MOTIVATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN STUDENT NGOS

Mihaela PĂCEȘILĂ [a*]

[a] Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the motivating factors for individuals' involvement in student nongovernmental organizations' activities. Data gathering method included the questionnaire based-survey used for identifying the reasons behind people involvement in the student organizations projects, as well as the motivators used by student NGOs to increase the number of their members. The analysis and interpretation of the data highlight that human resources motivation within student NGOs is a complex process, influenced both by individuals' desires and aspirations and organizations' goals. The research limitations come from the limited number of the respondents; that is why the research is not nationally representative.

KEYWORDS: *motivation, human resources, student NGOs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nongovernmental organizations are characterized by the diversity of human resources such as employees, members or volunteers. They are located between the public and private sectors and operate in a charitable framework (Balogh and Balogh, 2013; Păceșilă et al., 2016). Moreover, they are characterized by two attributes: the non-governmental attribute, meaning that these organizations are not part of the government apparatus, and the non-profit attribute, which make clarifications regarding the differences between the private for profit sector and the private not-for-profit sector (Păceșilă, 2018; Păceșilă and Colesca, 2020). Anheier (2005) considers that the NGOs activities should be carried out altruistically, exclusively for the public benefit, directly by themselves (not by third parties), in a timely manner and in time.

According to Păceșilă (2016, p. 57), compared to public or private sector human resources, the individuals involved in NGOs activities have a higher level of creativity and dedication. However, the disinterest of these organizations' management towards motivating employees or members or volunteers could lead to poor performance (Profiroiu and Păceșilă, 2010; Profiroiu and Păceșilă, 2017).

As regards motivation, there are many definitions in literature, but none of them is unanimously accepted among specialists. However, Nuttin's (1991) definition captures the essence of this concept. He considers that motivation is responsible for orienting behavior, preferably, towards one category of objects rather than another. Therefore, motivation is an inner state, expressed within the individual, impelling him to direct his actions towards achieving a goal (Zlate, 2006).

According to Ujčić (2015), motivating factors depend on variables such as individuals' preferences, profile, size and financial resources of the organization, level of education, etc. However, as regards nongovernmental sector, although there is considered to be an effective way of motivation, the financial rewards hold a low position in the hierarchy of motivators.

The paper is structured as follows: the first part of the paper reviews the literature on the human resources motivation in NGOs, followed by a brief presentation of the NGOs under analysis as well as of the explanation of the research methods used; the second part focuses on the research results;

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* Corresponding author. E-mail address: *mihaela.pacesila@man.ase.ro*

the third part consists of the conclusions and research limitations of the study conducted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A first research on the applicability of the bifactorial theory, the theory of expectation and the model of job characteristics showed that all these three have a large applicability in the NGO environment, despite their initial development for the private for profit sector (Schepers et al., 2005). Furthermore, the characteristics of the job proved to be closely related to the autonomous and intrinsic motivation. However, while they have no influence on the significance of the work done, there has been a fluctuation in autonomy, not determined by the model but rather by other factors of working conditions (Millette and Gagné, 2008).

The reviews of the literature about motivation and rewards influence on human resources satisfaction and their loyalty to the organization revealed several aspects: human resources motivations are different depending on the sector of activity, the economic ones being less common in nongovernmental organizations; human resources in NGO sector place more value on the intrinsic motivations for choosing an organization; NGOs provide the highest level of motivation for the work process itself by taking into account the values and tasks of the job; finally, loyalty to the organization varies only depending on age and education and does not take into consideration other factors (Borzaga și Tortia, 2006).

As regards intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in NGOs, few studies have been noticed. On the one hand, one of them shows that intrinsic rewards as motivators for human resources are more important than extrinsic ones, which are less desirable (Tippet și Kluvers, 2009). On the other hand, another study shows opposite results. Thus, human resources in NGOs are less intrinsically and more extrinsically motivated, with a significant relationship between rewards and motivation felt by employees within the NGO sector. In this regard, they place less emphasis on intrinsic motivations such as recognition or appreciation from colleagues and superiors. (Hafiza et al., 2011). Another study showed a greater importance given to intrinsic than extrinsic motivation by students participating in volunteering activities. Moreover, the external incentives have also been found to have the potential to weaken the intrinsic motivations of individuals who volunteer (Geiser et al., 2014). As regards the Romanian NGO sector, Păceșilă (2014) shows that organizations use different ways of intrinsically and extrinsically motivating human resources, adapted according to the field of activity. However, there is a lack of significant extrinsic motivators for employees and members, leading the latter to leave organizations.

From the perspective of increasing human resources retention in NGOs, a paper published in 2013 provides many relevant results: the most important factors in choosing an NGO by an individual are the values and contributions of the organization in the community as well as the leisure opportunities; an important element for motivating volunteers is to provide constant support in carrying out their tasks; managerial practice is based on intrinsic motivation, which is also expected by volunteers; as regards human resources retention, the main reason for choosing to leave the organization would be the working hours (Reinklou și Rosén, 2013).

As regards motivating factors, Phillips and Phillips (2010) show that few volunteers expect material rewards, some of them even refusing to participate in case of material compensation. However, they show a preference for some rewards over others. Moreover, the most effective motivators are not the material ones, but those related to management involvement and its efforts regarding motivation.

On the other hand, according to Ujčić (2015) the wage represents the most important motivating factor for NGO employees. This is followed by socialization opportunities and job characteristics. Managers and part-time employees put the financial component on the top level, being motivated rather by the possibility to be creative, the flexibility in decision making, the possibility to update oneself and the characteristics of the job. A similar situation occurs with volunteers, who, in addition to the motivators listed above, give a high score for mentoring and coaching.

