MOTIVATING HUMAN RESOURCES WORKING IN STUDENT NGOS WITHIN BUCHAREST UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMIC STUDIES

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this paper is to investigate the ways of motivating members in student NGOs within Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES). Empirical research is based on a survey of a sample of 51 active members who are students from the faculties of BUES, both undergraduate and master's programs. Pie charts and bar graph diagrams were produced in Microsoft Excel in order to analyze the data. The results found in this paper have shown similarities with previous papers in the literature suggesting that non-material rewards such as merit recognition as well as personal and professional development are more important than material rewards. The research limitations come from the small number of respondents which may not fully reflect the perception of the association's members.

KEYWORDS: *types of motivation, motivation ways, NGO members.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nongovernmental organization sector has grown more and more in recent years. The role of these types of organizations has become very important in today's society due to its impact on different field as well as its contribution to improving the quality of life.

NGOs have been operating in various forms for centuries, but reached their peak between 1980 and 1990, when their numbers increased dramatically. The Society Against Slavery, founded in 1839, could be considered the first international NGO, as well as a real catalyst for the next organizations. The reason for the founding of other NGOs was the war, giving rise to organizations such as the Red Cross, Save the Children, an organization created after the First World War, or Oxfam after the Second World War (Hall-Jones, 2006).

As regards student NGOs in Romania, they contribute significantly to the students' development, constantly providing sources of information and important experiences to support them during their academic years. Existing in most universities in the country, some established since 1875, student NGOs support the students' interests, represent them to the management of universities and carry out projects and events in various fields. They are a major investor in the students' development, both internally by taking into account the functions held by their members, and externally through the activities carried out for all students (Necşulescu, 2011; Păceşilă, 2021).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resources motivation refers to formal or informal components as well as financial or moral ones that managers provide to individuals in order to meet their needs, to encourage them to contribute to the activities of the organization and to achieving its objectives (Profiroiu & Păceşilă 2017). In this regard, their behavior, efforts, but also their decisions are considered very important (Toader, 2017).

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Motivation is the key to the success of nongovernmental organizations, whether it is a foundation, association or any other type of organization (Păceşilă & Colesca, 2020). The development and operation of an NGO mainly requires managers to pay special attention to encouraging and motivating human resources in order to be able to perform well. The motivation of an NGO's human resources starts from recognizing their merits, understanding the individuals' aspirations and needs as well as providing training programs by the employers. Moreover, the mission and purpose of an organization directly influences the human resources motivation. While each person should be motivated according to its own needs, the lack of adequate incentives (attractive salary, alternative forms of motivation, etc.) could lead to demotivation, thus leading to the failure of the organization (Păceşilă, 2014).

According to Reinklou and Rosén (2013) when choosing an NGO, people are interested in its fundamental values as well as its contributions in society and the opportunities regarding leisure. As regards volunteers' motivation, the authors mentioned above consider it an incessant work while providing support in carrying out the tasks is essential. Moreover, the main reason why NGO human resources choose to leave the organization is the incompatibility with the work schedule and the lack of financial compensation for members and volunteers.

Other study pointed out that motivation in Romanian NGOs is strongly influenced by recognition of merits, possibilities of affirmation and personal development as well as opportunities provided by the organization, while the rewards were not considered important (Andreica et al., n.d.). In fact, as regards the work process itself, NGOs provides the highest level of motivation while loyalty to the organization varies according to age and education (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006).

As for intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in NGOs, there are studies considering that intrinsic rewards are more important than extrinsic ones (Tippet & Kluvers, 2009; Păceşilă, 2014). This view is also supported by Phillips and Phillips (2010), highlighting that few individuals expect material rewards in volunteer work while most effective motivators are not material ones. Moreover, an individual is rather unmotivated because of lacking management involvement and lacking efforts to motivate people (Păceşilă, 2017).

There are also studies with opposite results, claiming that human resources in NGOs focus on extrinsic motivations, namely rewards, not being interested in intrinsic ones, such as recognition or appreciation of colleagues or superiors (Hafiza et al., 2011). Moreover, external incentives could lead to diminishing intrinsic motivations (Geiser, et al., 2014). On the other hand, Ujčić (2015) considers that salary and the possibility to be creative are the most important motivators. Managers and part-time employees attach little importance to the financial component and are rather motivated by possibility to be creative, flexibility in decision-making and job characteristics.

However, according to Păceşilă (2014), the lack of extrinsic motivating factors makes NGO employees and members either not to get too involved, or to leave the organization quite quickly. In this context, the effective motivation of NGO human resources requires taking into account several aspects: maintaining a balance between organization goals and human resources desires; providing training to all individuals to be able to attract new financial partners; creating a good organizational climate to improve the functioning of the organization; developing flexible work programs; organizing team buildings so that individuals know better their colleagues

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper analyzes the ways of motivating members of the Association of Students in Accounting and Management Information Systems (ASCIG) within Bucharest University of Economic Studies. Therefore, the analysis unit is represented by ASCIG members, during the academic year 2019 - 2020.

The research method used is the survey method considered by Chelcea et al. (1998) a general method aiming to obtain a truth finding, gathering evidence to refute or confirm the hypothetical truth (Chelcea, 2007). According to Rotariu and Iluţ (2001), the survey as a method used in the socio-

human sciences, represents an information exchange based on the communication between the researcher and the elements of the investigated social framework. It is a quantitative and formalized method using interactive or interrogative tools applied to a large number of people (Nadolu, 2007).

Compared to the other types of concrete sociological research, the survey mainly uses the questionnaire for gathering information. It aims not only at knowing subjective information (attitudes, points of view), but also objective ones (family composition, level of education) (Mărginean, 1993).

