MOTIVATING PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS IN A SELECTED DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

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Introduction/background: The process of motivating project team members involves creating the conditions that will increase their commitment to the project, which in turn will translate into the achievement of the set goals. A key element of this process is to recognise the individual needs of each team member and thus provide the right tools and conditions for work. Thanks to an in-depth analysis of the ways in which a project team is motivated in a selected company, it is possible to introduce changes to the current motivation system while ensuring its effective impact on current and future project team members.

Aim of the paper: The aim of the paper was to identify and evaluate ways of motivating the project team in a selected distribution company and to develop recommendations for the use of effective ways of motivation.

Materials and methods: In this paper, a survey was conducted using an online questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first, the information part, contained five metric questions, while the second, the core part, consisted of nineteen closed questions. The respondents were members of the project team at the selected distribution company.

Results and conclusions: The conducted research made it possible to identify ways and sources of motivation available in the analysed company, which in turn contributed to the assessment of the effectiveness of the motivation system. The research also made it possible to develop recommendations for proposed improvements in the way project team members are motivated.

Keywords: project management, project team, motivation, incentive system.

1. Introduction

In today's world, due to the rapidly changing marketplace, companies are trying to meet the expectations of their customers. The changes that occur require organisations to be able to adapt quickly to the prevailing conditions, and also drive organisations to continuously invest in the development of the entire enterprise as well as its resources. No organisation and no team would be formed and exist if it were not for the people working within it. It is the people who

are the key element in the functioning of any organisation and team and it is they who determine the success of the organisation through their skills and commitment. In today's market, companies find it hard to get skilled and loyal employees and even harder to retain them. Therefore, among all management functions, it is motivation that is presented as the most important, but also the most difficult. Companies are constantly looking for ideas on what and how to motivate their employees so that they become even more committed to their work. With the right motivation, it is possible to achieve better results and also to achieve the organisation's goals through the effective implementation of projects.

The aim of the paper was to identify and evaluate ways of motivating the project team in a selected distribution company and to develop recommendations for the use of effective motivation methods. The paper sought answers to the research questions:

1. What are the specific characteristics of the project environment?
2. What are the motivational factors used in project management?
3. What are the ways to motivate project team members in a selected project?
4. What are the motivational sources of team members in the selected project?
5. What are the recommendations for proposed improvements on how to motivate project team members?

The first part of the paper presents general issues related to the motivation process, defines the concept of motivation and describes the leading theories of motivation. Subsequently, on the basis of the literature study, the basic sources, tools and available motivation systems are detailed. The second part of the paper includes an analysis of the motivation system and tools available in the selected company, together with a presentation and discussion of the results of a survey conducted among project team members. The last part of the paper is devoted to conclusions and recommendations from the analyses.

2. Theoretical aspects of employee motivation in project management - selected issues

The chances of success, but also the chances of failure of a project are certainly influenced by a properly selected project team (Kisielnicki, 2011). The essences of a project team, as well as the constant changes taking place in the project environment require managers to have not only knowledge, but also skills and appropriate competencies. In turn, the project team itself should consist of people who bring not only their experiences but also their knowledge and abilities to the job (Klemens, Szewczuk-Stępień, 2018). Correctly selected team members and their working together certainly leads to a better end result, while skilful project team management is necessary at every stage of the project (Prabhakar, 2008).

With effective tools to support motivation, managers are able to use the full potential of their employees, whose work can translate into good company performance. However, motivation alone is not enough, it is still important to motivate the employee himself (Bijańska, Wodarski, 2020). What is the difference between motivating and motivation? R.W. Griffin defines motivating as 'an arrangement of forces that induce people to behave in a certain way' (Griffin, 2020). S. Borkowska defines motivating as the deliberate action and behaviour of employees that reflects their level of commitment and increases performance. (Borkowska, 1985), and Z. Jasinski, believes that motivating is nothing more than influencing employees, in a way that will enable them to achieve their goals, in line with expectations (Mazur, 2013). Motivation, on the other hand, is defined as the willingness to act in order to satisfy one's needs. Thanks to motivation, a person behaves in a specific way that can make it easier for him or her to achieve the desired goal. Therefore, motivation is important for organisations. In addition, it is among one of the most challenging processes that directly affect people's behaviour at work, and thus directly influences the efficiency of their work and the effectiveness of their projects (Sroka, 2017).

With the development of the motivation system, approaches to motivation have distinguished. The first of these, the traditional approach was based mainly on the motivational factor of receiving a salary. Different to the traditional one was the approach from the human relations side, where the assumption was no longer the desire for money, but the desire to be part of the organisation and to influence decisions. Another, more elaborate approach was from the human resources side. Its premise was no longer to supposedly influence decisions, but to actually count on the opinion of subordinates and take their ideas into account. This approach was characterised by putting employees and superiors on the same level (Kisielnicki, 2011). At the turn of many years, approaches to motivation have been constantly changing, with the motivation system now based on three basic theories referred to as content theory, process theory and reinforcement theory (Mazur, 2013). Content theory focuses primarily on the factors that determine what actually motivates people to act. Process theory, on the other hand, focuses on explaining people's behaviour in pursuit of their needs. The last theory, reinforcement theory refers to repetitive human behaviour. This theory can also be referred to as the learning theory, as employees whose behaviour has had a positive effect are bound to replicate those actions in the future, and those whose behaviour has not had the expected benefit will not be repeated in the future. The content-based approach to motivation includes three basic theories; Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the ERG theory and the two-factor theory.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs, identifies a person's basic needs, based on a certain degree of importance. However, before a person strives to satisfy his or her higher-level needs, he or she must have the basic ones provided and satisfied. Maslow classified these needs into five categories called physiological needs, safety, belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation needs (Akpan et al., 2022). The second, slightly different from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is the ERG theory. This theory assumes a division into three categories, called existence needs,

