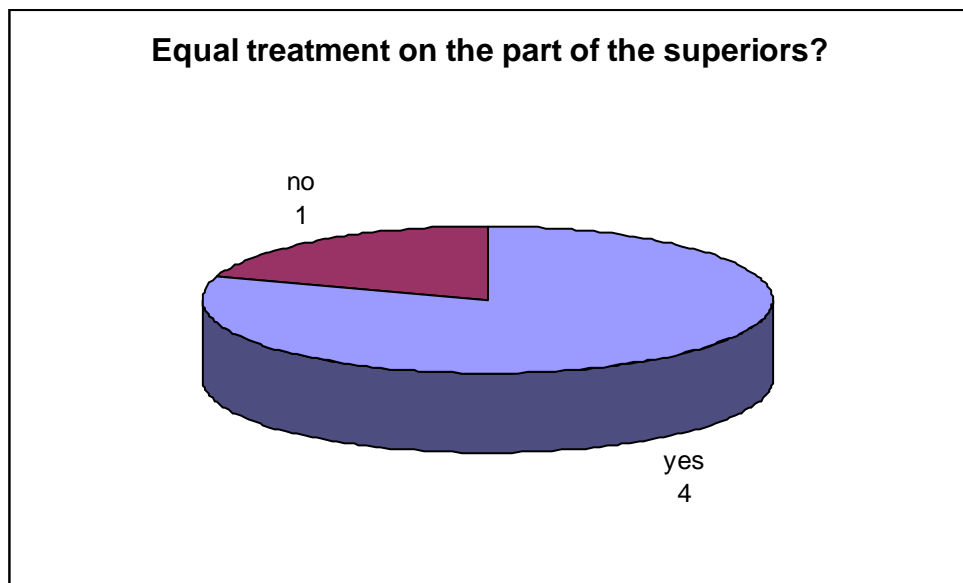
Equal treatment on the part of the superiors?	Central library	library	Branch library	library
	employees		employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	63,9	54	79,4
No	22	26,5	9	13,2
Other opinion	3	3,6	4	5,9
Total	78	94,0	67	98,5
Non-answers	5	6,0	1	1,5
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

Department and office heads again do not consider unanimously that they are treated equally.

Central library

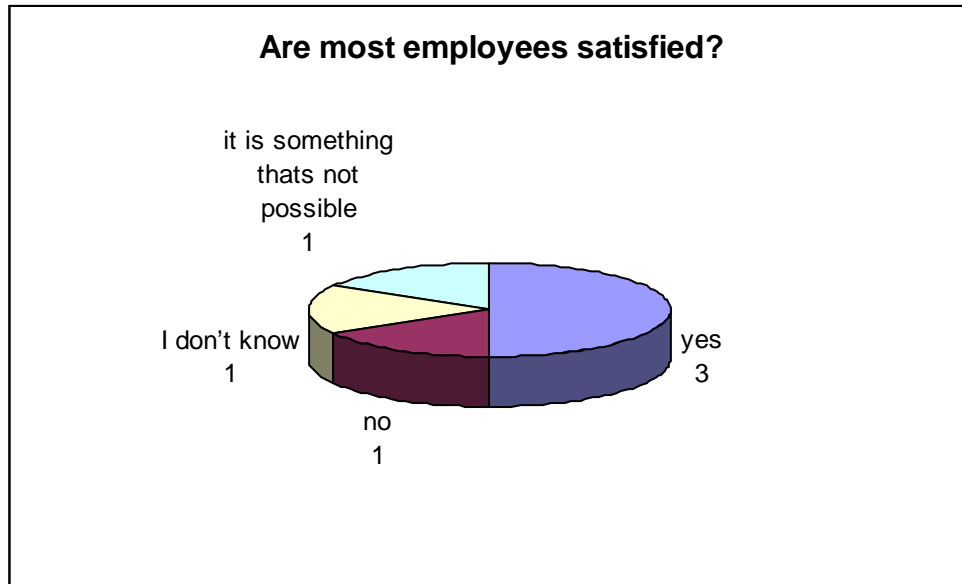


Branch Libraries



The perception of the management on the employees' satisfaction with their communication with the superiors

In what regards the perception of the management about most employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their communication with the superiors, 3 of them consider that the majority are satisfied, one does not know, another one considers that it is not possible, and yet another person considers that they are not satisfied. The opinions are therefore dispersed again.



Conclusions: All problems raised here are connected to the relationship with the hierarchical superior, whose quality is a premise for a well going work. the superior's reaction or lack of reaction to the employees' suggestions, refraining from making suggestions, the superposition of concrete tasks and job descriptions, the perception of job attributions, the modification of tasks in the job description, and the fact that the modifications were or were not made after a discussion with the person in question, the perception about equal treatment and the employees' satisfaction about their communication with the superiors – all these are issues which show that things could be improved in the institution, especially in the central library. If for 70 % of the branch library respondents their suggestions were also applied, in the central library this proportion is only 35 %, while the department heads in the central library received no answer or their suggestions were not applied. The percentage of those who made no suggestions in the central library because they didn't expect any receptiveness from their superiors is quite high, almost a third of the respondents. In case of problems to solve most people turn to their hierarchical superior, as is natural, but there is a 16 % in the central library who tend to accept the situation as it is, and another 24 % at the branches who rather turn to the coordinating head. In the central library only one of the department heads addresses the deputy manager instead of the direct superior. The employees' tasks only partially coincide with their job description for a rather high percent of the respondents both in the central library and at the branches: 23 % and 27 %

respectively; yet the job descriptions of many employees were modified during the past year, for 47 % in the central library and 40 % at the branches. These modifications were made without a previous discussion for half of the employees involved in the central library, and a third at the branch libraries. The perception of equal treatment on the part of the superiors is negative for almost a third of the central library employees, and the management's opinion on the satisfaction of employees regarding the quality of communication is dispersed, with a dominating optimism: 3 of 6 consider that the employees are satisfied, one does not know, one chooses "this is not possible" (that is, for employees to be satisfied), and one says that they are not satisfied.

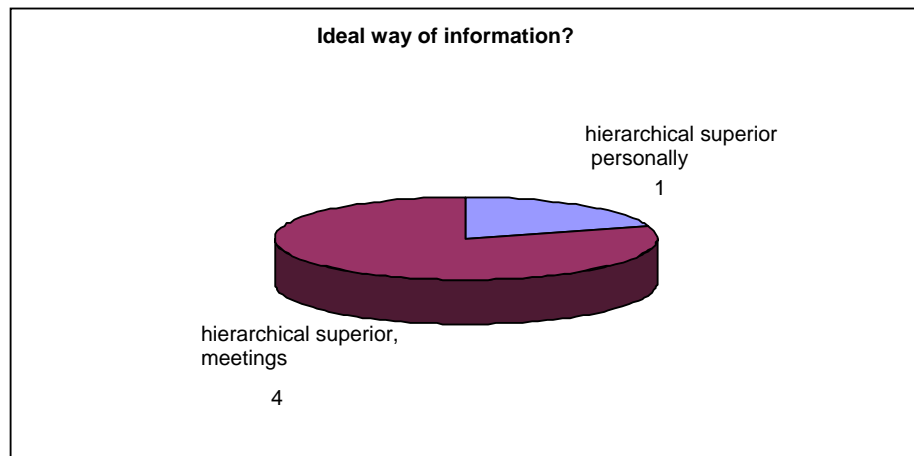
3. MODES AND WAYS OF COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND DECISIONS

Opinions on the recommended ways of informing the employees of an institution on management decisions that have a direct or indirect impact on them:

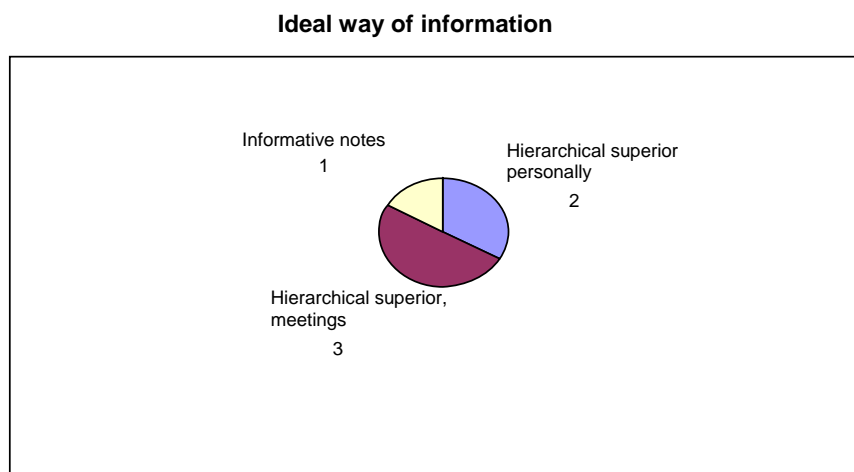
Ideal way of information	Central employees	library	Branch employees	library
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Hierarchical superior personally	29	34,9	28	41,2
Hierarchical superior in meeting	39	47,0	25	36,8
Department colleagues	-	-	1	1,5
Informative notes	14	16,9	13	19,1
Other sources	-	-	1	1,5
Total	82	98,8	68	100,0
Non-answers	1	1,2		
Total	83	100,0		

The ideal way of communicating management decisions is considered, as expected, to be by way of the superior, but this opinion is divided between personal communication and communication by meeting, theoretically more efficient especially in the central library where people can meet more easily. The next option is that of the *Informative notes*, which however are not practiced on a large scale at the moment. 5 of the department and office heads in the central library prefer the communication through meetings, one prefers personal communication; at the branch libraries the opinions are divided between *Hierarchical superior by meetings*, *hierarchical superior personally*, and then *Informative notes*. The same happens for superior management.

