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## Determinants of interpersonal communication on the example of a selected organization

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** The objective of the publication is to present the results of the research that casts new light on the issue of communication in the organisation. The research is intended to fill another gap in terms of recommendations for the development of communication competences of managers of the organisation with specific characteristics.

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** The research raised the issue of the interpersonal communication process in the surveyed organisation. A survey method was used as the main research method. The survey was anonymous and pen-and-paper personal interview.

**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** The first part of the paper presents the terminology of interpersonal communication in the organisation as a theoretical basis for research. Then, the results of own research were reviewed together with a critical analysis based on the adopted issues. The paper concludes with key conclusions and recommendations.

**RESEARCH RESULTS:** The results of the research showed that, although appropriate means of communication are used in the organisation and employees show a high level of satisfaction with interpersonal communication, there are areas where changes need to be made.

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### **CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The analysis of the results of the conducted research showed that interpersonal communication plays a key role in shaping the climate of cooperation in the company and determines the desired interpersonal relations. The practical implications of the conducted research are, above all, the need for continuous development of communication competences of managers. The organisation of training to help shape the communication competences of the organisation's employees. The appreciation by managers of the importance of the role of interpersonal communication in the organisation, which positively influences the effectiveness of task performance.

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### **KEYWORDS:**

communication competences, communication management,  
internal communication, interpersonal communication,  
manager competences

## **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of proper interpersonal communication in the organisation is still underestimated. Its ineffectiveness, according to estimates by Drucker (2011), is the source of approx. 60% of problems in managing the organisation. The communication plays a key role in management, indispensably with planning, organising, controlling, and leading the organisation. The communication is a process, not a state, which implies its complexity, or even multidimensionality. The process of communication is entangled in contexts concerning the individual and the organisation. These include psychosocial, physical, environmental, cultural contexts, etc. Unfortunately, communication in the organisation is often treated by managers in very simple terms. Mainly as a one-sided message, of maximum content, in maximum quantity, to the largest possible number of recipients (Balcerzyk, 2019).

It should be noted that the issue of communication and interpersonal relations in the organisation is important because of the role it plays in shaping relations between the employees themselves in a group or work team, but also relations between employees and superiors. Thus, the sphere of an employee's functioning in the organisation concerning communication is extremely important, as it builds

the culture of the organisation and its atmosphere (Balcerzyk, 2017, p. 156). The literature on the subject also emphasises the importance of effective interpersonal communication in influencing the decision-making process and trust (Jakubowska & Grabowska-Powaga, 2015, p. 320), motivating the employee, increasing the efficiency of employees, the effectiveness of their activities and the overall productivity of the organisation.

The objective of the publication is to present the results of the research that casts new light on the issue of communication in the organisation. In this paper, the authors hypothesised that „Interpersonal communication plays a key role in shaping the climate of cooperation in the organisation and determines the desired interpersonal relations“. The research is intended to fill another gap in terms of recommendations for the development of communication competences of managers of the organisation with specific characteristics.

### IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANISATION

The term communication is widely defined in the literature of management sciences, but also in other social sciences. It is interpreted as a process of communication between both individuals and teams, it is distinguished by its focus on the exchange of information, thoughts and ideas, while the means and levels used in it cause various effects (Wilsz, 2009, p. 404). A similar definition is proposed by Nęcki (2000, p. 98), who defines interpersonal communication as the exchange of verbal, vocal, as well as non-verbal signals to achieve a better level of cooperation.

Morreale, Spitzberg, Barge (2015) in their reflections on communication cite a definition that captures this concept as a process of organising messages and means of communication in order to create meaning. If we consider communication in the organisation, the above definition is particularly important, for example, in the process of information management.

The interpersonal communication can be defined as the process of creating unique, peculiar meanings shared by a group of people (Griffin, 2003, p. 72). It is a constant communication of information in

a verbal and non-verbal way between the sender and the addressee, during which they create and change messages and influence each other, with the aim of defining the actual situation together. Moreover, the interpersonal communication maintains bonds between people and teams and contributes to the flourishing of humanity. This process has the most significant impact on the quality of the relations between the manager and the subordinate, because it takes into account the personality and goals of people, significantly enabling the management of human resources, eliminating disputes, and improving the atmosphere in the organisation.