social contact needs and development needs. It also assumes that motivation takes place in a hierarchical manner with the proviso that a person can be motivated simultaneously by several stimuli. In ERG theory, there is a phenomenon called frustration, which occurs when a need is not satisfied. Consequently, there will be a return behind the drive to satisfy the underlying need (Griffin, 2020). On the other hand, the two-factor theory, authored by F. Herzberg, includes two independent factors that influence the level of employee satisfaction, the so-called mental hygiene factors and motivational factors. The motivation process according to this theory consists of two stages. First, appropriate mental hygiene factors should be provided and these will positively influence the level of satisfaction, then the employee should be properly motivated and achieve job satisfaction (Gostkowska-Dźwig et al., 2021).

The process-side approach to motivation distinguishes between expectancy theory, equity theory and goal-setting theory. The first of these assumes that motivation depends on the strength of the desire and then on the results of fulfilling the desire. According to the idea behind the theory, an employee expects the task he or she is performing to meet the requirements set by the organisation, but also expects to receive an adequate reward for performing the task correctly. On the other hand, the theory of justice, authored by J.S. Adams, assumes that each employee expects to receive fair pay and fair rewards by comparing them with other co-workers. A sense of injustice as well as dissatisfaction with the remuneration received arises in employees who do not understand the remuneration and bonus system currently in place in their organisation (Kopertyńska, 2008).

A recent approach to motivation from the reinforcement side is by B. Skinner. Within this theory, four types of reinforcement are specified, i.e.: positive reinforcement; characterised by the receipt of special rewards for correctly performed work, negative reinforcement, characterised by the lack of receipt of a reward, due to an incorrectly performed task, punishment; used to undermine inappropriate and undesirable behaviour, through the application of punishment, and extinction, meaning the weakening of undesirable behaviour by not being noticed by the supervisor. An employee who does not receive a reward perceives for themselves that their behaviour is incorrect and tries not to replicate previous behaviour.

The main sources of motivation are: security, success, respect for values, the need to know the meaning of the activities carried out, as well as openness to new beliefs and the personal predispositions of each employee (Trocki et al., 2003). Further reflections on motivation have distinguished between the basic types of motivation; intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is characterised by behaviour that occurs of one's own volition and is influenced by one's own experiences and beliefs. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, are actions that are imposed in advance. The result of this behaviour can be rewards or also punishments. This division further distinguishes two types of extrinsic motivation; positive and negative motivation. Positive motivation aims to improve the quality of work and increase the possibility of achieving goals, whereas negative motivation can cause feelings of insecurity among employees (Hysa et al., 2020).

The motivation system requires continuous improvement. It is important to know and correctly select such tools that bring out the best in employees in a natural and effective way and that fit perfectly into the character of the organisation. S. Borkowska divided motivation tools into three basic groups: coercive measures, incentive measures and persuasion measures. Coercive measures require an employee to behave in a certain way; they include orders, prohibitions and commands, which are regulated by various legal norms. Different from coercive measures are incentive measures, the idea of which is to encourage the performance of certain activities in exchange for receiving a reward. The motivated person is more willing to perform the assigned tasks because he or she can get something for himself or herself in return. The most well-known incentives include wage measures such as salaries and non-wage measures such as employee benefits, as well as non-economic motivators, which include professional development. The last group of motivators includes persuasion measures, which are closely related to the intrinsic motivation of each employee. The essential element that distinguishes this motivational measure from the others is the absence of the use of both rewards and punishments (Kacprzak-Biernacka et al., 2014).

The creation of a motivational system in an organisation is linked to many factors, both external and internal. There is no single ideal system, and the main factors influencing the shape of the system include the strategy, culture and organisational structure, the size of the company and its financial situation, the specifics of the business and the competitive environment, but above all the personnel potential of the organisation. The success of the organisation and its employees is considered to be the main objective of creating a good motivational system (in relation to a specific organisation) (Dzieńdziora, 2010).

An important element influencing the success of the project implementation is the continuous improvement of the team, which should depend on the evaluation carried out on the individual project participants. Thanks to these evaluations, it is possible to develop the effective functioning of employees in the team. The literature on the subject distinguishes between two types of employee evaluation - formal and informal. Formal appraisal is carried out at fixed periods of time, e.g. when project milestones are reached. Informal appraisal, on the other hand, involves providing verbal feedback to team members on their progress and performance. Such evaluation communicated in the course of project activities is usually face-to-face and ongoing, resulting in the ability to react more quickly to problems encountered or undesirable behaviour (Kisielnicki, 2011).