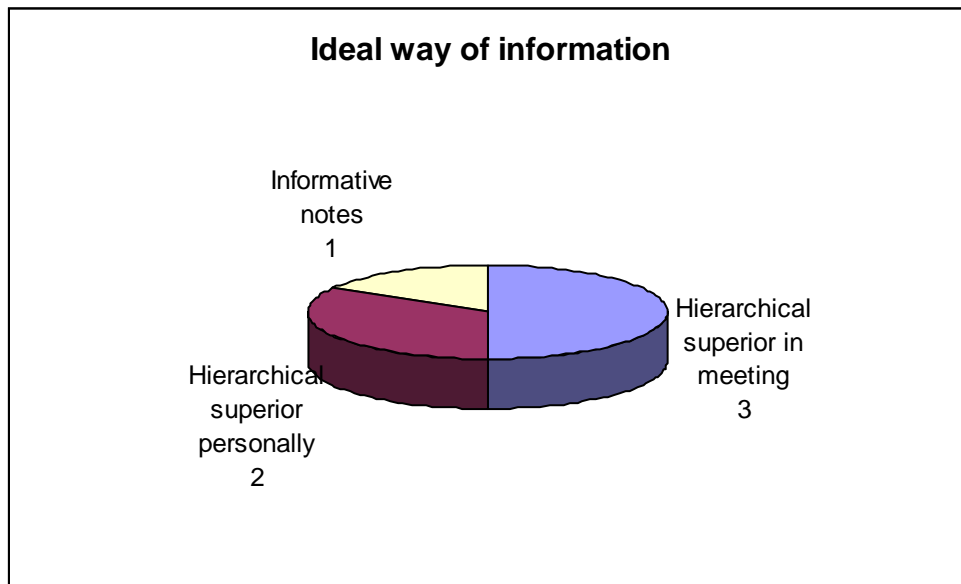
Central library:



Branch libraries:



Management



Ways by which employees usually find out the management decisions regarding them:

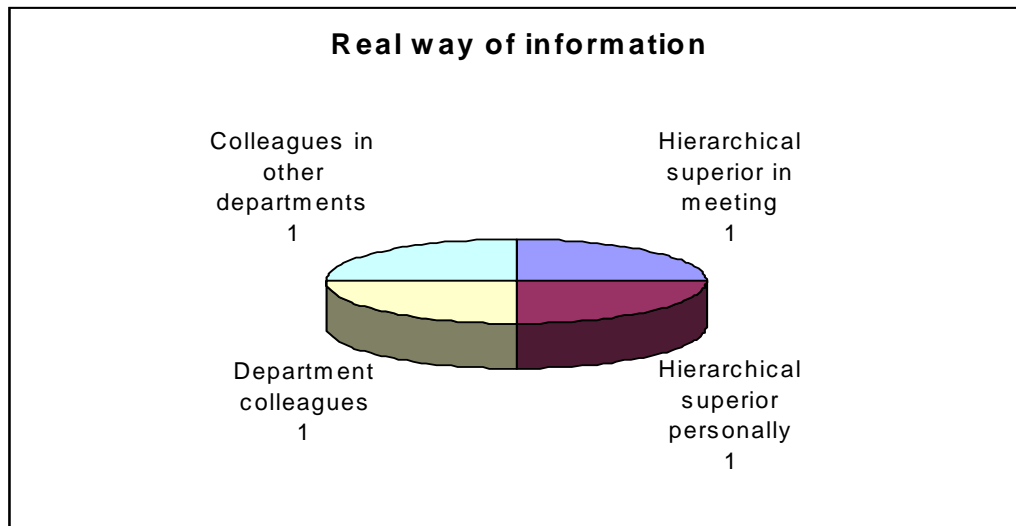
According to the central library respondents, the usually applied ways of communicating decisions are multiple, there is no predominant way of transmission: 24 % happens by the personal information of the superior, 22 % by meetings, 15 % by colleagues from other departments, 12 % other sources, etc. There is also a high percent, 12 %, of non-answers. The answers of the central library department and office heads, just like those of the rest of the employees, prove that there isn't a predominant way of decision transmission: one avoids the answer, the rest of them all choose different answers.

At the branch libraries most answers – 53 % – opt for personal communication by the hierarchical superior, and 3 of the department and office heads indicate personal communication by the superior, and 2 indicate communication by *Informative notes*. It can be presumed that meetings are not very much at hand at the branch libraries, as it is difficult to gather together people who all work with the users, yet the decisions also cannot be transmitted personally to all employees, only to some, who then transmit them on. Written informative notes would be the best solution, but they seem not to be very much applied in any of the libraries.

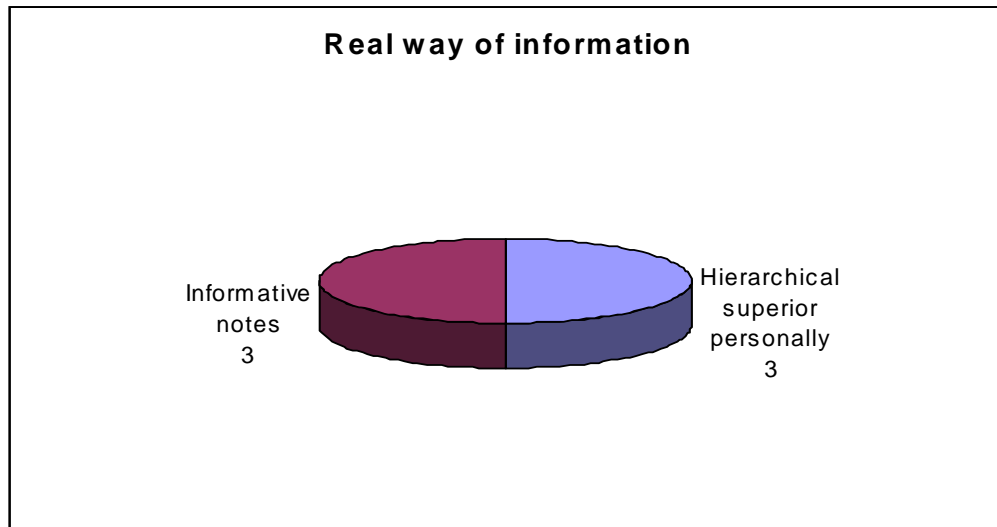
Real way of information			Central employees Frequency	library Percent	Branch employees Frequency	library Percent
Hierarchical personally	superior,		20	24,1	36	52,9
Hierarchical meetings	superior in		18	21,7	8	11,8
Colleagues in the department			7	8,4	11	16,2
Colleagues in other departments			12	14,5	6	8,8
Informative notes			6	7,2	4	5,9
Other sources			10	12,0	2	2,9
Total			73	88,0	67	98,5
Non-answers			10	12,0	1	1,5
Total			83	100,0	68	100,0

There is a difference between the ideal and real situation both in the central library and at the branches. Although ideally the preferred way of communication would be the communication of management decisions regarding all the employees by means of meetings, directly to each employee, or by Informative notes, the reality is different: meetings are rarely called for both in the central library and at the branches, and Informative notes are not really employed either. Direct communication (superior–employee) seems to be practiced at the branches and considered a solution in the central library, although it is counter-productive: it is not handy for a superior to transmit management decision down to each employee individually. It would only work if it were about decisions regarding one employee in particular.

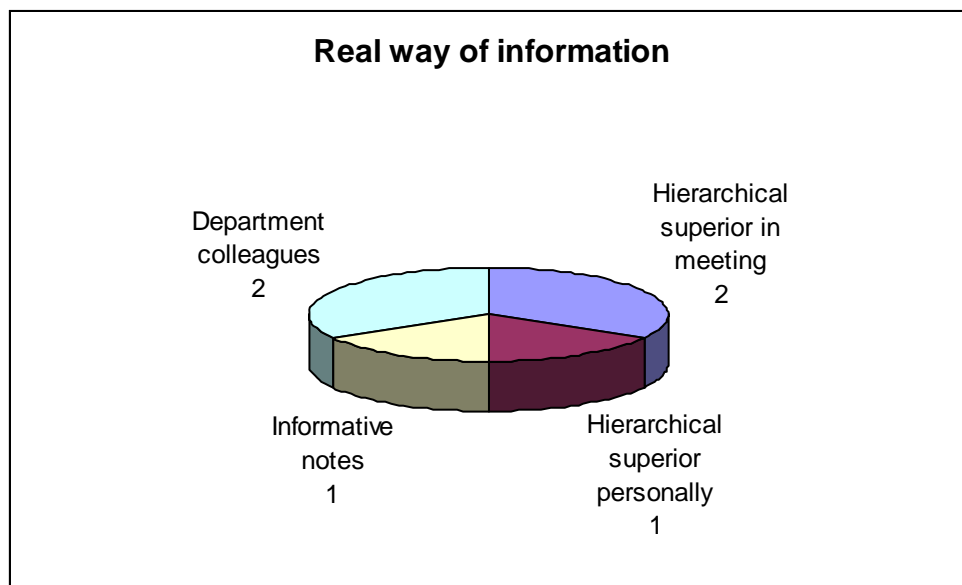
Central library



Branch libraries



Management



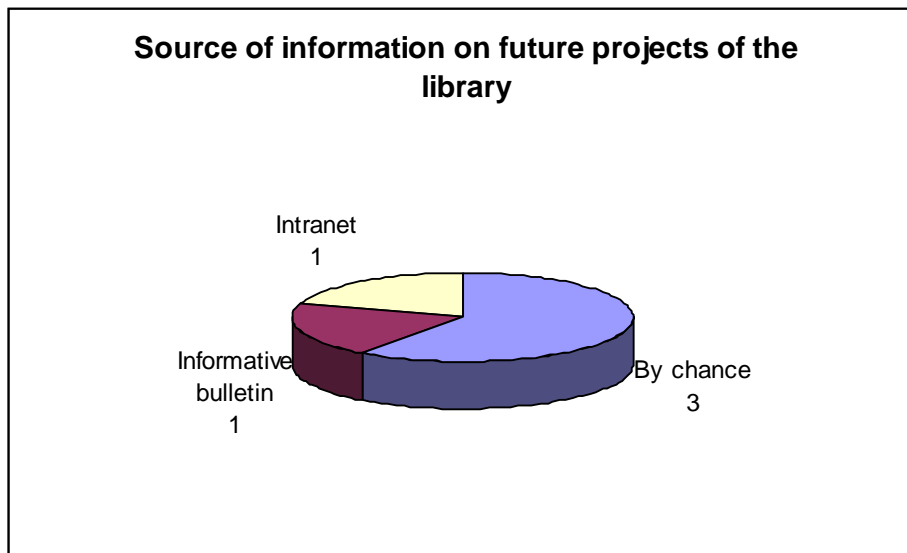
9. Sources of information on future projects of the University Library:

There are two approximately equally cited sources of information on future projects in the central library: the hierarchical superior with 33 % and chance with 34 %. This may imply differences depending on both the departments and the superiors: some probably transmit information on a regular basis, other don't. At the branches the most cited source is the hierarchical superior for 34 % of the respondents, followed by electronic mail for 16 %, chance for 12 %, and the Informative bulletin for 10 %.