Another study, conducted at the "Babeş-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca, found that in Romanian

non-governmental sector, motivation depends predominantly on merits recognition, possibilities of affirmation, personal development and opportunities provided by the organization to its human resources but not necessarily on the material rewards it could offer (Andreica et al., n.d.).

According to Haivas et al. (2012), the organizational atmosphere is closely related to the volunteers' autonomous motivation while meeting the needs of autonomy and competence has a positive influence on the autonomous motivation. Moreover, a climate supporting autonomy ensures the satisfaction of the three basic needs highlighted by the theory of self-determination (autonomy, competence, relationship). In fact, the number of the individuals' social connections is also related to the satisfaction of the three basic needs (Colesca et al., 2017). In addition, the volunteers' contributions are closely related to the desire to accumulate knowledge, but not to the increase of their self-esteem or social needs (Dwyer et al., 2013).

3. STUDENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES (BUES)

Three of the student organizations under analysis belong to BUES faculties, but include members from all faculties of the university: ASCIG – Asociația Studenților la Cibernetică și Informatică de Gestiune, ASEAM – Asociația Studenților la Economie Agroalimentară și a Mediului. USASE (Uniunea Studenților din Academia de Studii Economice) has a special membership regime, because it consists of students representatives within university faculties. The other student associations - AEGEE, ASER, BOS, VIP were also set-up for BUES students' development, but also for those outside this university.

AEGEE (Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe) is a European NGO with branches in 40 countries as well as in most important cities in Romania. It aims to create a Europe working for the young people development. The association promotes intercultural exchange through mobility as well as non-formal education through trainings, contributing to the development of students' skills. Regarding the human resources of the organization, they consist of both members and volunteers, the latter being recruited to implement the projects of the organization (AEGEE Europe, 2018).

ASCIG (Asociația Studenților în Contabilitate și Informatică de Gestiune) facilitates communication between the students within BUES. Its projects aim to personally and professionally develop young people (counseling and professional orientation, public speaking, encouraging entrepreneurship, etc.) and are intended for students from all faculties of the university. The association consists of members and includes several departments (ASCIG, n.d.).

ASEAM (Asociația Studenților la Economie Agroalimentară și a Mediului) ensures the personal and professional development of the students of the Faculty of Agri-Food and Environmental Economics. The association also aims to enter into partnerships with employers within the business environment. It is the newest student organization within the university because it was founded in 2014, and consists only of members (ASEAM, n.d.).

ASER (Asociația Studenților Economiști din România) is over 20 years old and it was set-up for the development of students within Bucharest public universities: Bucharest University of Economic Studies, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration and University of Bucharest. It carries out projects on career guidance, innovation and entrepreneurship, vlogging, etc. (ASER, n.d.).

BOS (Business Organization for Students) aims to create and maintain a dialogue between students and employers, through partnerships and educational projects. It carries out projects regarding entrepreneurship, IT field, improvement of student-employer relationship, etc. (BOS, n.d.).

USASE. (Uniunea Studenților din Academia de Studii Economice) consists of the representatives within the BUES faculties and it solves problems reported by students. It also, monitors the protection of students' rights and organizes recreation activities (USASE, n.d.).

VIP (Voluntari pentru Idei și Proiecte) carries out projects on entrepreneurship, international relations

and diplomacy, high-performing leaders etc. (VIP, n.d.).

4. RESEACH METHODOLOGY

The paper analyzes the reasons determining students to get involved in NGOs activities as well as the motivators used by BUES organizations to increase the number of members. Knowing these motivations ensures the understanding of the needs, desires and aspirations of human resources within the student environment.

The research method used is the questionnaire based-survey because it allows to analyze a large number of cases as well as to obtain both subjective information - respondents' opinions on a relatively high number of motivating factors and objective information - data about the non-governmental organizations studied. The advantage of using this research tool is the short completion time, which is often appreciated by respondents. However, it does not allow for direct interaction with respondents and does not provide the opportunity to clarify any possible questions raised by them.

The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part contains questions regarding the respondents profile; the second part refers to the reasons determining the respondents to get involved in the student organizations activities and projects, as well as the motivators used by these organizations to attract and maintain human resources. The data collection was done by using an online questionnaire distributed to all those activating in student organizations, while its completion remained at their choice. Google Forms was used for this purpose while the information was recorded in databases in Google Sheets.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Respondents profile
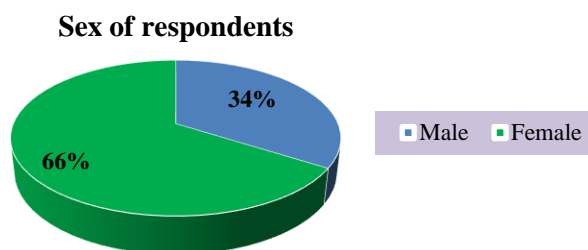In outlining the respondents' profile, about one third of respondents are male and about two thirds are female.