In modern organisations, managers are responsible for the engagement of team members. This is because they are the ones who work directly with each other and are therefore the ones who have the most knowledge about their employees. It is incumbent on the manager to know what really motivates and increases engagement among employees. With this knowledge, it is the managers who should develop an individualised approach to motivation, which in turn will increase performance at work (Pierścieniak et al., 2013).

3. Data and method

The research subject was a distribution company operating in Poland in the energy sector, employing over ten thousand people. The company has more than 190 distribution facilities, located in all provinces. The main tasks of the project teams established at the company include the development and implementation of projects that enable the effective realisation of the company's strategic objectives. The main objective of the project was to implement a system to support the implementation of the investment process carried out in the company. Both the company's internal resources and the support of an external consultant were used to implement the project. The aim of the study was to identify and evaluate ways of motivating the project team in the selected company and to develop recommendations for the use of effective ways of motivation. In addition, motivational factors and sources available in the surveyed entity were identified. The selection of the research group was chosen purposefully, as the respondents were members of the selected project team in the analysed enterprise. A total of 57 employees from across the country were appointed to participate in the project team, of whom 51 took part in the study. Data was collected using a survey research tool, using an online questionnaire. The survey was conducted in February/March 2023, using the web portal www.forms.office.com and sent directly to the mailboxes of project team members at the selected distribution company. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire, consisting of a total of 24 questions. The first, informational part, contained five metric questions, while the second, core part consisted of nineteen closed questions. The questions were developed on the basis of the literature analysis and with reference to the incentive system in place at the surveyed entity.

Of the total team members, the largest number were employees in the positions of Senior Specialist - 41%, Manager - 33% and Specialist - 16%. The smallest number of employees were employees in the position of Junior Specialist - 10% (Figure 1).
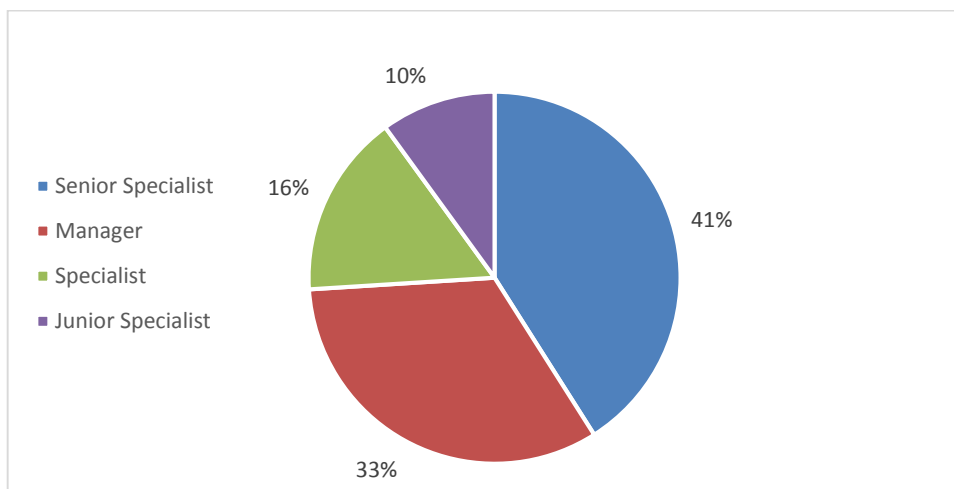

Figure 1. Positions held as at the date of the research.

Source: own study.

The respondents were further divided by age group, as well as by length of seniority in the company and the total number of projects in which they were involved. The largest number of project team members, 55%, were employees who were 36 to 50 years of age, 31% were between 26 and 35 years of age, while the smallest number of employees - 14% - were over 50 years of age, and there was not a single person under 25 in the entire project team (Figure 2).
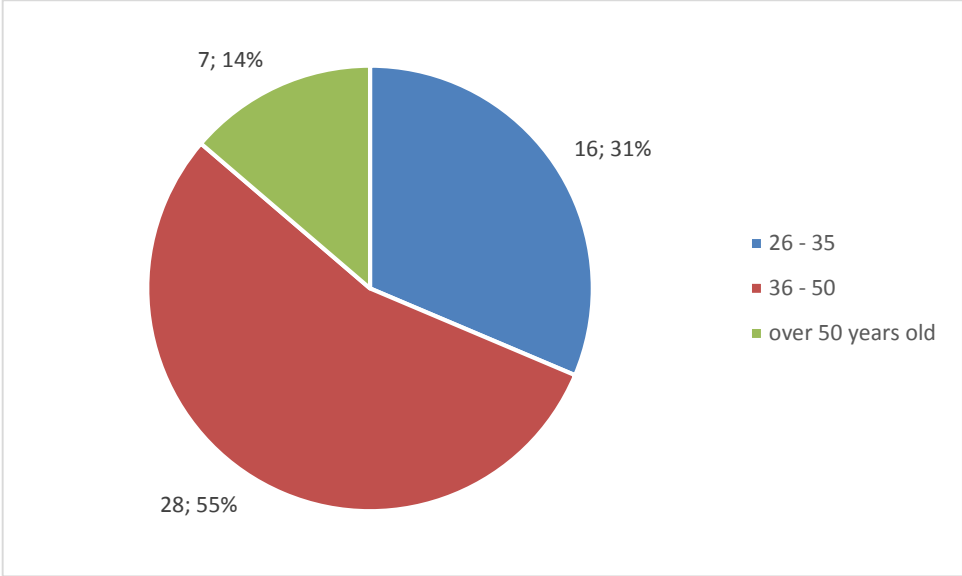
Figure 2. Age of respondents.