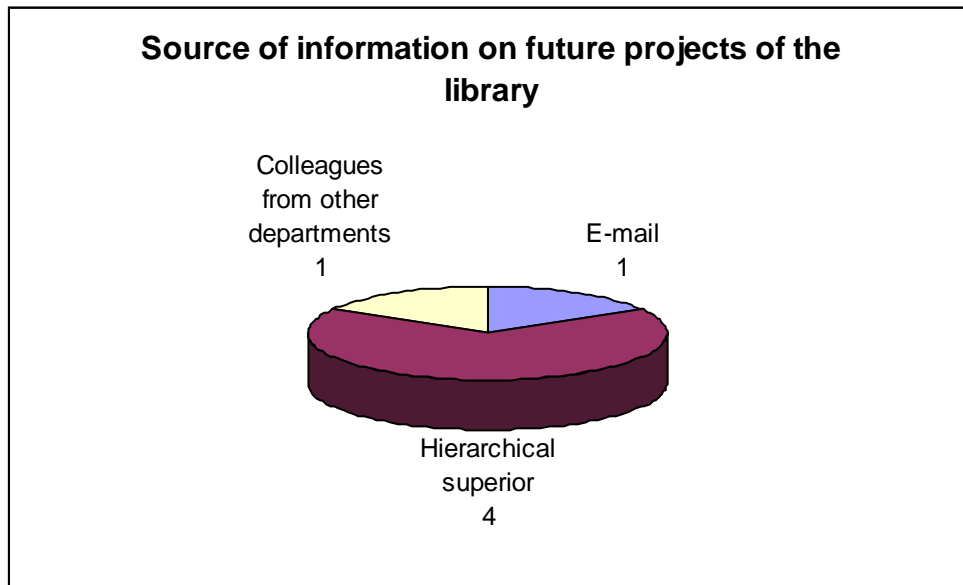
It must be noted that of the 5 department and office heads in the central library who filled out the questionnaire, 3 find out accidentally about the future projects of the library, while the source of information for the other two is the Intranet and the Informative bulletin. The situation is different at the branch libraries: of the 6 department and office heads 4 mention the hierarchical superior, one mentions the colleagues, and yet another mentions e-mail.

Source of information on future projects of the library	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Hierarchical superior	27	32,5	23	33,8
Colleagues from the department	4	4,8	5	7,4
Colleagues from other departments	3	3,6	6	8,8
By chance	28	33,7	8	11,8
Informative bulletin	5	6,0	7	10,3
Intranet	3	3,6	5	7,4
E-mail	8	9,6	11	16,2
Other source	2	2,4	3	4,4
Total	80	96,4	68	100,0
Non-answers	3	3,6		
Total	83	100,0		

Central library:

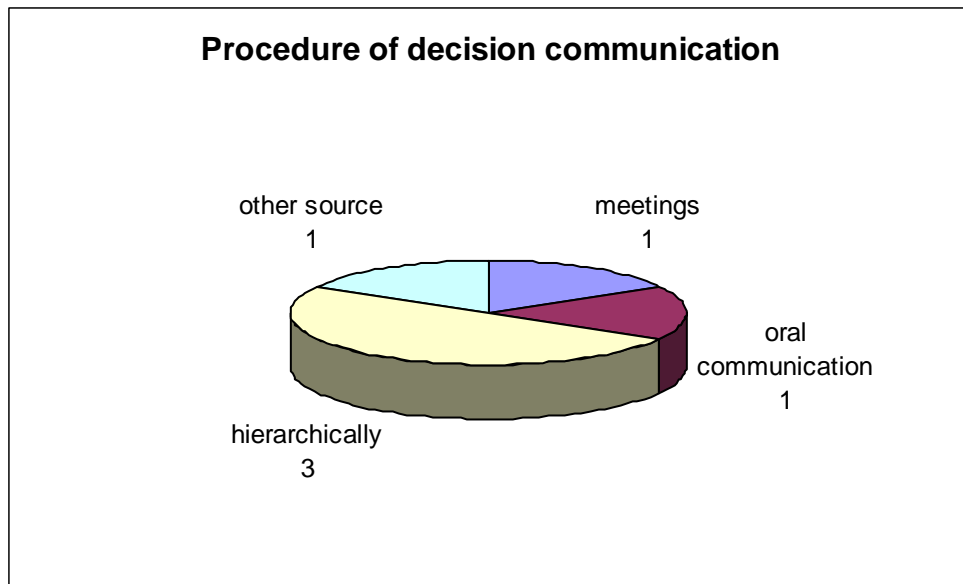


Branch libraries:



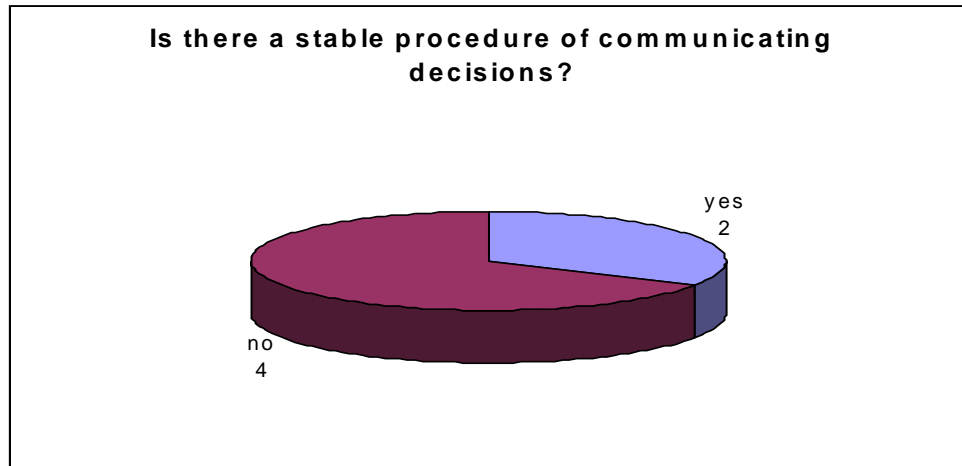
The answers of the members of superior management show that there is no stable practice that they use in communicating their decisions: 3 of them consider that the coordinating heads transmit the information to the department heads, who transmit it further on, one thinks that the information is transmitted to one person who will diffuse it to the others, another person says that the information is communicated via the regular informative meetings, and yet another thinks that the practice varies from one department to the other.

Ways of communicating decisions



Is there a stable procedure of communicating decisions?

4 of the 6 answers given to the question whether there is a stable procedure of communicating management decisions to the employees consider that there is one, and 2 think that there isn't. What we can make of this is that either this procedure exists, but it is not respected, or it is only respected by certain members of the management who answer only for themselves. Evidently, the analysis of these and the previous answers shows that there is no common rule, or it is not applied.



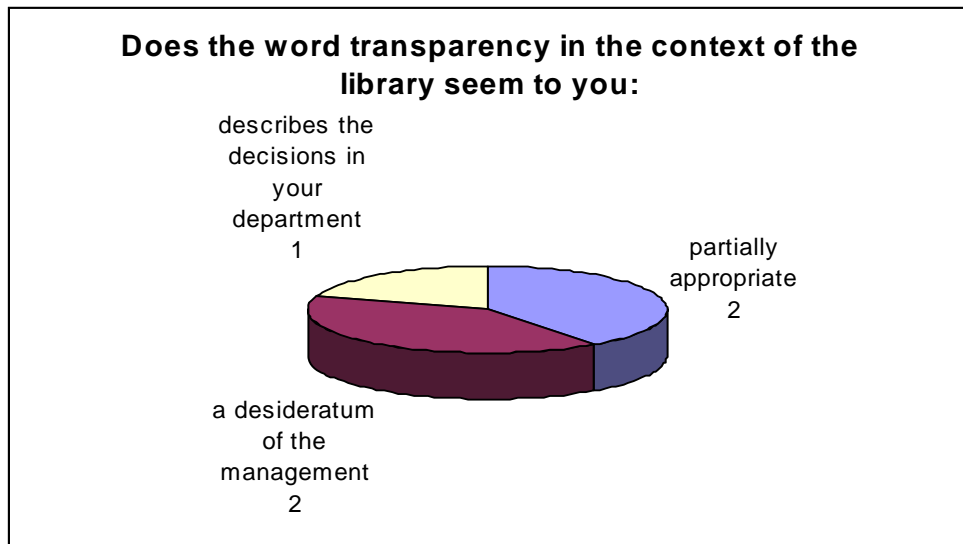
The concept of “transparency” in the Central University Library:

The options on the word “transparency” in the context of the library focus on the answers: “not appropriate” for 33 %, then “partially appropriate” for 21 %, followed by “a desideratum of the management” for 15 %. There is also quite a high percent of those who avoid the answer: 15 %. At the branches the answers about transparency opt for “departmental decisions” to a higher degree, 34 %, while 24 % choose “it is partially suitable”, and 19 % consider it “a desideratum of the management”. 7 % think in the central library that transparency describes the way top decisions are made, while at the branches this rate is somewhat higher, 13 %.