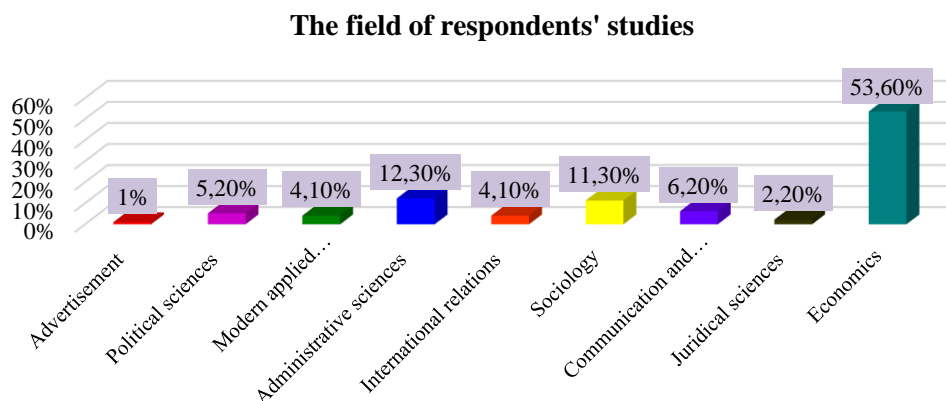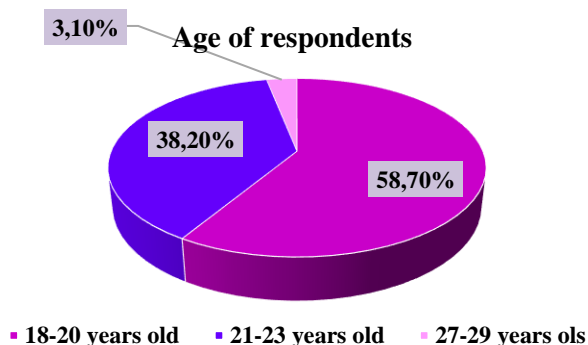**Figure 1. Sex of respondents**

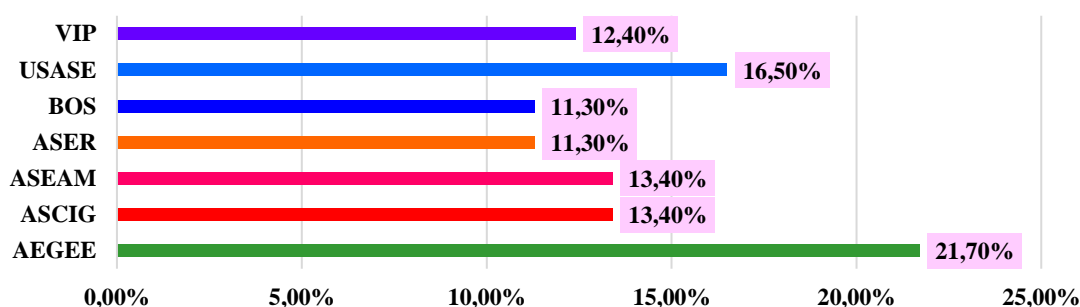
Figure 2. The field of respondents' studies

Secondly, as regards the field of studies, more than half of respondents are enrolled in the specialization of economics (53.6%), followed by administrative sciences (12.3%), sociology (11.3%), communication and public relations (6.2%), political sciences (5.2%), modern applied languages (4.1%), international relations (4.1%), juridical sciences (2.2%) and advertising (1%).

Third, the age of the respondents was checked. Therefore, over half of the respondents (58.7%) are aged between 18-20 years, a little over a third (38.2%) are between 21-23 years old, and the remaining 3.1% between 27-29 years old. There are no respondents under 18 years old or over 30 years old.

Age of respondents

3,10%

38,20%

58,70%

■ 18-20 years old   ■ 21-23 years old   ■ 27-29 years ols

Figure 3. Age of respondents

Fourth, the distribution of respondents within organizations revealed that the largest number of respondents are from AEGEE (21.7%), then, in decreasing order, USASE (16.5%), ASEAM and ASCIG (each amounting to 13.4 %), VIP (12.4%), BOS and ASER (each amounting to 11.3%).
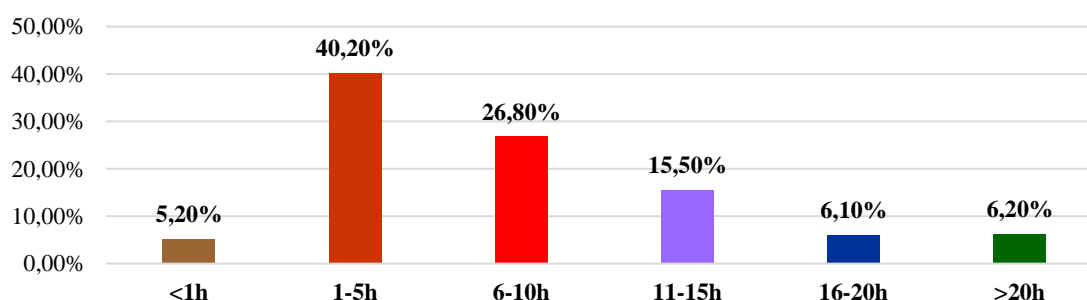
Distribution of respondents in student organizations

Organization	Percentage
VIP	12,40%
USASE	16,50%
BOS	11,30%
ASER	11,30%
ASEAM	13,40%
ASCIG	13,40%
AEGEE	21,70%

Figure 4. Distribution of respondents in student organizations

Finally, the time spent weekly in the organization's activities was checked: most of the respondents (40.2%) spend between 1-5 hours, followed by those spending between 6-10 hours (26.8%), 11-15 hours (15.5%), over 20h (6.2%) and between 16-20h (6.1%). Those who dedicate less than an hour to associations' activities have a share of 5.2%.