Source: own study.

The vast majority - 45% - of the project team members were employees with seniority of 11 to 20 years, followed by 29% of employees with seniority of 3 to 10 years, closely followed by 26% of employees with seniority in the company of more than 20 years. In contrast, there were no employees on the project team with less than 2 years of experience (Figure 3).
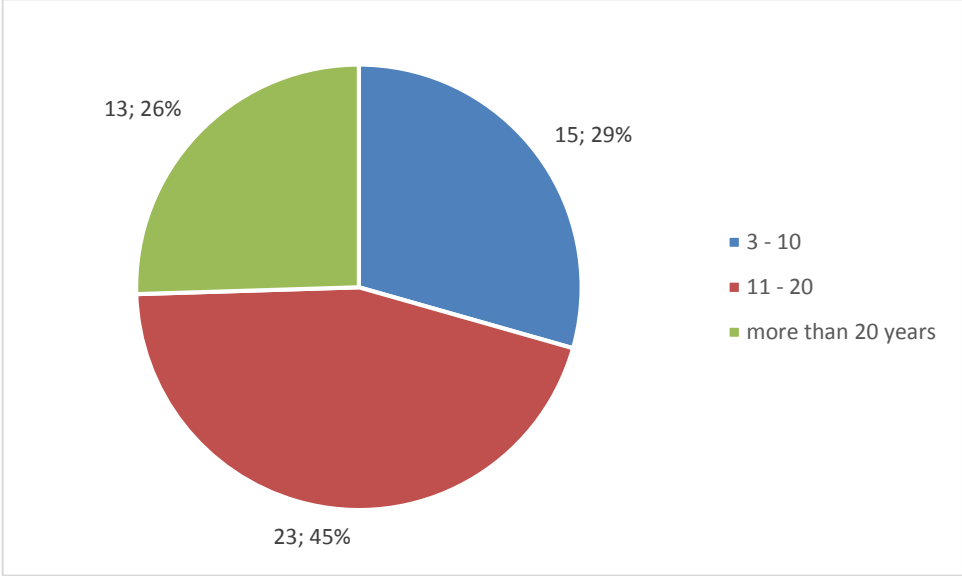
Figure 3. Project team members' seniority.

Source: own study.

Next, 41% of employees declared that they had been involved in between 3 and 5 projects. In contrast, 29% of employees declared that they had participated in less than 2 projects, 24% of employees declared that they had participated in between 6 and 10 projects and only 6% of employees declared that they had participated in more than 10 projects (Figure 4).
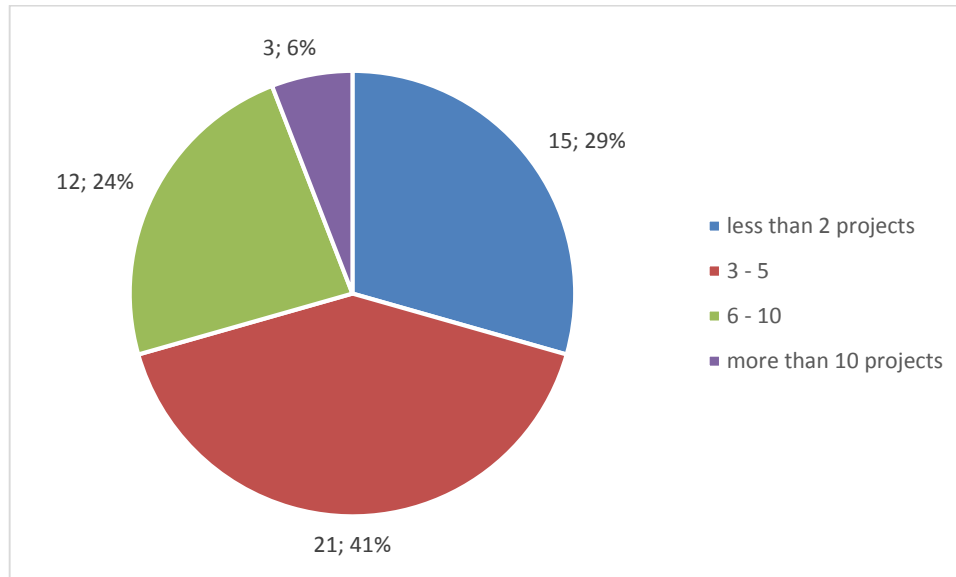

Figure 4. Total number of projects carried out by members of the project team.
Source: own study.