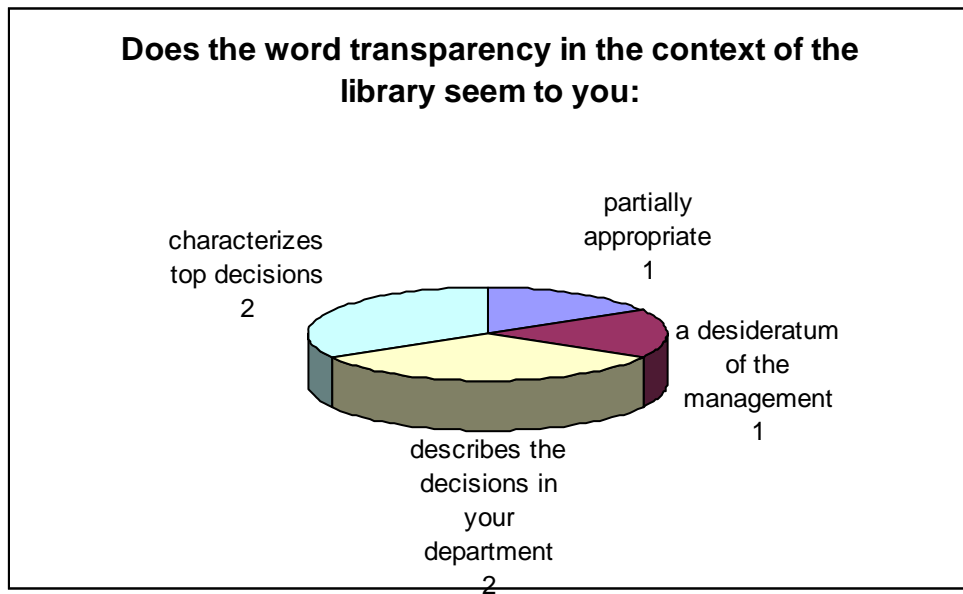
Department and office heads and members of the superior management have different opinions, from “partially appropriate” to “decisions within the department” and “a desideratum of the management”.

The word “transparency” in the context of the library		Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Total	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Top decisions	6	7,2	9	13,2	
Departmental decisions	8	9,6	23	33,8	
A desideratum of the management	12	14,5	13	19,1	
Not appropriate	27	32,5	6	8,8	
Partially appropriate	17	20,5	16	23,5	
Other opinion	1	1,2			
Total	71	85,5	67	98,5	

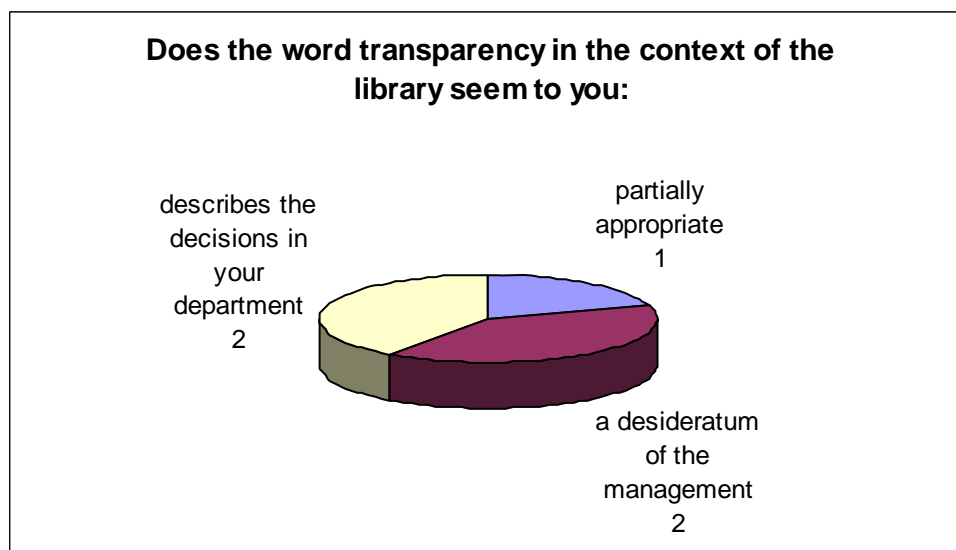
Central library:



Branch libraries:



Management

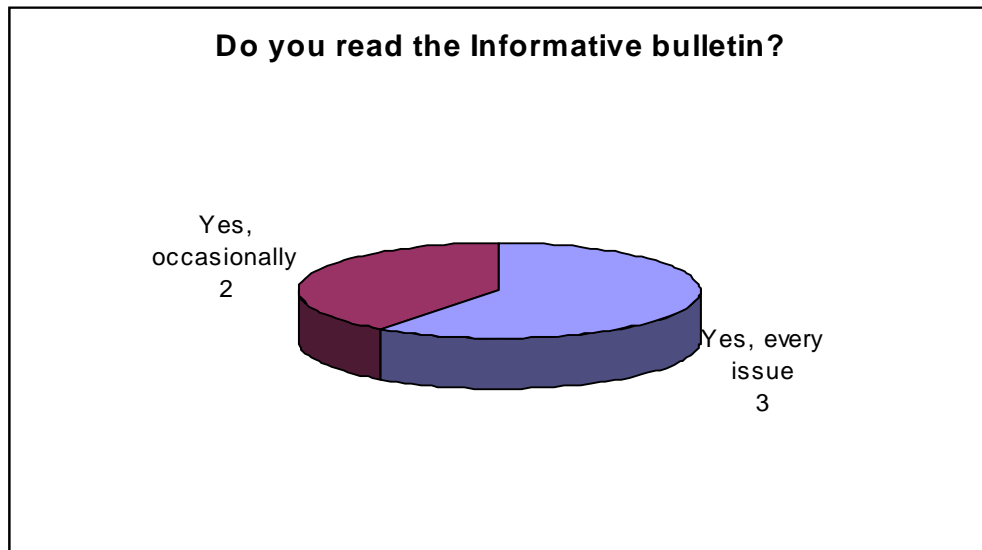


Do you usually read the Informative bulletin?

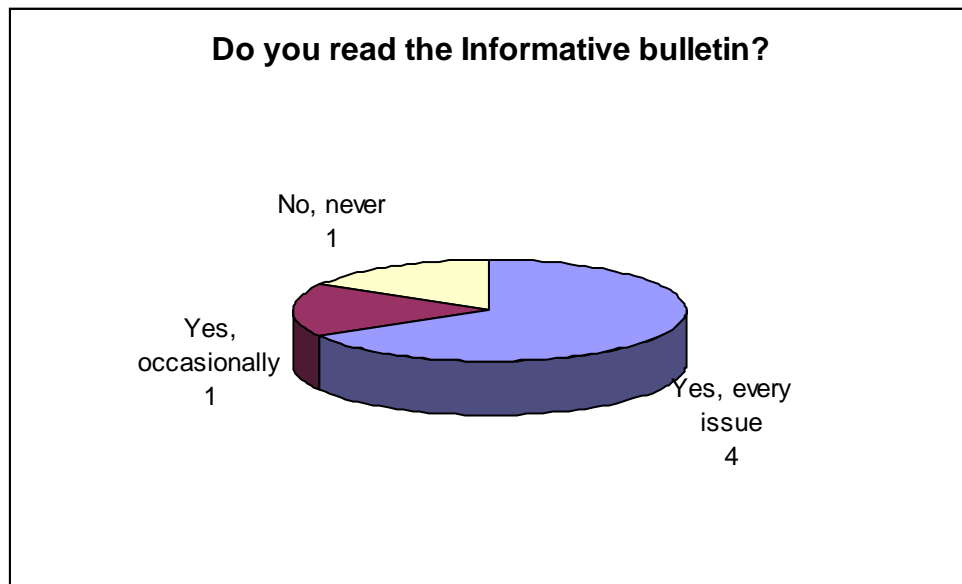
It may be stated that the Informative bulletin is quite widely read, although most people only read it occasionally (50 %).

Do you read the Informative bulletin?	Central employees		Branch employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes, every issue	27	32,5	27	39,7
Yes, occasionally	43	51,8	34	50,0
No, never	13	15,7	4	5,9
Total	83	100,0	65	95,6
Non-answers			3	4,4
Total			68	100,0

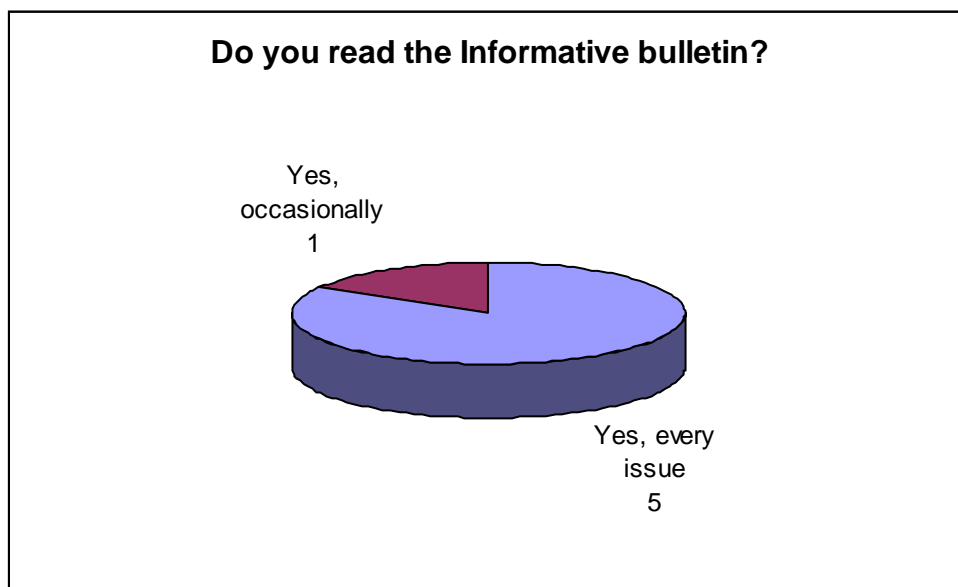
Central library:



Branch libraries:



Management

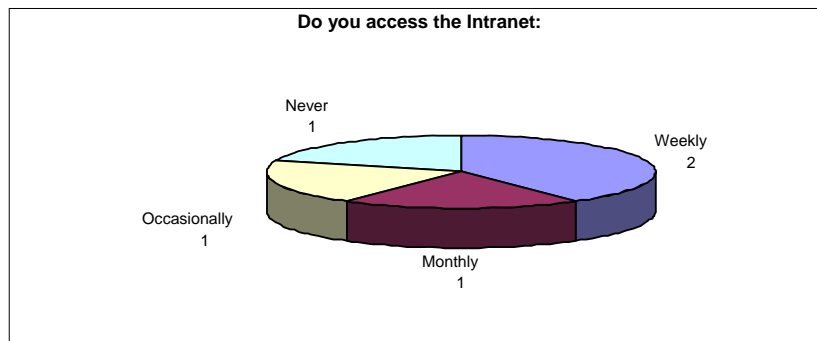


Do you access the Intranet?