In the organisation, there is internal communication, which will be analysed in this publication, and external communication. The external communication refers to the communication management strategy that the organisation uses to communicate messages to the general public. The internal communication aims at communicating relevant messages within the organisation's structure. The effective internal communication will certainly result in the integration of the team working in a harmonious employee-employer relation, increasing work motivation. In addition, it gives all actors an opportunity to get to know each other, learn about the goals of the organisation, and allows to actively participate in all activities within the organisation by identifying with it, which ultimately results in more effective work.

When writing about communication in the organisation, it is worth emphasising the importance of a properly planned communication system that:

- enables the improvement of interpersonal relations;
- increases the effectiveness of their work;
- increases overall motivation to work;
- increases employee involvement;
- increases the level of understanding between superiors and employees;
- increases the loyalty and commitment of the employees to the company;
- builds and strengthens the organisational culture in the minds of the employees;
- influences the acceptance by the employees of the need for change and organisational development (Ludlow, & Panton, 1992; Agarwal, & Garg, 2012).

Communication can be conceptualised as a form of action based on the ability to provide and exchange information, thoughts, and emotions between individuals of groups or teams. Communication is a functional way of psychosocial interaction of people, achieved through symbols and meanings of generalised social reality. In other words, communication plays a fundamental role in achieving individual and organisational goals. The above considerations imply the benefits of effective communication in the organisation. It should therefore be stressed that the strength of the manager's communication skills is crucial to the success of the organisation.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in a company located in Wrocław, whose core business profile is the production of carbon steel, stainless steel, and aluminium products. It also provides services such as joining metal elements (welding), laser cutting, drilling, threading, turning and other product finishing methods. The company has reserved the anonymity.

The aim of the conducted research was to learn about the process of interpersonal communication in the surveyed organisation. To obtain an answer to this issue, the main question was formulated: What is the process of interpersonal communication in the surveyed organisation? To make it more specific, the following research questions were posed:

- Does interpersonal communication influence the atmosphere in the organisation and the quality of the tasks performed?
- Which elements of the communication process are most important?
- How do the employees assess their level of satisfaction with interpersonal communication in the organisation?
- Is training on developing communication competences provided, and how often is it provided?
- What are the communication barriers and what are the biggest communication problems in the organisation?

The research used a survey method as the main research method. Survey questionnaires were used to provide information

on interpersonal relations between employees, as well as their observations on the methods of communication used and their effectiveness. In addition, the opinions of the respondents allowed for the analysis and assessment of the climate among employees while working in the organisation. The surveyed group consisted of the company's employees at the lowest level as well as at management level. The survey was anonymous and pen-and-paper personal interview. The survey was conducted in January 2022. It should be noted that the research results presented in this publication are a fragment of research on the main research question.

The characteristics of the research sample were determined by variables such as the gender of the respondents, age, education, work experience, and position held.

Based on the answers obtained, it can be concluded that the vast majority of the surveyed employees are men (as many as 89%), which may be due to the specificity of the company. A production company of this type usually employs men due to physical predispositions and desired professional qualifications. In contrast, women are a minority of the respondents (only 11% of the surveyed group).

Most of the respondents are employees aged 18–35 (over 83%). Thirty-nine per cent of the respondents are between 18 and 26 years old, while 44% of the surveyed group are employed between 27 and 35 years old. On the other hand, the minority are employees under the age of 18 and over the age of 35 (only 17%). Minors constitute only 6% of the surveyed group, while those employed over the age of 35 constitute 11% of this group. Summing up, the majority of the respondents are young people who are capable of working physically in shifts.

The vast majority of the respondents are employees with vocational (39%) and secondary education (39%). People with higher education constitute only 16% of the surveyed group. In contrast, the fewest employees have primary education (only 6%).

The survey also asked the respondents to provide their work experience in the company. Most of the respondents are people working in the company from one to five years (over 44%). Then, there are employees with work experience of 5 to 10 years (28%), and those working less than a year (22%). A minority are people who have been employed for 11 to 16 years (6%). Summing up, the majority of the

respondents are people with no more than 10 years of work experience in the company.