4. Motivation system in project management - results of an empirical study

As a first step, the respondents determined their knowledge of the ways to motivate project team members available in the company and assessed the effectiveness of the motivation system. As many as 98% of the respondents are familiar with the available means of motivation, while 69% of the respondents rated the system as satisfactory. Next, their overall degree of work motivation was determined; 63% of the respondents felt highly motivated to work, while 39% described their degree of motivation as 'medium' and 'low'. The next questions referred directly to their level of satisfaction with their pay; 78% of respondents confirmed that they were satisfied with their pay and just under 22% denied this, however, for 96% of respondents, the level of pay has an impact on their level of commitment to work.

The research carried out, also made it possible to determine which of the motivational factors available in the company have an impact on the level of work motivation. Among the salary motivation factors, the highest influence is salary - 53%, bonuses received - 39% and individual remuneration raises - 35%. In contrast, the least influential are the industry allowance - 12% and the annual award - 16% (Figure 5).
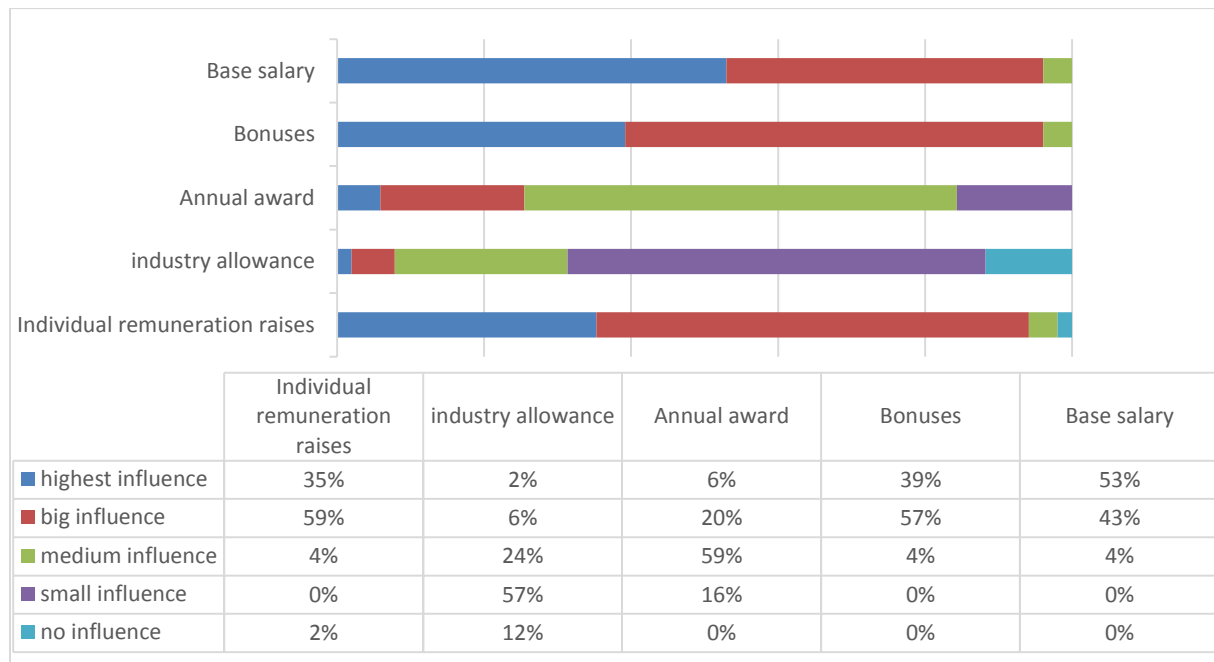
	Individual remuneration raises	industry allowance	Annual award	Bonuses	Base salary
highest influence	35%	2%	6%	39%	53%
big influence	59%	6%	20%	57%	43%
medium influence	4%	24%	59%	4%	4%
small influence	0%	57%	16%	0%	0%
no influence	2%	12%	0%	0%	0%

Figure 5. Salary incentive factors available in the company.

Source: own study.

Among non-salary material motivation factors, the most influential are study funding/participation in training - 33%, as well as the possibility to work remotely/mobile working hours (18%). The available benefits package also has a large impact on the level of motivation - 53% and an individual career path - 59%, while having a company phone/car has no impact on the level of motivation to work (Figure 6).
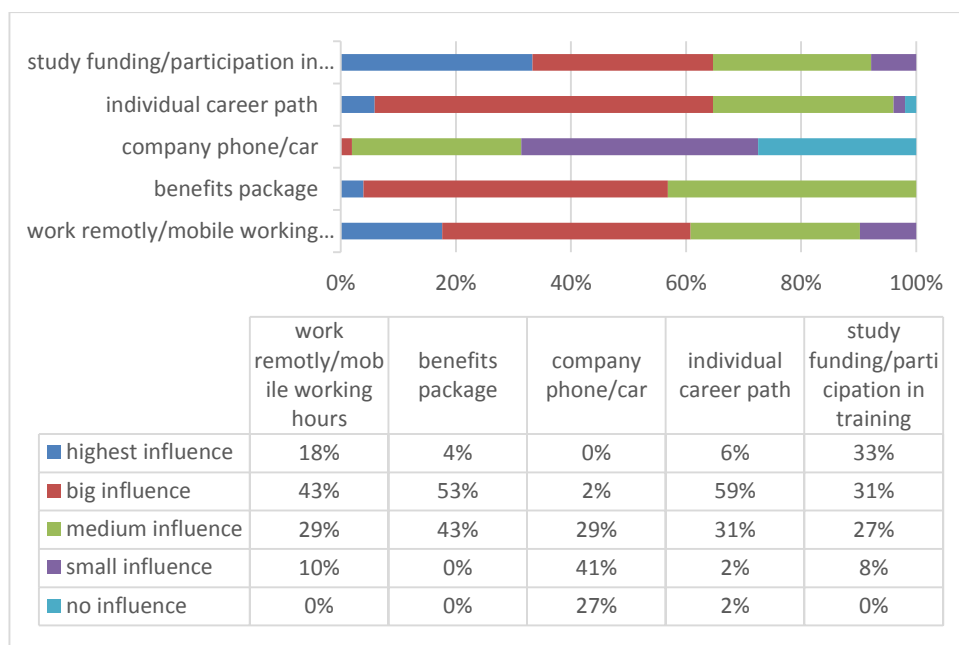