The Intranet seems to be accessed, though not on a regular basis: most people in the central library, 47 %, only occasionally access it, but at the branch libraries the same percent of people access it weekly, and 28 % monthly. This is so in spite of the fact that the information on the Intranet is quite outdated for its most part, with some exception such as the monthly statistics of Aleph processing.

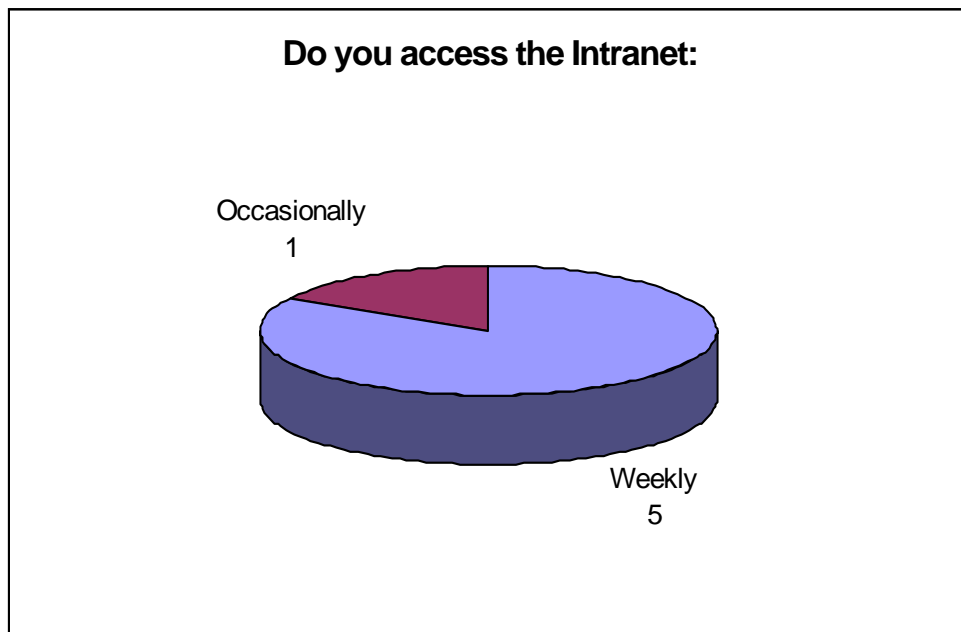
Do you access the Intranet:	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	19	22,9	32	47,1
Monthly	18	21,7	19	27,9
Occasionally	39	47,0	11	16,2
Never	5	6,0	0	0
Total	81	97,6	62	91,2
Non-answer	2	2,4	6	8,8
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

Central library:



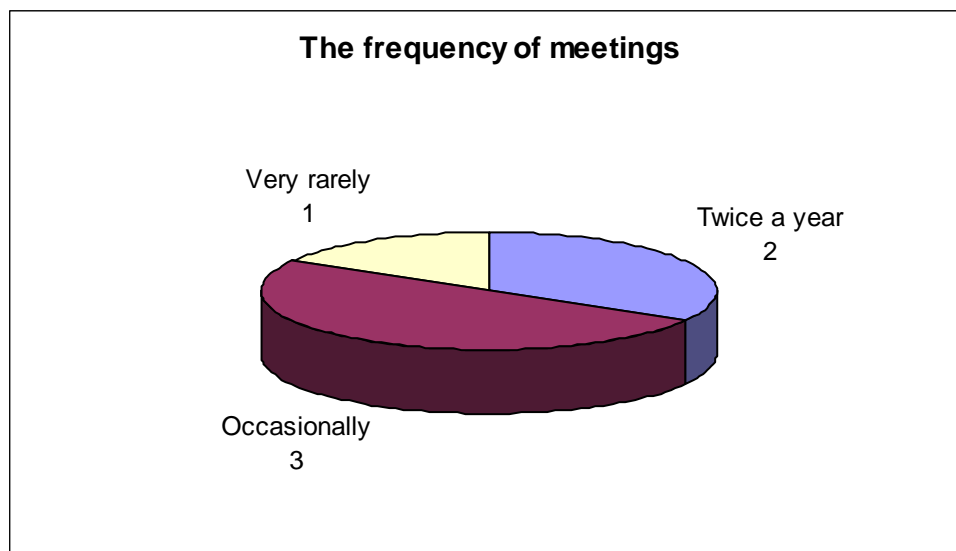
At the branches all heads say that they access the Intranet on a weekly basis.

Management



Is the Intranet a good means of information for the employees?

All members of the management who answered the questionnaires unanimously considered that the Intranet is a good means of information for the employees.

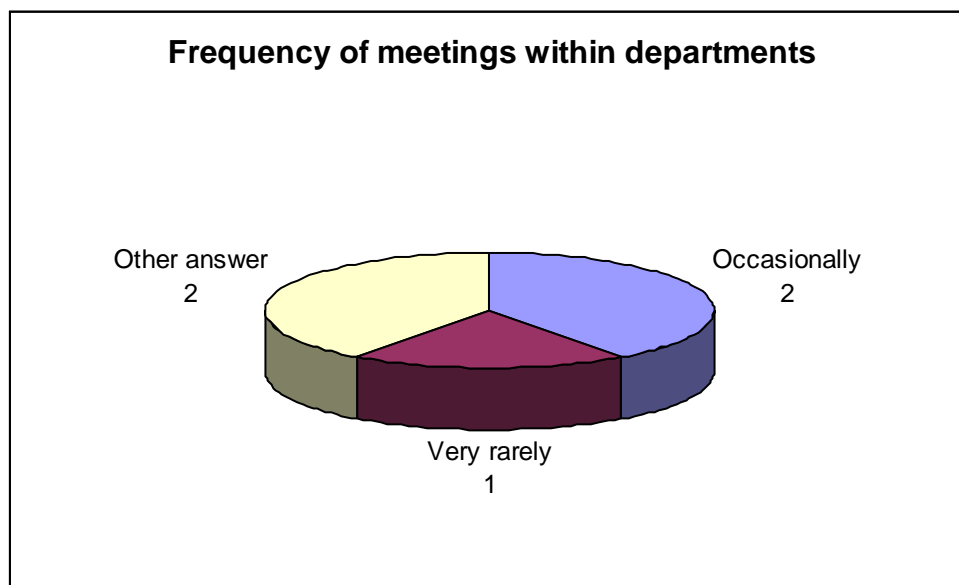


The frequency of meetings

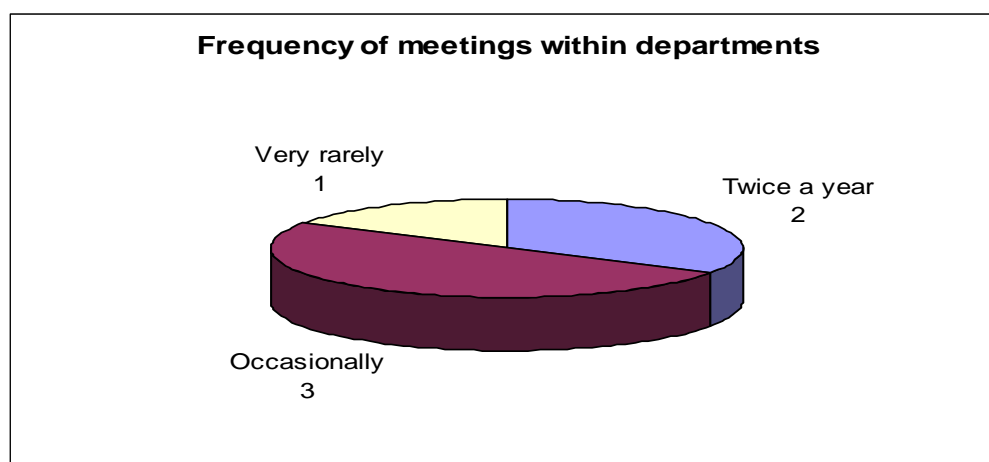
Starting from the premise that meetings can be a good way of disseminating professional information and a productive medium for professional communication, I was interested to see how often they were organized. The answers are divided between a 51 % of “occasionally” and a 25 % of “very rarely” in the central library, compared to a 69 % of “occasionally” and a 13 % of “very rarely” at the branch libraries. The answers given by the heads also show that meetings are not very regular.