Time dedicated by the respondents to the organization

Time	Percentage
<1h	5,20%
1-5h	40,20%
6-10h	26,80%
11-15h	15,50%
16-20h	6,10%
>20h	6,20%

Figure 5. Time dedicated by the respondents to the organization

5.2 Motivation of the respondents within student organizations in Bucharest University of Economic Studies

The sixth question investigates to what extent the respondents consider that their involvement in the organization is motivated by the feeling of belonging to it. The results show that respondents are motivated by this aspect to a large (34%) and very large extent (39.2%).
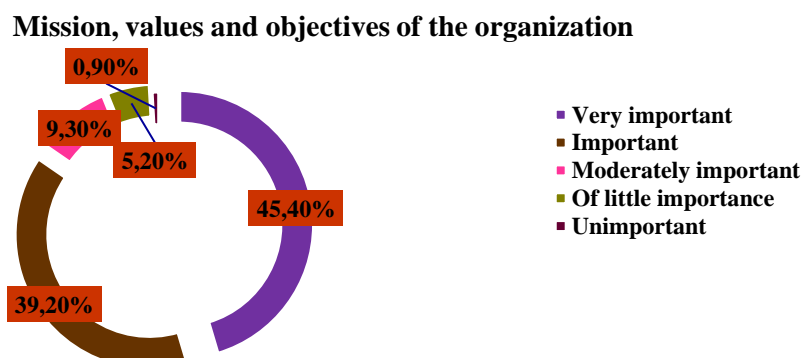
The feeling of belonging to the organization
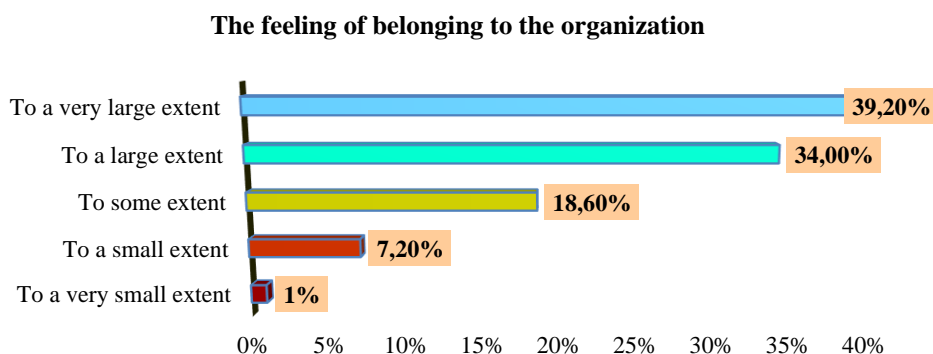
Figure 6. The feeling of belonging to the organization

The seventh question refers to the extent to which the involvement in the organization's activity is motivated by the opportunity to accumulate knowledge. According to the responses, the accumulation of knowledge is considered very important by over half of the respondents (57%) and important by about a quarter of them (24%).
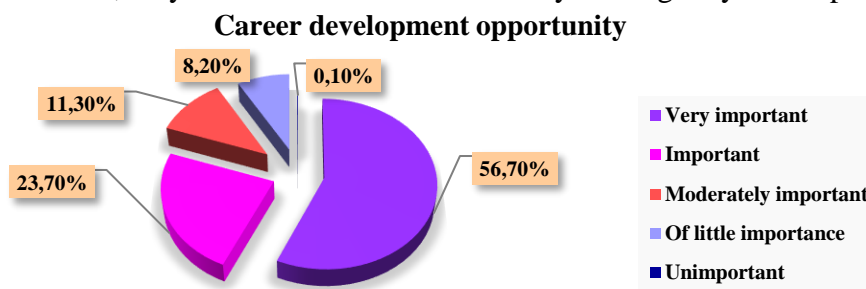

Figure 7. The opportunity of gaining knowledge

The eighth question refers to the extent to which the involvement in the organization's activity is motivated by its values, mission and objectives. The values, mission and objectives of the organization represent a strong motivating factor for students because over 84.6% of respondents ticked the option very important and important.
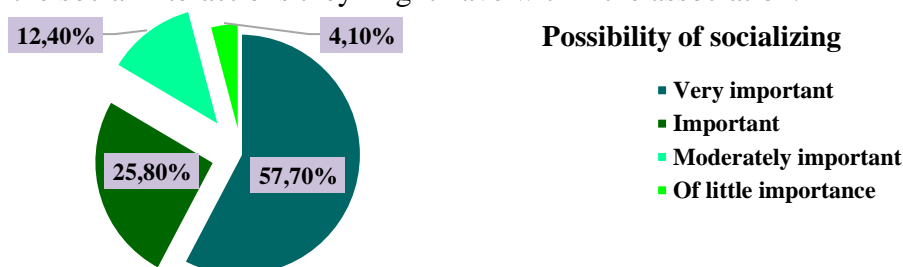

Figure 8. Mission, values and objectives of the organization

The ninth question makes reference to the extent to which the involvement in the organization's activity is motivated by the opportunity to develop the career. 80.4% of the respondents gave a positive answer. Therefore, they are aware of the benefits they could get by developing their career.

Career development opportunity

Figure 9. Career development opportunity

As regards the tenth question, the extent to which the involvement in the organization's activity is motivated by the possibility of socializing, about three quarters of the total respondents are very motivated by the social interactions they might have within the association.