	work remotly/mobile working hours	benefits package	company phone/car	individual career path	study funding/participation in training
highest influence	18%	4%	0%	6%	33%
big influence	43%	53%	2%	59%	31%
medium influence	29%	43%	29%	31%	27%
small influence	10%	0%	41%	2%	8%
no influence	0%	0%	27%	2%	0%

Figure 6. Non-wage material motivation factors available in the company.

Source: own study.

Non-wage intangible factors included: recognition or praise - 69%, good relations with colleagues - 67% promotions - 61%, and atmosphere at work - 55% and gaining new skills and experience - 55%. A small proportion of respondents - 4% indicated that the above factors have little or no impact on their level of motivation at work (Figure 7).
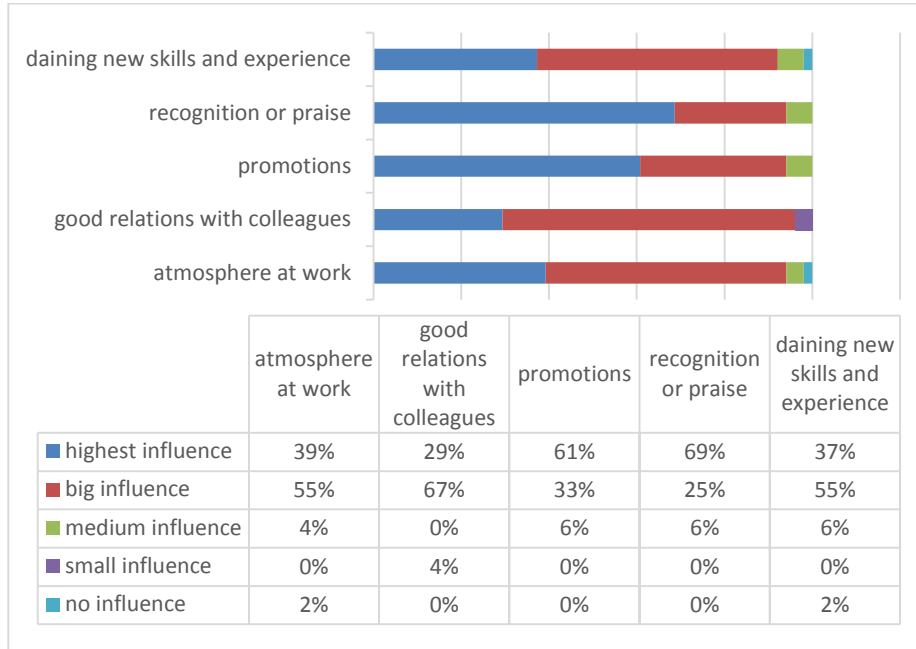

	atmosphere at work	good relations with colleagues	promotions	recognition or praise	daining new skills and experience
■ highest influence	39%	29%	61%	69%	37%
■ big influence	55%	67%	33%	25%	55%
■ medium influence	4%	0%	6%	6%	6%
■ small influence	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
■ no influence	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%

Figure 7. Non-wage intangible motivational factors available in the company.

Source: own study.