Frequency of meetings within departments	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	7	8,4	5	7,4
Twice a year	3	3,6	5	7,4
Occasionally	42	50,6	47	69,1
Very rarely	21	25,3	9	13,2
Other answer	7	8,4	2	2,9
Total	80	96,4	68	100,0
Non-answers	3	3,6		
Total	83	100,0		

Central library



Branch libraries



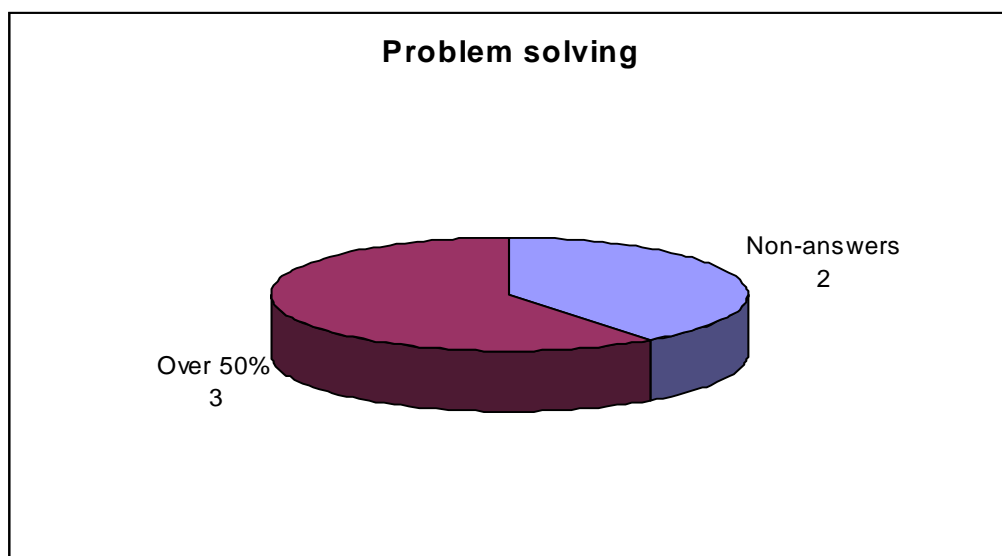
Problem solving during the meetings

Problem solving	Central library employees		Branch library employees	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Under 50 %	29	34,9	10	14,7
Over 50%	34	41,0	40	58,8
Over 90%	8	9,6	16	23,5
I didn't take part in the	4	4,8		

meetings				
Total	75	90,4	66	97,1
Non-answers	8	9,6	2	2,9
Total	83	100,0	68	100,0

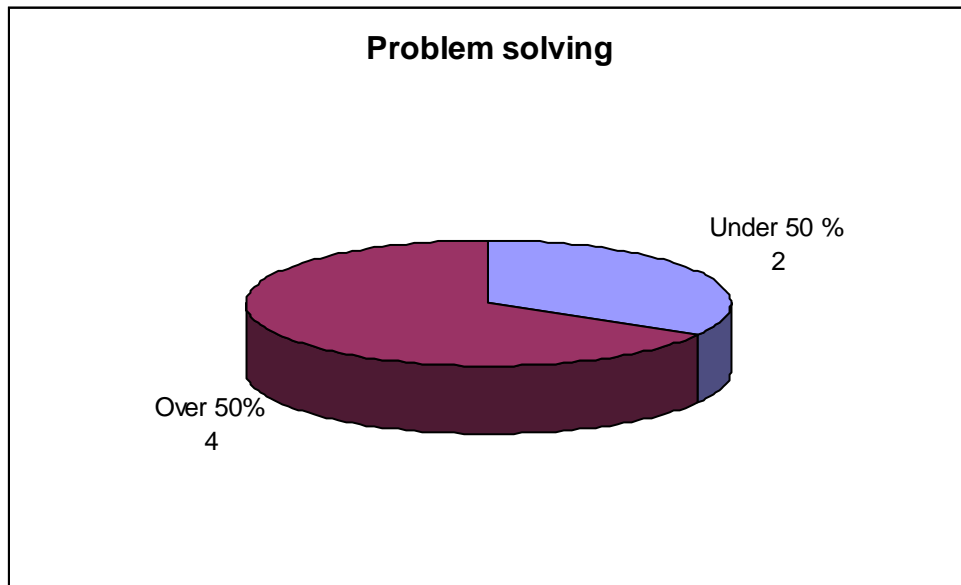
At the branch libraries 59 % of the respondents consider that the meetings solved concrete problems in the department in a proportion of over 50 %, and 24 % consider that this proportion is over 90 %. In the central library the opinions are divided between under and over 50 %, and only 10 % consider that meetings have solved problems in a proportion of over 90 %.

Central library heads



At the branch library heads one answer is missing, while the other 5 respondents consider that the meeting solved problems in a proportion of over 50 %. 2 of the management members consider that problems were solved during the meetings to a degree of under 50 %, and 4 say over 50 %. In short, meetings are rare and not very efficient, if we listen to the employees' opinions.

Management



Conclusions

There is no stable procedure of transmitting management decisions to the employees, or at least it is not applied; the way of communicating decisions applied by the management varies from case to case (*transmitting to the employees via coordinating heads who further communicate it to their subordinated heads, who further communicate it to the employees; or transmitting the information to a person who transmits it further to his/her colleagues; or communicating in meetings, or various ways of transmitting information depending on the department*). Communication of general interest information and discussion of problems in meetings very rarely happens and it is inefficient, Informative notes are not really made, many central library employees only hear accidentally about the library's future projects; at the branches the sources are more numerous, firstly the hierarchical superior, then the electronic mail, chance, or the Informative bulletin. While many people at the branches say that "transparency" characterizes the decisions made in the department or that it is a partially appropriate concept, in the central library "transparency" is not an appropriate concept or only a partially appropriate one for many respondents, although it seems not to characterize the decisions of the respondents' departments. For 15 % in the central library and 19 % at the branches transparency is a desideratum of the management, and 7 % in the central library and 13 % at the branches consider that top decisions are characterized by transparency. The Informative bulletin is quite widely read, the interest is probably also due to the kind of information it offers, and the Intranet is also occasionally accessed despite of often outdated pieces of information. All respondents of the management agree that the Intranet is a good means of informing the employees about various professional issues, although it would be of their competence to keep it updated.

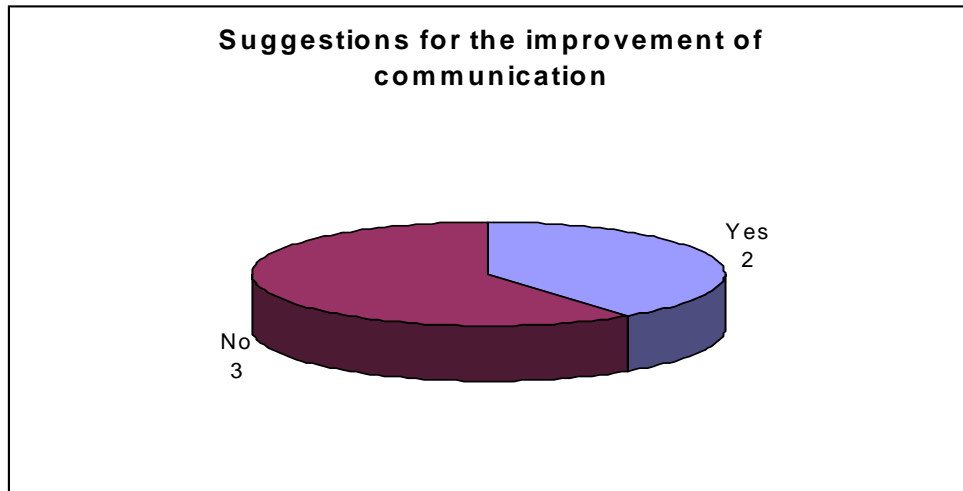
The answers given on the questions regarding the ways and means of communicating information and decisions leave the impression that these means are not used efficiently, and there are no stable rules of transmitting information and controlling its reception by the employees. Under these circumstances it is only natural that there is discontentment and suspicion among the employees; however, it is even more problematic that the lack of organization in what regards information transmission impedes the good functioning of the work in the library and the working relations, although not very great effort is needed to make communication better. The information on decisions and projected changes, on the conditions of promotion and rewarding, on the various aspects of professional life via regular Informative notes accessible to all the employees, the periodical organization of professional meeting where the employees are equally informed and have the chance to discuss the work problems they have to face, the permanent updating of the Intranet and the establishment and observance of procedures of communicating management decisions are all solutions that might come in handy for the management, and could have a positive impact on all levels of communication.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION

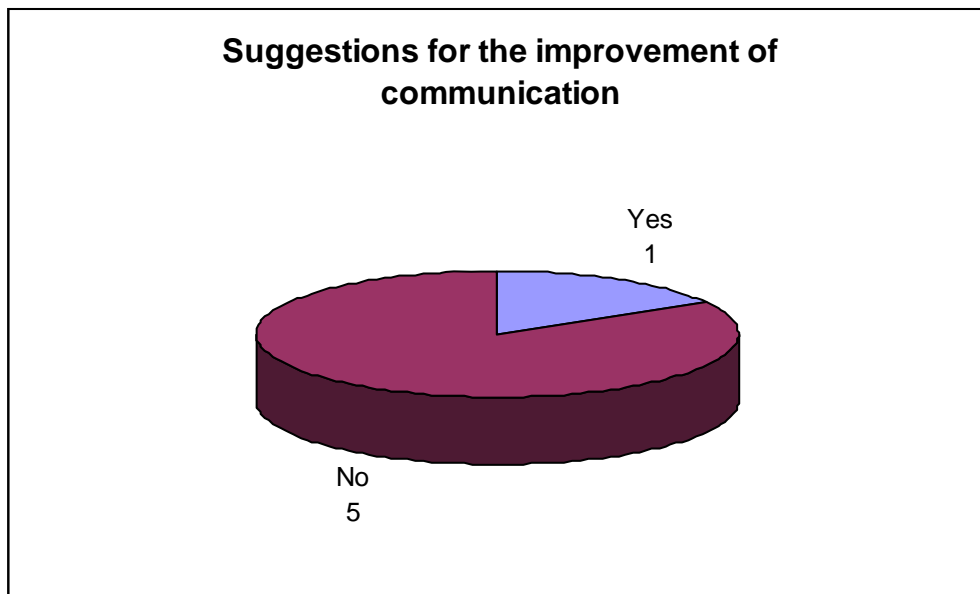
22 % of the central library respondents and 25 % of the branch library respondents have made suggestions for the improvement of communication, as shown below:

Suggestions for the improvement of communication	Central	library	Branch	library
	employees Frequency	Percent	employees Frequency	Percent
Yes	18	21,7	17	25,0
No	64	77,1	51	75,0
Total	82	98,8	68	100,0
Non-asnwrs	1	1,2		
Total	83	100,0		