The respondents were also asked to specify their current position in the company. Based on their indications, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents are lower-level production employees (89%), while only 11% of the respondents hold a managerial position.

Summing up, the majority of the respondents are young men, with vocational and secondary education, working in production positions, with a work experience of up to 10 years. The characteristics of the respondents are in line with the specificity of the company and its expectations towards the employee.

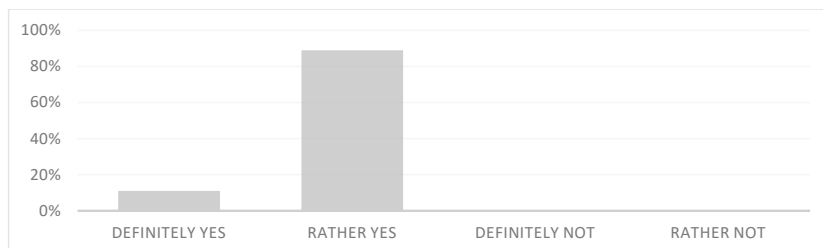
### DETERMINANTS OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IN OWN RESEARCH

The research results presented in this publication are a fragment of research pursuing their main objective, which is to learn about the process of interpersonal communication in the surveyed organisation. The research material is too extensive, so it was decided to present the selected research results. The research results shown below present the results and analysis of the opinions of the respondents/employees of the organisation on key issues.

An important issue of the discussed question is the impact of interpersonal communication in the organisation on the quality of the tasks performed and the atmosphere in the organisation. Hence, the respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, interpersonal communication in the organisation influences the quality of the tasks performed? The respondents had the opportunity to choose one answer from the proposed set of answers. The respondents' opinions on this issue are presented in Fig. 1.

The vast majority of the employees, as many as 89%, are of the opinion that communication rather influences the quality of the tasks performed. The respondents who chose this answer are aware that proper interpersonal relations between the company's employees and the way of communicating with other people probably result in better efficiency at work.

Figure 1. Impact of interpersonal communication in the organisation on the quality of the tasks performed according to the respondents



Source: Own research

In contrast, 11% of the respondents emphasises that interpersonal communication definitely determines the quality of the tasks performed. The belief of these respondents in the impact of communication on work efficiency is great.

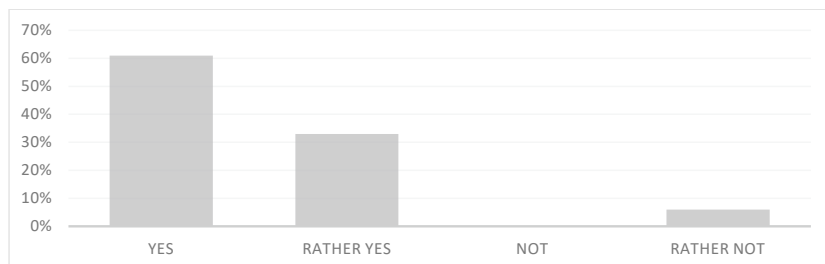
It is worth noting that all respondents chose the answer „definitely yes” or „rather yes”. On the other hand, no one expressed the opinion that interpersonal communication would not influence the quality of the duties performed.

Searching for answers to the issues of the importance of interpersonal communication in the organisation, the respondents were asked to express their opinion on the impact of interpersonal communication in the organisation on the atmosphere in the company and the creation of a climate of cooperation. The results are presented in Figure 2.

The vast majority of the respondents, 61%, were of the opinion that proper communication determines the desired atmosphere in the organisation and can create a positive climate of cooperation. In addition, 33% of the respondents chose the answer „rather yes”, while only 6% of the surveyed group answered „rather not”. The respondents appreciate the correlation between the way of communication and the creation of a climate of cooperation in the organisation. The respondents notice the importance and role of the communication process. What’s more, they indicate this process as a determinant of the atmosphere in the company.