Although the analysis shown so far indicates that it is the non-wage intangible motivational factors that have a very strong impact on employees, still more than half of the respondents - 57% - believe that it is the wage factors that are more effective and 43% that non-wage intangible factors are, however, more effective motivational factors. However, it should be noted that none of the individuals confirmed the effectiveness of non-wage tangible factors (Figure 8).
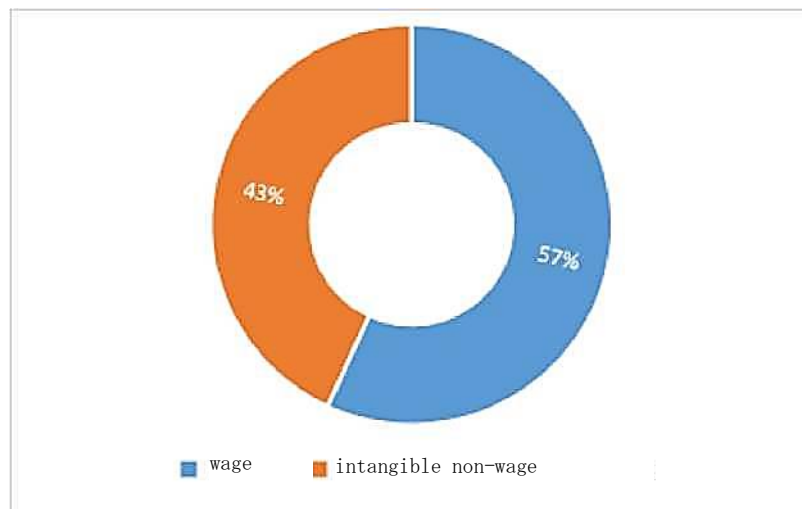

Figure 8. Effectiveness of selected forms of motivation.

Source: own study.

When asked whether employees had the option to refuse to participate in the project team, 63% of the respondents were appointed to the team without the option to refuse, 29% had the option to refuse, but did not use it, and only less than - 8 % could not opt out of the project despite not wanting to participate. This in effect showed that participation in the project team, was a form of distinction, as 88% of the respondents confirmed, and only 12% were of a different opinion (Figure 9). Although 67% of the respondents described the commitment of the members to the team as satisfactory, when asked: in the opinion of the members of the project team, does the available incentive system in the company encourage participation in the projects that are carried out in the company? as many as 74% think that it does not, and only 26% think that it rather does.
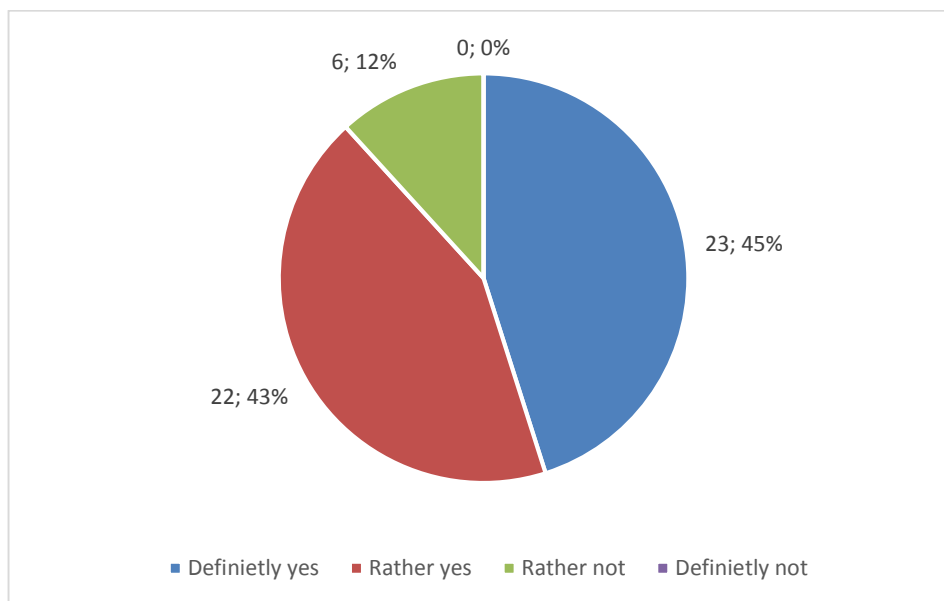

Figure 9.- Distinction resulting from participation in the project team.

Source: own study.

When asked: is the effort put into the success of a project adequately recognised and rewarded by the company?, 81% of the respondents denied this and only 19% said that they were rather well rewarded for the work put into the project, despite the fact that in an earlier question about the effectiveness of the company's incentive system, the answers were rather positive.

Further research focused on the performance evaluation system for project team members. For 84% of the respondents, the method of performance appraisal is rather clearly defined, while for 16% it is not. In contrast, its effectiveness was described by 75% of the respondents as unsatisfactory and 25% as rather satisfactory. Furthermore, 78% of the respondents believe that the developed performance appraisal system for project team members has no impact on increasing the level of commitment to the project, and only for 22% it has an impact.

Finally, respondents addressed the question of whether, in their opinion, the incentive system available in the company had an impact on the end result of the project and whether the project was successful. The result is surprising, with as many as 84% of respondents stating that