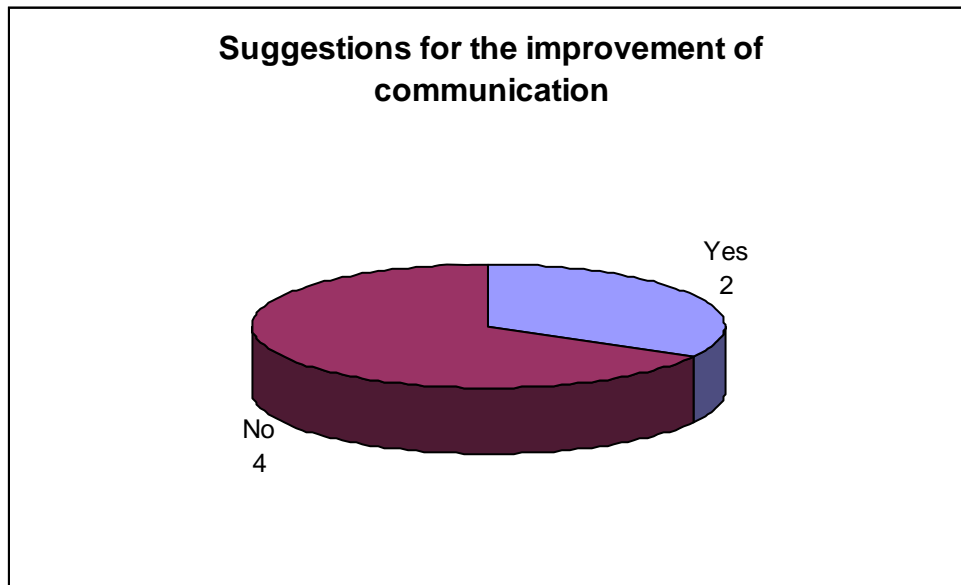
Central library



Branch libraries



Management



Suggestions for the improvement of communication

Suggestions made by the members of superior management:

6.
 4. *formation of working teams on professional matters / problems, meeting on a periodical basis;*
 5. *periodical working meetings on all levels of management;*
 6. *written communication of decisions of the superior management, posted on the Intranet;*
3.
 7. *each employee's understanding of the notion of communication;*
 8. *materials accessible on the Intranet;*
 9. *more seriousness and involvement in professional matters;*
 10. *discouraging the "jumping" of normal stages of communication and especially of the deficient methods (communication in groups);*

Suggestions made by central library employees

79

- *Communication, in my opinion, is achieved. The deficiencies are connected to pride and certain aspects imposed by force. This could be escaped by participating in trainings on communication, organized by scholars in psychology; this is only possible with funding of course. Such lectures could open new horizons for those who are too proud and think that "only my opinion is the right one", and also give self-confidence for those who, for various reasons, do not dare express their opinion. This is a long-time investment, but it yields results.*

- 77
- *establishing the objectives at the beginning of each year;*
 - *discussions in meetings and individual discussions with the heads, in which they motivate or communicate their expectations of each employee, or motivate the rewarding system;*
- 75
- *Mailboxes for each employee. Thus each employee could communicate more efficiently with the other departments, especially if he/she would like to keep his/her anonymity in a comment. Also, there could be fliers posted with information regarding certain departments only, making it unnecessary to access the “announcements” lists, which regards all employees.*
- 74
- *Why would I make any suggestions? They wouldn't be taken into consideration anyway...*
- 59
- *They should speak more often with the employees. I am convinced that our institution possesses a well-trained and valuable human potential, which could and would do more, but lacks motivation, encouragement, and perhaps nobody asks for their opinion (they are not important enough). Also, a more trustful climate should be created, meaning that the employees should have the courage to speak their minds, to express their opinions and ideas. There might be ideas, opinions, and voices, which get lost somewhere, regretfully, because they are not listened to. An opinion or idea exposed is not an offence to anybody.*
- 56
- *the Philobiblon workshops are ways of communication exploited to only a very small degree*
- 54
- *work reunions*
- 51
- *I think the only way of communication not exploited enough is the personal one.*
- 33
- *A higher level of professionalism for the staff, and a higher degree of availability of the employees for the users – kindness and concrete solutions offered for the problems met by the users.*
- 32
- *Useless*
- 31
- *Transparency. The salaries and rewards should not be confidential, since this is a state institution, and the salaries are given by points, after an individual assessment (if you fulfil certain requirements, you get a certain salary, so this should not be any secret. It is only at private firms that the patron has the right to divide the retribution as he wishes, and put up with the consequences. Also, for the granting of rewards, certain granting criteria should be respected, made public previously, and if you fit the criteria, you get the reward, if not, then at least you know why you were left out, but at least they should announce that such rewards are granted to certain persons only, if everything is secret, the feeling of “arrangement” appears.*

- 24
- Any change of the traditional pattern of how activities are made is accepted with much difficulty – I mean the serving of publications by couriers to reading rooms I–III.
- 22
- The communication between coordinating heads and their subordinated employees should be improved. Information from the top reach down on other ways that they should, and with the “inherent” additions of deficient communication!
 - It would be useful to reintroduce annual meetings in the departments or even in the whole library, for several reasons: - all the employees would know the organizational structure of the library, as well as the problems and/or achievements of all departments;
 - Meeting the new employees and knowing about the projects of each department or the library;
 - Recognizing the colleagues’ professional merits, promoting their scientific works or projects completed (reorganization of a new reading room, a new library, etc.)
 - Identifying the common problems of several departments and finding efficient solutions, which can be applied everywhere (e.g. cataloguing, over schedule program, digitization, open access shelf organization, etc.)
 - Recognizing the necessity of drawing up an annual library activity report, critical, projective, strategic, etc.
- 14
- I am not important enough to make suggestions that would be taken into account
- 12
- at the next employments emphasis should be put on the communicativeness of the persons
- 7
- On-line information in a well-defined space
 - More receptiveness to the problems of the people around us

Suggestions made by branch library employees

- 4
- regular working reunions
 - using the “announcements” list for all problems
- 12
- trimestrial meetings with the hierarchical superior and the branch library coordinating head; the complete reading of personal activity reports.
- 13
- Meetings in the department at least once in three months. The situations presented in the library report should be relevant, or at least read and taken into consideration.
- 49
- Between the branch libraries and the central library
- 51

- *Transparency and impartiality*
- 53
- *By the organization of work meetings*
- 54
- *Meetings between librarians at the branches and professors, and then communicating the results to the central library (especially on the bibliographies).*

The suggestions made are grouped around 4 tendencies, one predominant – concrete suggestions of measures to be taken in order to insure a good informational flux; observations on the uselessness of making suggestions (that people don't make suggestions because it is useless anyway), which is quite telling on the quality of communication, since distrustfulness is present among the employees (this was also observed when the questionnaires were applied, some people refused to fill them out or avoided certain answers). Another category is in fact not suggestions but observations, or they are not to the point, and finally there are a few somewhat fantastic suggestions as well, such as the encouragement of anonymity for a better communication, or a special training in the field of communication.

For sake of concision, we note the following suggestions:

- *the establishment of objectives at the beginning of each year (to see at the end what has been achieved, and to know during the year what to do)*
- *putting individual potential to better use – motivation and stimulation of the employees, taking into consideration their opinion, more attention of the superior to each individual employee*
- *organization of work meetings*
- *improvement of communication between coordinating heads and their subordinated department heads*
- *more transparency*
- *encouragement of participating in reunions on professional matters (Philobiblon workshops)*
- *written communication of general interest information*
- *drawing up an annual library activity report, critical and projective, strategic*
- *on-line information*
- *meetings between branch librarians and professors*

ATTACHMENTS

Central library questionnaire

Dear colleagues, the Office of Projects and Service Promotion conducts a study on communication in our institution, with the purpose of improving the flux of information and working relations. Therefore we ask you to answer the following questions. As our intention is to gain a comprehensive image on the situation, we are not interested in the identity of the respondents. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous, and will be statistically analyzed. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How do you assess the efficiency of communication regarding professional problems in the Central University Library? (choose only one answer)

Up-down communication (from heads to employees) is:

- ☐ very good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

Down-up communication (from employees to heads) is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

The communication in my department is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

The communication between the departments is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

2. If you made any suggestion to your hierarchical superior about the library activity, what was the result : (choose only one answer)

- ☐ the suggestion was considered good and applied
☐ the suggestion was considered good but wasn't applied
☐ the suggestion wasn't considered good
☐ I received no answer

3. If you made no suggestions to your hierarchical superior, why? (choose only one answer)

- ☐ you are relatively satisfied with the present state of things
☐ you think that your superior will not be receptive to suggestions
☐ other reason, which:

4. If you have a problem to solve or a discontentment connected to work that could be solved by the superiors, you prefer: *(choose only one answer)*

- ☐ to discuss it with your hierarchical superior hoping for a solution
- ☐ to discuss with the deputy manager with attributions in that particular field
- ☐ to discuss it with the general manager
- ☐ you accept the situation as it is
- ☐ other answer:

5. In your opinion what would be the recommended way that the employees of an institution find out the management decisions regarding them (directly or indirectly): *(choose only one answer)*

- a) from the hierarchical superior, personally
- b) from the hierarchical superior in meetings
- c) from the colleagues in the same department
- d) from the colleagues in other departments
- e) from the Informative notes of the management
- f) from other sources, namely:....

6. Which of the above situations describes the reality in our institution (in what way to you usually find out the management decisions that regard you) ?

(choose one of the answers from question no.5)

- a) b) c) d) e) f)

7. Name the departments of the library with which your contacts are:

- most frequent :

- best :

- rarest :

- 1. Library management
- 2. Special collections
- 3. Home loan
- 4. Information
- 5. Documentation
- 6. Accounting
- 7. Human resources
- 8. Branch libraries

- 9. Projects and service promotion
- 10. Bibliographic research (Marino, Multimedia, Reference Rooms, Philobiblon editorial office)
- 11. Reading rooms (Blaga, Psychology, Professors, Periodicals, Researchers)
- 12. Cataloguing and classification
- 13. IT and digitization laboratory
- 14. Collection development and publication registry
- 15. Administrative, technical, and public acquisitions department

8. Name the departments of the library with which you should have contacts:

- more frequently:.....
- better:.....
- rarely or at all:

9. What is the source from which you usually find out about future projects or various changes in the Central University Library:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ hierarchical superior
- ☐ colleagues from the same department
- ☐ colleagues from other departments
- ☐ accidentally
- ☐ the Informative bulletin
- ☐ Intranet
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Other source, namely:

10. Do you think the word “transparency” in the context of the University Library:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ it describes the way top decisions are made
- ☐ it describes the way decisions are made in your department
- ☐ is a desideratum of the management
- ☐ is not appropriate
- ☐ is partially appropriate
- ☐ other opinion, namely:

11. When you need the cooperation or help of your colleagues in the department:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ they are always cooperative
- ☐ usually they are cooperative
- ☐ some of them are cooperative
- ☐ I have difficulties in cooperating with my colleagues
- ☐ I turn first to my hierarchical superior
- ☐ other answer

12. Do you read the Informative Bulletin ?

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes, every issue
- ☐ yes, sometimes
- ☐ no, never

13. You access the Intranet:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ occasionally

☐ never

14. Generally speaking, how do you think the cooperation between departments is:
(choose only one answer)

- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ acceptable
- ☐ deficient
- ☐ very bad
- ☐ other opinion, namely...