Possibility of socializing

Figure 10. Possibility of socializing

The eleventh question refers to the extent to which the involvement in the organization's activity is motivated by the recognition received from colleagues and/or superiors. The results show that more than two thirds of respondents (71.2%) considered that recognition from colleagues or leaders is very important and it represents a key element in maintaining a good organizational climate.

Recognition from colleagues and/or superiors
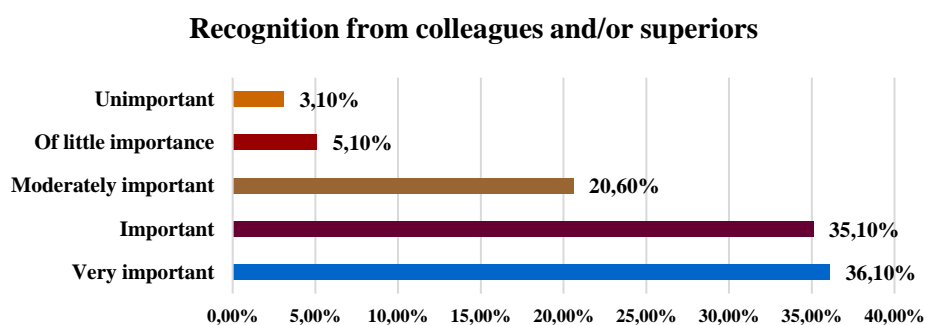
Figure 11. Recognition from colleagus and/or superiors

The level of motivation related to the work currently performed
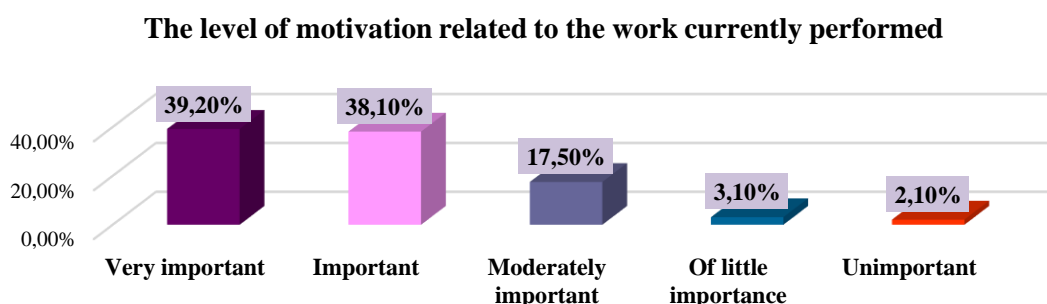
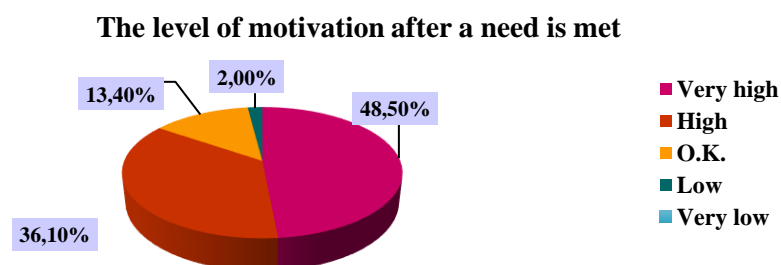**Figure 12. The level of motivation related to the work currently performed**

Positive answers were also given to the twelfth question regarding the level of motivation related to the work currently performed. The work performed gives them the opportunity to diversify their skills and knowledge and always be informed about the field of activity.

Question 13 addresses the factors influencing extrinsic motivation (Figure 13). The motivating factors mentioned below are closely related to the work specificity and aim to mobilize people to work better. The answers obtained to this question show that most respondents attach great importance to all this factors.
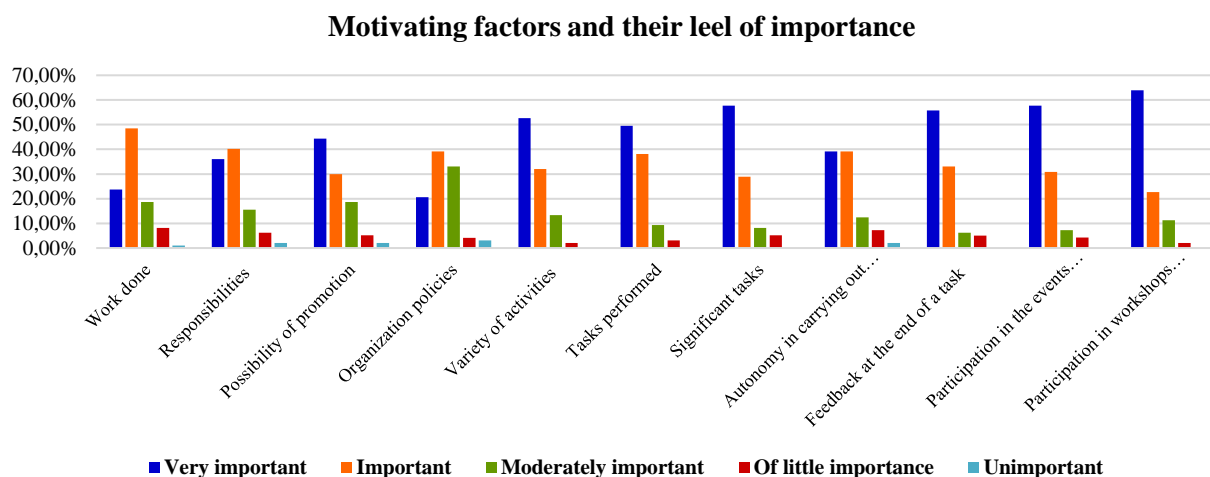
Figure 13. Motivating factors and their level of importance

The fourteenth question refers to the level of motivation felt after satisfying a need. According to Maslow (1943), motivation comes from the need to meet needs. In fact, the essential function of a need is to indicate the satisfactions that a person needs. These aspects are supported by the answers obtained because over 80% of the respondents ticked the options high and very high.