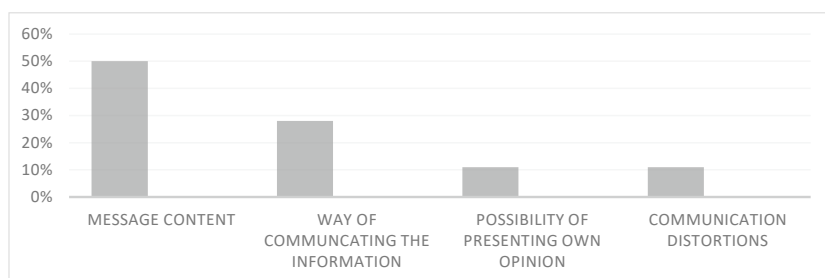
Figure 2. Impact of communication on the atmosphere in the company and the creation of a climate of cooperation



Source: Own research

The communication process between people is a very complex process. When analysing it, many aspects and determinants should be taken into account. For the purposes of the research, those that are clear to the researchers and the specificity of the research sample and research area were selected. Figure 3 presents the results obtained from the respondents' answers on their opinions relating to the importance of individual elements of communication during a conversation.

Figure 3. Importance of the selected elements of communication during a conversation



Source: Own research

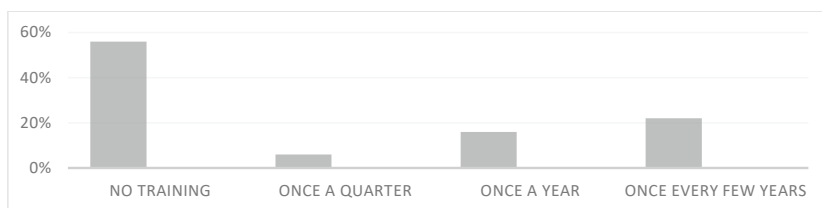
According to half of the respondents, the message content is the most important during a conversation. On the other hand, 28% of the respondents indicated that the most key element during a conversation is the way of communicating the information. In contrast, significantly fewer respondents, 11%, chose the possibility of presenting

own opinion and communication distortions – also only 11%. Summing up, the respondents pay most attention to what information they receive, what the content of the information is, and then the way in which it is communicated. A much smaller percentage of the respondents attach importance to the issue of the possibility of expressing own opinion or the problem of communication distortions.

In the surveyed production company, the most important is the message content, which should contain the necessary details and be communicated in an accessible and clear way.

It seems interesting whether the employer recognises the importance of the interpersonal communication process in its company and whether the employer wants to improve it in some way. If so, training employees to improve awareness and communication competences can be such a proof. Thus, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of training in interpersonal communication held in the company. The results are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Frequency of training in interpersonal communication held in the company



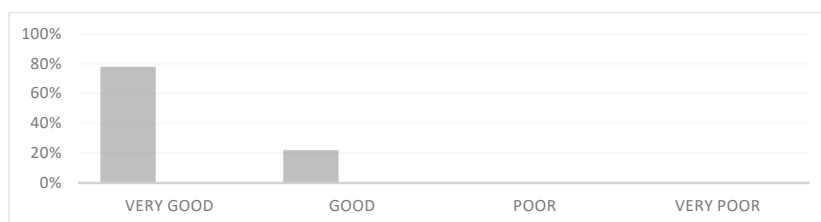
Source: Own research

More than half of the respondents (56%) answered that there is no training in communication. Just 22% of the respondents indicated a response of „once every few years”, while 17% said that such events take place once a year. Only 6% of the respondents stated that such training takes place once a quarter. A broader look at these results reveals an obvious problem, which is, firstly, the deficit of training devoted to interpersonal communication. It should also be noted that it is probable that there was an objective error that could have influenced the respondents' answers, namely the fact that most of the employees have very little work experience. The second problem that

may cause the situation, to which the respondents pay attention, is the time deficit of the production company, not attaching importance to the development of soft skills of its employees.