15. How do you perceive the communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

16. How do you perceive the communication between superior management and coordinating heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

17. Does your job description correspond to what you actually do at work ? (choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partially

18. What do you think of your job attributions compared to your training and skills: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ too demanding
- ☐ appropriate
- ☐ less demanding
- ☐ other answer, namely:

19. Has your job description been modified in the past year:

- ☐ yes ☐ no

20. If yes, was this done as a result of a discussion with your hierarchical superior?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

21. The working meetings in your department take place:

- ☐ monthly ☐ occasionally, not regularly ☐ other answer:
☐ twice a year ☐ very rarely

22. What do you think is the percentage that the working meetings you participated in solved the concrete problems at work :

- ☐ under 50 % ☐ over 50% ☐ over 90%

23. Do you think your superiors generally treat you equally with your colleagues?
(choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ other opinion

24. Do you wish to make suggestions for the improvement of communication in the library? (unexploited or insufficiently exploited ways of communication or other suggestions on communication):
.....

Thank you for your cooperation!

Branch libraries questionnaire

Dear colleagues, the Office of Projects and Service Promotion conducts a study on communication in our institution, with the purpose of improving the flux of information and working relations. Therefore we ask you to answer the following questions. As our intention is to gain a comprehensive image on the situation, we are not interested in the identity of the respondents. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous, and will be statistically analyzed. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How do you assess the efficiency of communication regarding professional problems in the Central University Library? (*choose only one answer*)

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☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

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The communication in my department is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

The communication between the departments is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

2. If you made any suggestion to your hierarchical superior about the library activity, what was the result : (*choose only one answer*)

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☐ the suggestion was considered good but wasn't applied
☐ the suggestion wasn't considered good
☐ I received no answer

3. If you made no suggestions to your hierarchical superior, why? (*choose only one answer*)

- ☐ you are relatively satisfied with the present state of things

- ☐ you think that your superior will not be receptive to suggestions
- ☐ other reason, which:

4. If you have a problem to solve or a discontentment connected to work that could be solved by the superiors, you prefer: *(choose only one answer)*

- ☐ to discuss it with your hierarchical superior hoping for a solution
- ☐ to discuss with the deputy manager with attributions in that particular field
- ☐ to discuss it with the general manager
- ☐ you accept the situation as it is
- ☐ other answer:

5. In your opinion what would be the recommended way that the employees of an institution find out the management decisions regarding them (directly or indirectly): *(choose only one answer)*

- g) from the hierarchical superior, personally
- h) from the hierarchical superior in meetings
- i) from the colleagues in the same department
- j) from the colleagues in other departments
- k) from the Informative notes of the management
- l) from other sources, namely:....

6. Which of the above situations describes the reality in our institution (in what way to you usually find out the management decisions that regard you) ?

(choose one of the answers from question no.5)

- a) b) c) d) e) f)

7. Name the departments of the library with which your contacts are:

- **most frequent** :

- **best** :

- **rarest** :

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Library management | 9. Projects and service promotion |
| 2. Special collections | 10. Bibliographic research (Marino, Multimedia, Reference Rooms, Philobiblon editorial office) |
| 3. Home loan | 11. Reading rooms (Blaga, Psychology, Professors, Periodicals, Researchers) |
| 4. Information | 12. Cataloguing and classification |
| 5. Documentation | 13. IT and digitization laboratory |
| 6. Accounting | 14. Collection development and publication registry |
| 7. Human resources | 15. Administrative, technical, and public acquisitions department |
| 8. Branch libraries | |

8. Name the departments of the library with which you should have contacts:

- **more frequently**:.....

- better:.....

- rarely or at all:

9. What is the source from which you usually find out about future projects or various changes in the Central University Library:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ hierarchical superior
- ☐ colleagues from the same department
- ☐ colleagues from other departments
- ☐ accidentally
- ☐ the Informative bulletin
- ☐ Intranet
- ☐ E-mail
- ☐ Other source, namely:

10. Do you think the word “transparency” in the context of the University Library:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ it describes the way top decisions are made
- ☐ it describes the way decisions are made in your department
- ☐ is a desideratum of the management
- ☐ is not appropriate
- ☐ is partially appropriate
- ☐ other opinion, namely:

11. When you need the cooperation or help of your colleagues in the department:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ they are always cooperative
- ☐ usually they are cooperative
- ☐ some of them are cooperative
- ☐ I have difficulties in cooperating with my colleagues
- ☐ I turn first to my hierarchical superior
- ☐ other answer

12. Do you read the Informative Bulletin ?

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes, every issue
- ☐ yes, sometimes
- ☐ no, never

13. You access the Intranet:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ never

14. Generally speaking, how do you think the cooperation between departments is:
(choose only one answer)

- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ acceptable
- ☐ deficient
- ☐ very bad
- ☐ other opinion, namely...

15. How do you perceive the communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

16. How do you perceive the communication between superior management and coordinating heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

17. Does your job description correspond to what you actually do at work ? (choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ partially

18. What do you think of your job attributions compared to your training and skills: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ too demanding
- ☐ appropriate
- ☐ less demanding
- ☐ other answer, namely:

19. Has your job description been modified in the past year:

- ☐ yes ☐ no

20. If yes, was this done as a result of a discussion with your hierarchical superior?

- ☐ yes ☐ no

21. The working meetings in your department take place:

- ☐ monthly ☐ occasionally, not regularly ☐ other answer:
☐ twice a year ☐ very rarely

22. What do you think is the percentage that the working meetings you participated in solved the concrete problems at work :

- ☐ under 50 % ☐ over 50% ☐ over 90%

23. Do you think your superiors generally treat you equally with your colleagues?
(choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ other opinion

24. Can you state that the Central Library supports you in solving the problems of the branch library you work at?

- ☐ usually yes
- ☐ only occasionally
- ☐ we usually don't feel supported

25. Do you wish to make suggestions for the improvement of communication in the library? (unexploited or insufficiently exploited ways of communication or other suggestions on communication):

.....

Thank you for your cooperation!

Superior management questionnaire

The *Office of Projects and Service Promotion* conducts a study on communication in our institution, with the purpose of improving the flux of information and working relations. Therefore we ask you to answer the following questions. As our intention is to gain a comprehensive image on the situation, we are not interested in the identity of the respondents. Your answers will be confidential and anonymous, and will be statistically analyzed. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How do you assess the efficiency of communication regarding professional problems in the Central University Library? (choose only one answer)

Up-down communication (from heads to employees) is:

- ☐ very good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
- ☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

Down-up communication (from employees to heads) is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
- ☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

The communication between the departments is:

- ☐ very good ☐ good ☐ acceptable ☐ deficient
- ☐ inefficient ☐ other opinion, which...

2. In your opinion what would be the recommended way that the employees of an institution find out the management decisions regarding them (directly or indirectly): (choose only one answer)

- a) from the hierarchical superior, personally
- b) from the hierarchical superior in meetings
- c) from the colleagues in the same department
- d) from the colleagues in other departments

- e) from the Informative notes of the management
- f) from other sources, namely:....

3. Which of the above situations describes the reality in our institution (in what way to you usually find out the management decisions that regard you) ?

(choose one of the answers from question no.5)

- a) b) c) d) e) f) g) I don't know

4. What is the way of communicating decisions usually applied by the superior management: *(choose only one answer)*

- ☐ the coordinating heads transmit the information to department and office heads, who transmit it to the employees
- ☐ the coordinating heads transmit the decisions to some employees, who transmit it to their colleagues
- ☐ decisions are transmitted to the employees in regular informative meetings
- ☐ other way, which :

5. Is there a stable procedure of transmitting superior management decisions to the employees? *(choose only one answer)*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

6. Do you think the word “transparency” in the context of the University Library:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ it describes the way top decisions are made
- ☐ it describes the way decisions are made in your department
- ☐ is a desideratum of the management
- ☐ is not appropriate
- ☐ is partially appropriate
- ☐ other opinion, namely:

7. Do you read the Informative Bulletin ?

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes, every issue
- ☐ yes, sometimes
- ☐ no, never

8. You access the Intranet:

(choose only one answer)

- ☐ weekly
- ☐ monthly
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ never

9. Do you think the Intranet is a good way of informing all employees about various issues of professional interest? *(choose only one answer)*

- ☐ yes ☐ no

10. If not, why?.....

11. Generally speaking, how do you think the cooperation between departments is:
(choose only one answer)

- ☐ very good
- ☐ good
- ☐ acceptable
- ☐ deficient
- ☐ very bad
- ☐ other opinion, namely...

12. How do you perceive the communication between coordinating heads and department and office heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

13. How do you perceive the communication between superior management and coordinating heads: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ good ☐ deficient ☐ bad ☐ I don't know how they communicate

14. Work meetings with the participation of department and office heads, managers, and coordinating heads take place: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ monthly ☐ occasionally, not regularly ☐ other answer:
- ☐ twice a year ☐ very rarely

15. What do you think is the percentage that the working meetings you participated in solved the concrete problems at work :

- ☐ under 50 % ☐ over 50% ☐ over 90%

16. Do you think the employees in their majority are satisfied with the communication with their superiors: (choose only one answer)

- ☐ yes, most of them are satisfied
- ☐ no, they are not satisfied
- ☐ such a thing isn't possible
- ☐ I don't know if they are satisfied

17. Do you wish to make suggestions for the improvement of communication in the library? (unexploited or insufficiently exploited ways of communication or other suggestions on communication):

.....

Thank you for your cooperation!