the system developed at the company was unlikely to have had an impact on the end result, and yet over 88% of respondents believe that the project was successful (Figure 10).
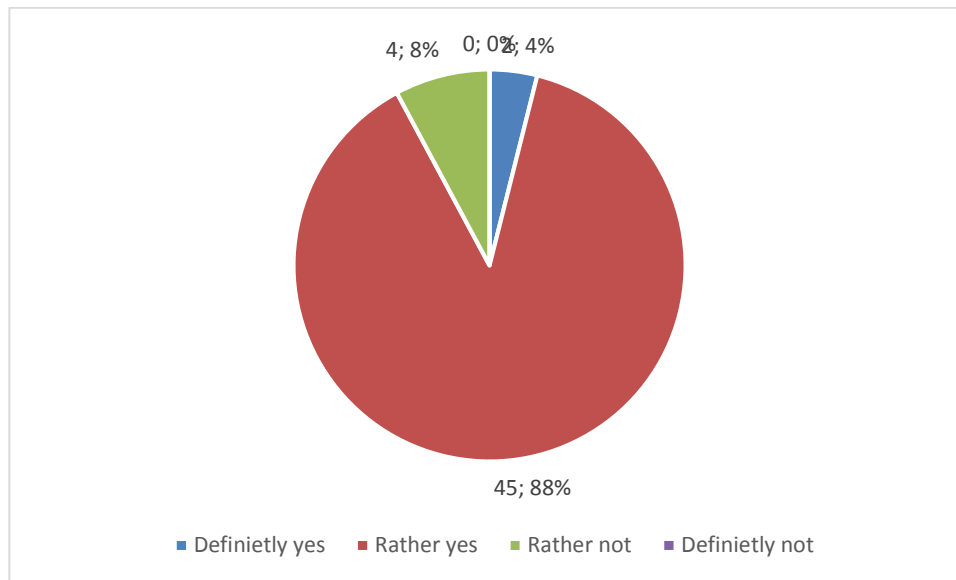

Figure 10. Project success.
Source: own study.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The process of motivating project team members is primarily about creating conditions that will have a significant impact on increasing the level of commitment to the project, which in turn will contribute to achieving the set goals. A key element of this process is to recognise the individual needs of each team member and thus provide the right tools and conditions for work. A key role in the success of a project is played by correctly selected members who have both experience and expertise.

The research carried out showed that employees were invited to participate in the project team, most of whom, held senior specialist positions and had many years of experience in the company, which influenced the effects of their work. These employees, were highly experienced in both their field and knowledgeable about the company's procedures, which in turn allowed them to make decisions and perform their job duties more effectively. Organisations that create a project environment are characterised by specific features, i.e. limited lead time, and limited resources, both human and financial. These characteristics, affect the entire project implementation and require an appropriate approach on the part of the project team. The project environment also enforces the need for full commitment and quality in the execution of the assigned tasks, the individual project members as a whole forming one cohesive team.

Even though the vast majority of members had only been involved in a negligible number of projects and lack of experience in teamwork was a noticeable problem, the level of commitment to the team, was at a satisfactory level, which could be a direct result of their long experience and sense of belonging to the company due to their length of service. The research also showed that the incentive system available in the company is clearly defined and that employees are familiar with the principles and methods of motivation. The use of motivational factors in a team is very important for the success of a project. However, in order to be able to motivate your team effectively, you should first of all know and understand the individual needs of each member in order to best match the motivational factors to their needs. The team leader should get to know both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of his or her employees in order to be able to match the right type of motivation in order to effectively achieve the project goals.

As a result of the research, previous theoretical considerations and analyses have confirmed that among all the motivational measures available in the company, the most effective according to the surveyed respondents are the salary motivational factors, which include the basic salary in the first place and, just behind it, the received bonuses and individual remuneration raises. The majority of employees are also satisfied with their basic salary, which became the reason for describing the motivation system as effective. Satisfaction with the remuneration received also has a positive impact on the overall level of commitment to the job.

In organisations that provide their employees with positive work experiences and appreciate them and enable them to learn new skills, there is a noticeable increase in performance and commitment, which was also confirmed in the research conducted in this study, as members showed that nonmonetary intangible factors were equally important to them, showing that participation in the project was a form of recognition for most of them. Other available non-wage intangible motivational factors such as gaining new skills and experience, promotion, a good atmosphere and relationships between colleagues were also shown as being very important. This was also confirmed against the original theoretical considerations and analyses. The analysis of the data made it possible to evaluate the motivation system in terms of the incentive to participate in projects and to assess whether the effort put into achieving project success is adequately recognised and rewarded. The results showed that the system in place did not encourage participation in projects and also the amount of work that employees put into the project was not adequately rewarded by their superiors, despite the extensive incentive system. Despite this, the project was successful.

In order to be able to talk about a fully effective incentive system, several changes need to be made to the current system. Considering that the very participation in projects is motivating for employees, and that currently they are top-down appointed to these jobs without being able to take part in recruitment, as such recruitment is not carried out. With this in mind, the Company could consider conducting internal recruitment for individual team members. In this way, future teams can gain not only an employee with the right competences, but also

an employee who has the right attitude to work in the team. Through recruitment, an employee with a different specialisation, characterised by different experience and knowledge can be included in the team, which in turn can have a positive impact on the team atmosphere and influence even better performance. In addition, the cyclical performance appraisals carried out could provide opportunities for promotion or at least individual raises for those highest rated and employees.

With the research carried out and a few imperfections found, it is possible to make relatively minor changes to the system, which will certainly have a positive perception among current and future project team members. As has been stressed more than once, the foundation of any organisation and any team is people. Job satisfaction is crucial for effective teamwork and the achievement of common goals. The main limitation of the article is the size of the research sample to the project team in the selected distribution company. Undoubtedly, the direction of further research will be to include a larger group of project teams in the study, as well as to expand the group of companies studied.

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