The communication should take place in an atmosphere of trust and understanding. Such a course of communication facilitates the delegation of powers. Proper two-way communication between management staff and employees has a special role to play here (Balcerzyk, 2017). The question verifying the efficiency of communication in the organisation is to check what relations exist between colleagues, and in particular between subordinates and superiors. Hence, the respondents were asked to assess their relations with their superior on a four-point scale. The data from the respondents' answers are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Relations between employees and superiors

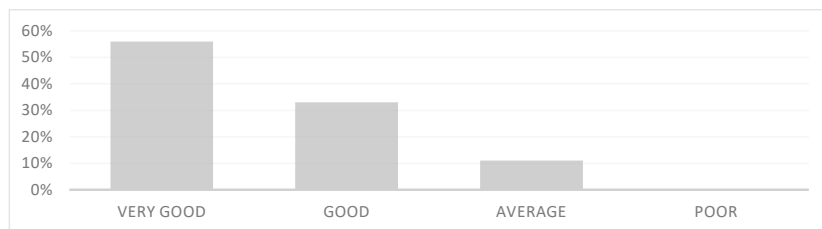


Source: Own research

Most of the respondents (as many as 78%) confirmed that they have very good relations with their superiors. In contrast, 22% of the respondents stated that interpersonal relations with the manager are good. No one assessed the relations with the superior as poor or very poor. Summing up, the majority of the respondents appreciate interpersonal relations due to proper communication with the superior. The mutual exchange of views, attention and directness in a conversation have a positive effect on the attitude of lower-level employees.

The atmosphere in the organisation is largely created by interpersonal relations. The basis for a positive atmosphere is to a large extent efficient interpersonal communication. In the survey, the respondents were asked to specify their relations with colleagues. The data from the answers on this issue are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Respondents' opinion on the assessment of communication with colleagues



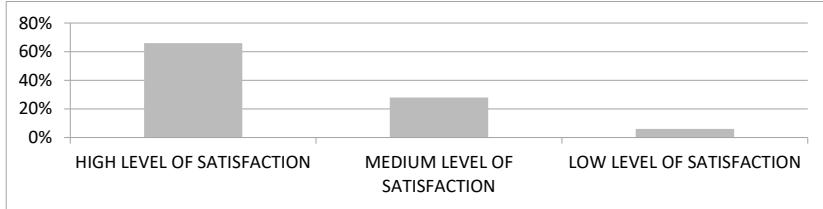
Source: Own research

More than half of the respondents (as many as 56%) said that they have very good relations with employees of the same level. Moreover, 33% of the respondents stated that they have good interpersonal relations with their colleagues, while only 11% stated that these relations are only average. The results allow the conclusion that the employees positively assess interpersonal relations with employees of the same level. The employees of the company often do not have communication problems with their colleagues because of the common denominator, which is, for example, a similar approach to work in the company, or to tasks.

Another issue of interest to the researchers was the level of satisfaction with the company's interpersonal communication. This problem is complemented by the issues of relations with colleagues and superiors, which, among other things, build the atmosphere at work. The results of the respondents' answers are presented in Figure 7.

Most respondents (67%) indicated that their level of satisfaction with interpersonal communication in the organisation is high. In contrast, 27% of the surveyed group said that communication is at a medium level. The fewest respondents marked the answer „low level of satisfaction” (only 6%). The results allow to conclude that the employees mostly respect and are satisfied with the company's communication ways. The level of satisfaction with communication is largely influenced by the choice of communication channels, the division of communication roles in the organisation, the emphasis on the role of the addressee during a conversation or active listening.

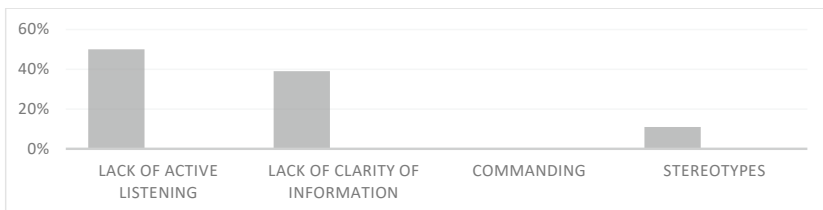
Figure 7. Employees' level of satisfaction with interpersonal communication in the organisation



Source: Own research

In addressing the issue of communication in the organisation, the authors assumed that a diagnosis of the respondents' opinions would help to identify weaknesses in communication. This will allow the managers to point out what needs to be improved, what needs to be worked on in order to improve the communication system in the organisation. For this purpose, the respondents were asked to select the most frequent communication barriers in the organisation. The data from the answers are presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Most frequent communication barriers in the organisation



