Chapter 03

Three Different Perspectives on Organizational Communication

Theoretical Perspectives for Understanding Organizational Communication

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Chapter 3: Introduction

Three Different Perspectives on Organizational Communication

Distinguishing among the Functional approach, the Meaning-centered approach, and the Social psychological perspective identifies three perspectives that can be applied to organizational communication. The Functional approach views organizations as systems of communication, focusing on how communication helps organizations achieve their goals. The Meaning-centered approach emphasizes the role of language and meaning in organizational communication, viewing organizations as communities of meaning. The Social psychological approach considers the role of social interactions and relationships in organizational communication, viewing organizations as social systems.

Classical Theories of Organizational Communication

Classical theories of organizational communication have evolved over time, with different perspectives emerging to explain how communication occurs within organizations. Some early perspectives include the functional approach, the meaning-centered perspective, and the social psychological approach. These perspectives differ in their emphasis on the role of communication in organizational functioning.

Functional Approach

The functional approach to organizational communication focuses on the role of communication in achieving organizational goals. According to this perspective, communication is a means to an end and is used to achieve specific objectives. The functional approach emphasizes the efficiency and effectiveness of communication in organizations, with the goal of maximizing efficiency and effectiveness.

Meaning-Centered Perspective

The meaning-centered perspective on organizational communication emphasizes the role of language and meaning in organizational communication. This perspective views organizations as communities of meaning, where communication is a means of creating shared understanding and meaning. The meaning-centered perspective highlights the importance of communication in creating shared meaning and understanding among members of an organization.

Social Psychological Approach

The social psychological approach to organizational communication focuses on the role of social interactions and relationships in organizational communication. This perspective views organizations as social systems, where communication is a means of maintaining and reinforcing social relationships. The social psychological approach emphasizes the importance of communication in maintaining social cohesion and interpersonal relationships within organizations.

Current Perspectives

Current perspectives on organizational communication include the interpretive-symbiotic approach, the critical perspective, and the systemic perspective. These perspectives build upon earlier theories and offer new ways of understanding communication within organizations.

Interpretive-Symbiotic Approach

The interpretive-symbiotic approach to organizational communication emphasizes the role of interpretation and symbolism in communication. This perspective views organizations as symbolic systems, where communication is a means of creating and maintaining shared meanings and symbols. The interpretive-symbiotic approach highlights the importance of communication in creating shared symbols and meanings among members of an organization.

Critical Perspective

The critical perspective on organizational communication focuses on the role of power and domination in organizational communication. This perspective views organizations as power systems, where communication is a means of maintaining and reinforcing social power relations. The critical perspective emphasizes the importance of communication in maintaining social power relationships within organizations.

Systemic Perspective

The systemic perspective to organizational communication emphasizes the role of systems theory in understanding communication. This perspective views organizations as systems, where communication is a means of maintaining and reinforcing system dynamics. The systemic perspective highlights the importance of communication in maintaining system stability and functioning.

Future Directions

Future directions for research on organizational communication include the exploration of new perspectives and the integration of existing perspectives. Researchers are encouraged to explore new ways of understanding communication within organizations and to integrate findings from different perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of communication in organizations.

Summary

This chapter introduces three different perspectives on organizational communication: the functional approach, the meaning-centered perspective, and the social psychological approach. These perspectives differ in their emphasis on the role of communication in organizational functioning. Current perspectives, such as the interpretive-symbiotic approach, the critical perspective, and the systemic perspective, build upon earlier theories and offer new ways of understanding communication within organizations. Future research on organizational communication should explore new perspectives and integrate findings from different perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of communication in organizations.