Figure 14. The level of motivation after a need is met

The fifteenth question make references to the possibility of having control over the actions taken to perform a task. Most of respondents (81.4%) prefer to have control over their own actions and to establish for themselves the path to follow to fulfill them.
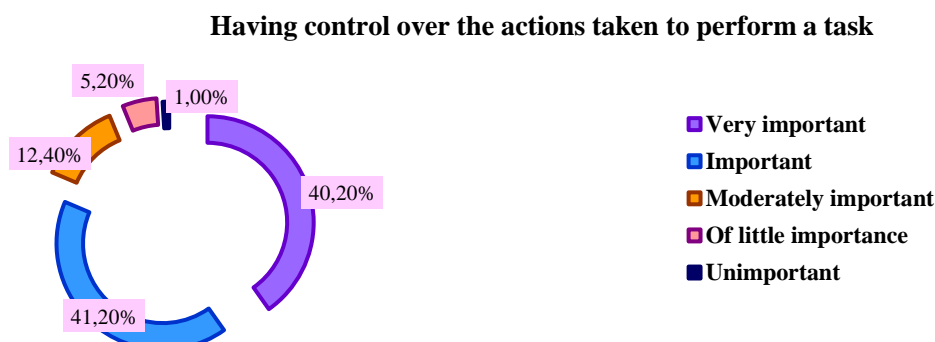
Figure 15. The control over the actions taken to perform a task

Analyzing the sixteenth question regarding the control from colleagues/superiors in performing tasks, the following results emerge: about 66% of respondents considers this control to be crucial because their members are students without work experience; a quarter of them attaches moderate importance to this control meaning they value freedom of action in carrying out tasks; the remaining 9.2% do not appreciate too much the supervision from their colleagues or department coordinators of the student NGO.

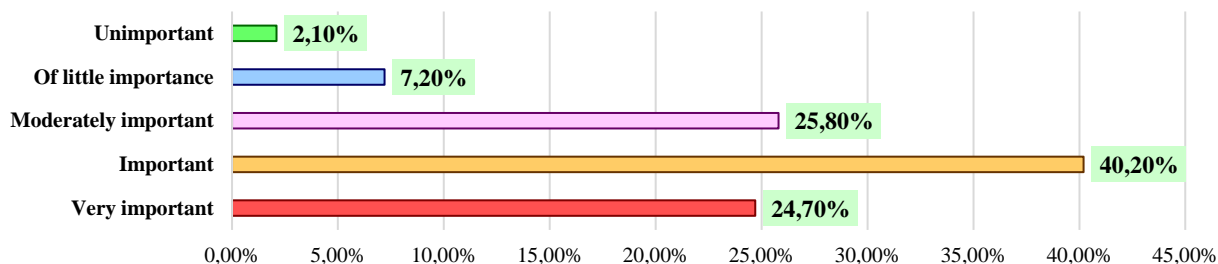**Control from colleagues/superiors in performing tasks**

Figure 16. Control from colleagues/superiors in performing tasks

As regards the success in terms of rewards (question 17), for over half of respondents (61.9%) the rewards are important and very important. In fact, the reward is most effective when it is offered regularly and shared at the right time. Recognition and appreciation should come from all levels of the organization, not just from the top down. The permanent appreciation of the organization members increases their motivation and determines them to fight for the success of the NGO. Moreover, they feel important and do not want to change the organization.
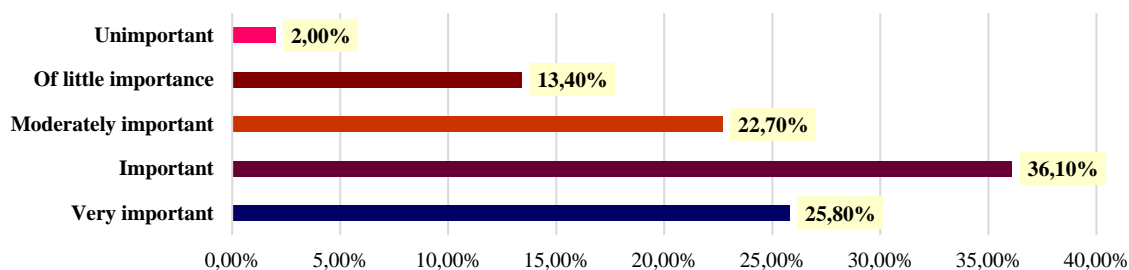
Success in terms of rewards