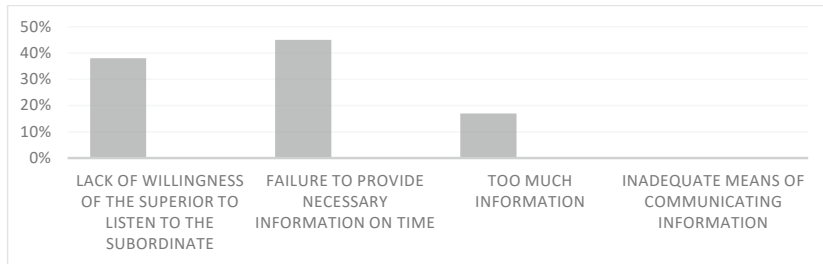
Source: Own research

Half of the respondents considered the lack of active listening to be the biggest communication barrier, indicating its primary role in the communication process. Moreover, 39% of the respondents answered that the most bothering barrier is the lack of clarity of information received. In contrast, 11% of the respondents stated that stereotypes are the most frequent factor disturbing communication. The significant majority of the respondents emphasised the role of active listening, simplicity, and clarity of the message. The clarity

of information, its quality and the ability to listen to the other person are the basic determinants of effective communication.

What issues in terms of interpersonal communication should the organisation work on, according to its employees? This is a key issue for the development of the organisation. The data from the surveys are summarised in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Biggest communication problems in the organisation



Source: Own research

The largest number of the respondents (44%) pointed to the fact that the biggest problem in communication in the organisation is the failure to provide necessary information on time. A slightly smaller percentage, as 39% of the respondents, answered that the most bothering problem is the superior's lack of willingness to listen to a lower-level employee. In turn, 17% of the respondents pointed to the problem of too much information received.

Summing up, although the results of the survey showed that appropriate means of communicating information have been used in the organisation, the employees show a high level of satisfaction with interpersonal communication, there are areas where changes need to be made. The managers should show greater interest and empathy towards lower-level employees and ensure that information is provided on time and that the message content is clear, simple and factual.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, the authors hypothesised that „Interpersonal communication plays a key role in shaping the climate of cooperation in the organisation and determines the desired interpersonal relations“. The conducted research activities dictated by the desire to find answers to the formulated research questions allowed for the presentation of the most important conclusions:

- the vast majority of employees is aware that proper interpersonal relations between the company's employees and the way of communicating with other people result in better efficiency at work;
- a significant proportion of the respondents believe that proper communication creates the desired atmosphere in the organisation and a positive climate of cooperation;
- the respondents pay the greatest attention to what information they receive and how it is communicated;
- there is a deficit of training devoted to communication in the organisation;
- the majority of the respondents are satisfied with their interpersonal relations with their superiors and employees of the same level;
- the employees' level of satisfaction with communication in the company is high;
- the biggest communication barrier in the organisation is the lack of active listening;
- the biggest problem in communication in the surveyed organisation is the failure to provide necessary information on time.

The analysis of the results of the conducted research showed that interpersonal communication plays a key role in shaping the climate of cooperation in the company and determines the desired interpersonal relations. It can be noticed that there is a greater awareness among employees of how to communicate more effectively, but also of what can be improved in this regard.

According to P.F. Drucker (2011), humans have it encoded in their minds that the more information the better. However, if we are suffering from information overload and we do not have any selection mechanisms, then information becomes data, which makes the situation worse. Therefore, a modern manager is obliged not only to

distribute information and assign tasks, but should ensure reliable preparation of the message content, giving it meaning, choosing its communication channel, and its proper reading (Balcerzyk, 2019).

The practical implications of the conducted research are, above all, the need for continuous development of communication competences of managers. The organisation of training to help shape the communication competences of the organisation's employees. The appreciation by managers of the importance of the role of interpersonal communication in the organisation, which positively influences the effectiveness of task performance. It should be noted that due to the limited research area, the conclusions of the research are only a voice that can enrich the discussion in this area. The authors intend to continue research in a wider scope.

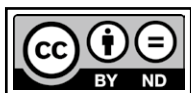
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