Figure 17. Success in terms of rewards

Analyzing the data from question 18 regarding the success in terms of personal achievement, an overwhelming majority of respondents (89.7%) provided an affirmative answer. In fact, the image of success is extremely personal. Each person has goals and desires that he/she wants to achieve in life. It is important that the organization where they operate meets these goals and desires (HTIME, n.d.).
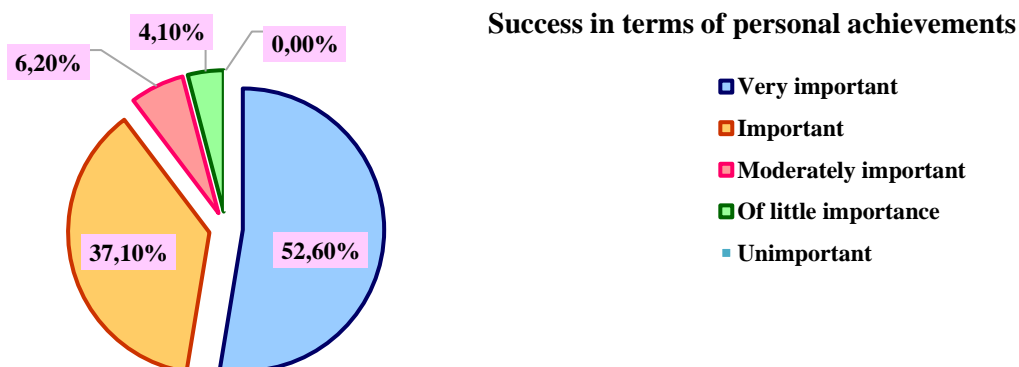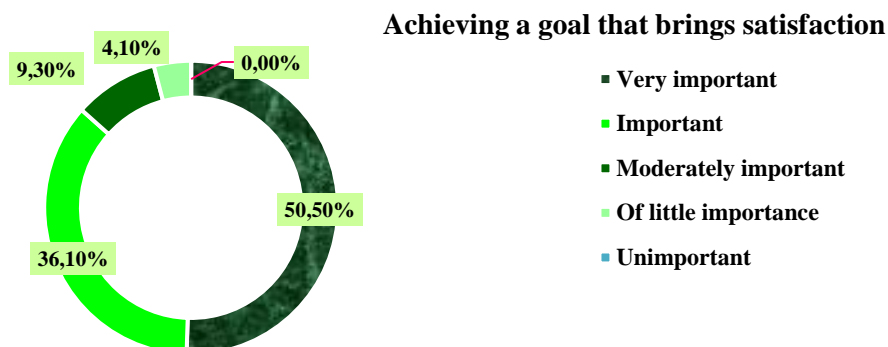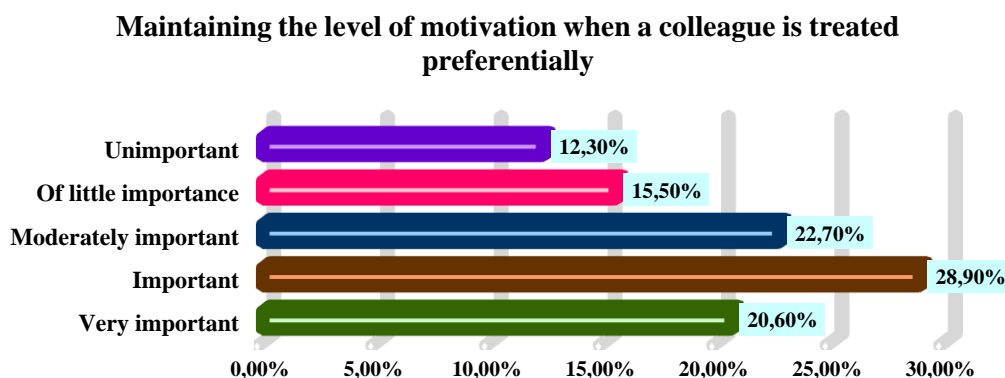

Figure 18. Success in terms of personal achievements

99

Figure 19 (question 19) shows the students opinion regarding the achievement of a goal that brings satisfaction. An overwhelming majority of respondents (86.6%) consider that satisfaction in the activity performed is closely related to motivation.

Achieving a goal that brings satisfaction

- **Very important**
- **Important**
- **Moderately important**
- **Of little importance**
- **Unimportant**

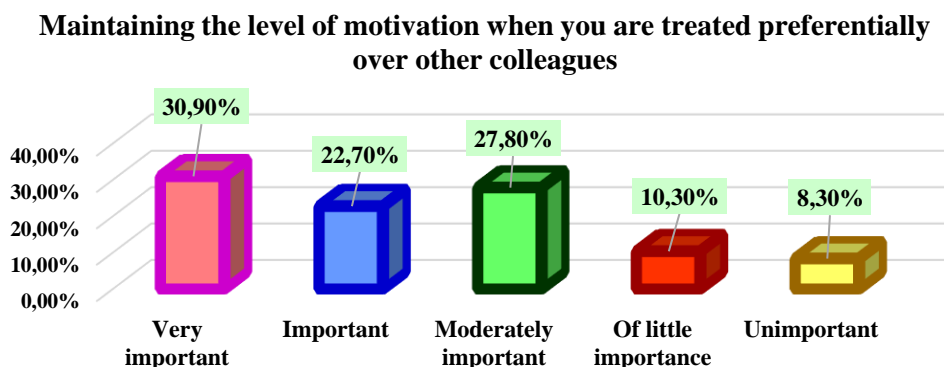4,10%   0,00%
9,30%
50,50%
36,10%

Figure 19. Achievement of a goal that brings satisfaction

Question 20 (Figure 20) about maintaining the level of motivation when you are treated preferentially over other colleagues, analyzes the respondents' level of motivation when inequities occur at work. As expected, almost half of them (49.5%) are affected by such situations. This could have a demotivating effect in terms of continuing to support the NGO's causes.

Maintaining the level of motivation when a colleague is treated preferentially

Unimportant 12,30%
Of little importance 15,50%
Moderately important 22,70%
Important 28,90%
Very important 20,60%

0,00% 5,00% 10,00% 15,00% 20,00% 25,00% 30,00%

Figure 20. Maintaining the level of motivation when a colleague is treated preferentially

Question 21 represents the reciprocal of the previous statement, analyzing the respondents' level of motivation when they are treated preferentially over other colleagues. More than half of the respondents (53.6%) ticked the option important and very important. The answers to questions 20 and 21 invalidate Adams '(1965) theory of inequity, arguing that when inequity occurs, individuals' motivation tends to decline. Thus, in both cases about half of the respondents ticked the same options, regardless of whether the inequity was in their favor or against them.

Maintaining the level of motivation when you are treated preferentially over other colleagues

30,90%
22,70%
27,80%
10,30%
8,30%

40,00%
30,00%
20,00%
10,00%
0,00%

Very important   Important   Moderately important   Of little importance   Unimportant

Figure 21. Maintaining the level of motivation when you are treated preferentially over other colleagues

100

As regards question 22, 77.4% of respondents consider that setting a goal in the workplace environment represents a strong motivating factor.
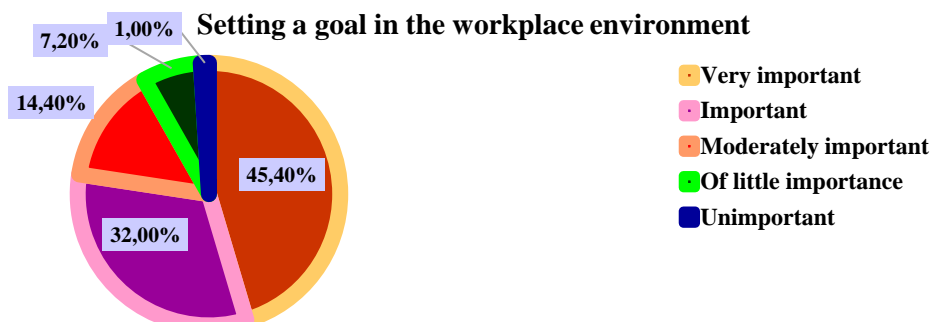

Figure 22. Setting a goal in the workplace environment

Question 23 regarding the respondents involvement in the decision-making process, analyzes the relationship between motivation and respondents' consultation in decision making within the organization. According to the results, autonomy in decisions regarding tasks to be performed is essential for most respondents (79.4%).
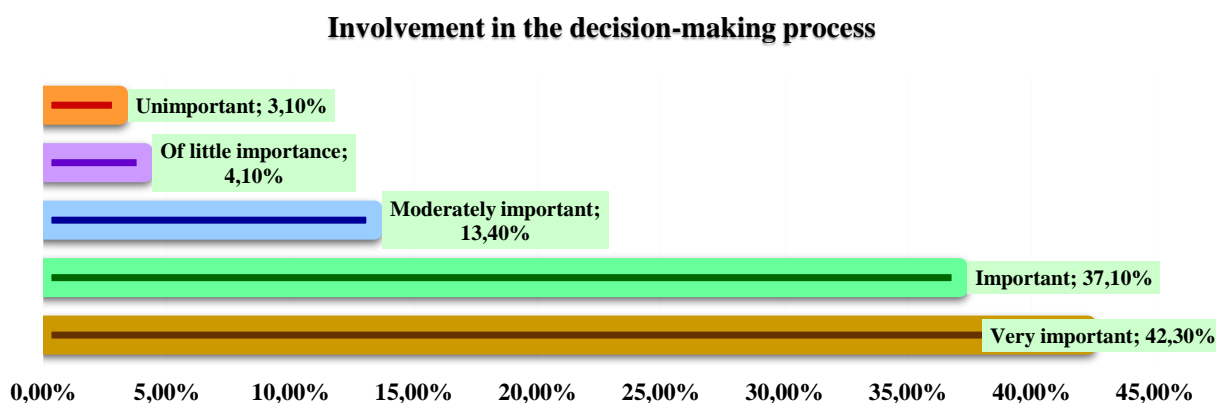

Figure 23. Involvement in the decision-making process

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The paper aimed to clarify some important aspects related to human resources motivation in student non-governmental organizations. In this regard, seven student organizations from Bucharest University of Economic Studies have been analyzed. The research showed that human resources motivation in student associations is a complex approach, located at the intersection of sociology, psychology and human resources field, but also a process involving many variables, influenced by the needs and desires of individuals working in these organizations.

One of the difficulties in the elaboration of this paper was the low responsiveness of the student NGOs members. Therefore, several interventions have been made after the distribution of the questionnaires to determine those operating within these organizations to complete the questionnaire in order to form a valid sample.

This paper creates the opportunity for further studies with the same topic in other universities in Bucharest. In addition, the research could be extended to student NGOs from all over the country. The study could be subsequently resumed in many more student non-governmental organizations from Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES) for a better representation of the results obtained. In this regard, it is recommended to establish close relations with representatives of BUES associations in order to facilitate the process of distributing and completing the questionnaire.

As regards the research limitations, first, the small number of organizations investigated limited the representativeness of the research compared to the student NGO environment within BUES.

Secondly, this research is valid only for student associations operating within BUES and cannot be applied to other higher education institutions because the respondents are exclusively members of the university's NGOs.

Thirdly, each of the NGOs investigated has its own specifics and members. Therefore, the results obtained are representative only for the associations under analysis and not for other student associations within other universities.

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