In Chelcea's (2007) view, the questionnaire is an investigative tool including written questions and possible graphic elements as indicators, in a logical and psychological order, which can be administered by survey operators or self-administered. Its purpose is to collect data from the respondents' answers.

The questionnaire includes an introductory part containing data on the researcher, the purpose of the investigation and aspects about ensuring the confidentiality of the answers, while the second part consists of questions sometimes accompanied by instructions to complete them. The format of the questionnaire varies depending on the purpose of the research and the number of questions is set according to the objectives of the investigation (Șandor, 2013).

The sampling of this research is non-probabilistic, based on a predefined purpose. The samples correctly identified represents a significant source of suitable information for describing the population of the study (Babbie, 2009).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The questionnaire was applied anonymously to a sample of 51 active members of the Association of Students in Accounting and Management Information Systems (ASCIG) during the academic year 2019-2020. The members of the association are students from the faculties of Bucharest University of Economic Studies (BUES), both undergraduate and master's programs. As regards the sample, the students from the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems have a higher percentage than the students from other faculties in order to keep the report on the composition of the association members.

The Association of Students in Accounting and Management Information Systems was founded in 2002 to bring about a change in the students' lives and to represent their interests. The organization is made up of students from various faculties within Bucharest University of Economic Studies, the largest share belonging to the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems. In order to ensure the students' easy transition from the university to the business world, the association brings to the fore a non-formal educational model, with information from several interesting fields. The association aims to facilitate students' access to the business environment and to the opportunities provided by companies as regards internships and jobs. Moreover, it offers information on the university facilities for students (scholarships, accommodation in dormitories, canteen, student camps), while representing the students from the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems in the management of the university (ASCIG, 2020).

4.1. Respondents' profile
The majority off the respondents are between 21-22 years old (54.9%) and between 18-20 years old (33.33%), which means they are students in the bachelor programs. Only 11.8% of respondents fall into the age category of 23 and 25 years old, a range specific to master's programs.
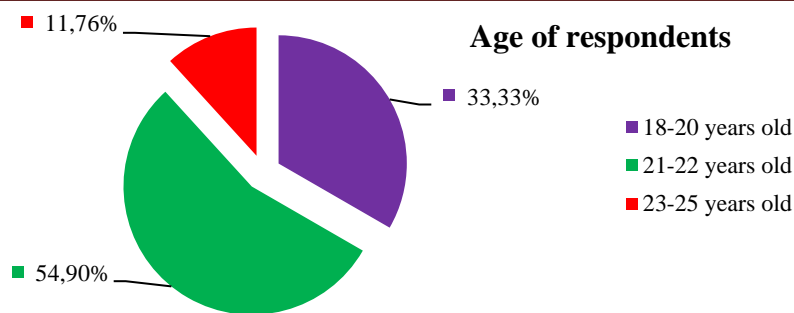
Figure 1. Age of respondents

Almost three quarters of the respondents are women (74.51%) while the rest of them are male (figure 2). This means that the association is mainly made up of female members, especially since the majority of BUES students are female.
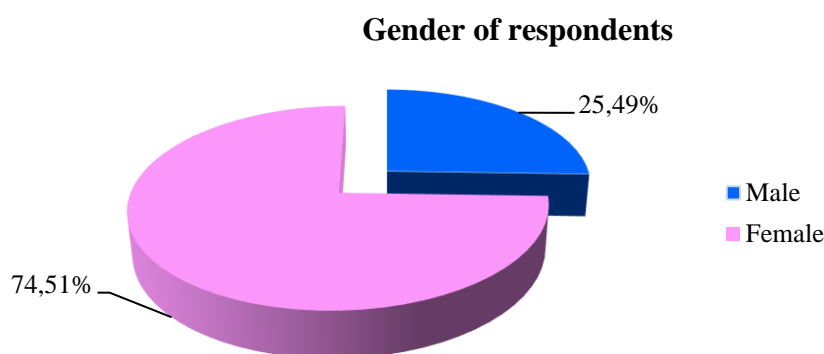
Figure 2. Gender of respondents

As regards the distribution of respondemts by university years, the majority of them are students in the 1st and 2nd year of the bachelor programs and only a small part are in the first (5.88%) and second year (2.03%) of master's programs. No students spending an additional at university were part of the study sample.
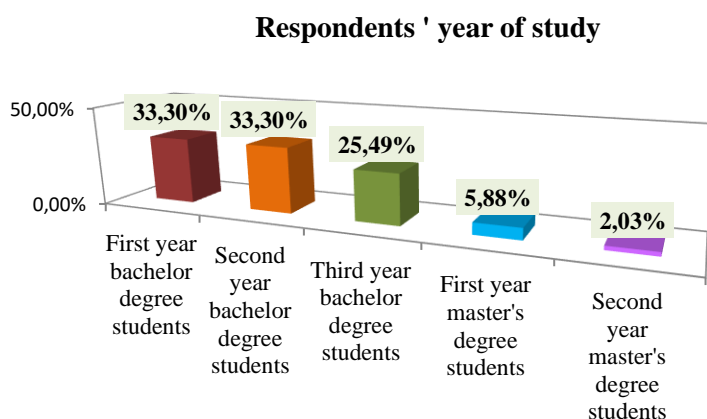
Figure 3. Respondets' year of study

When analyzing the faculty of origin, according to the data presented in figure 4, almost half of the respondents (47.05%) are students in the Faculty of Accounting and Management Information Systems, probably because this is the main category of students to whom the association is addressed. The other respondents come from the other faculties within BUES.
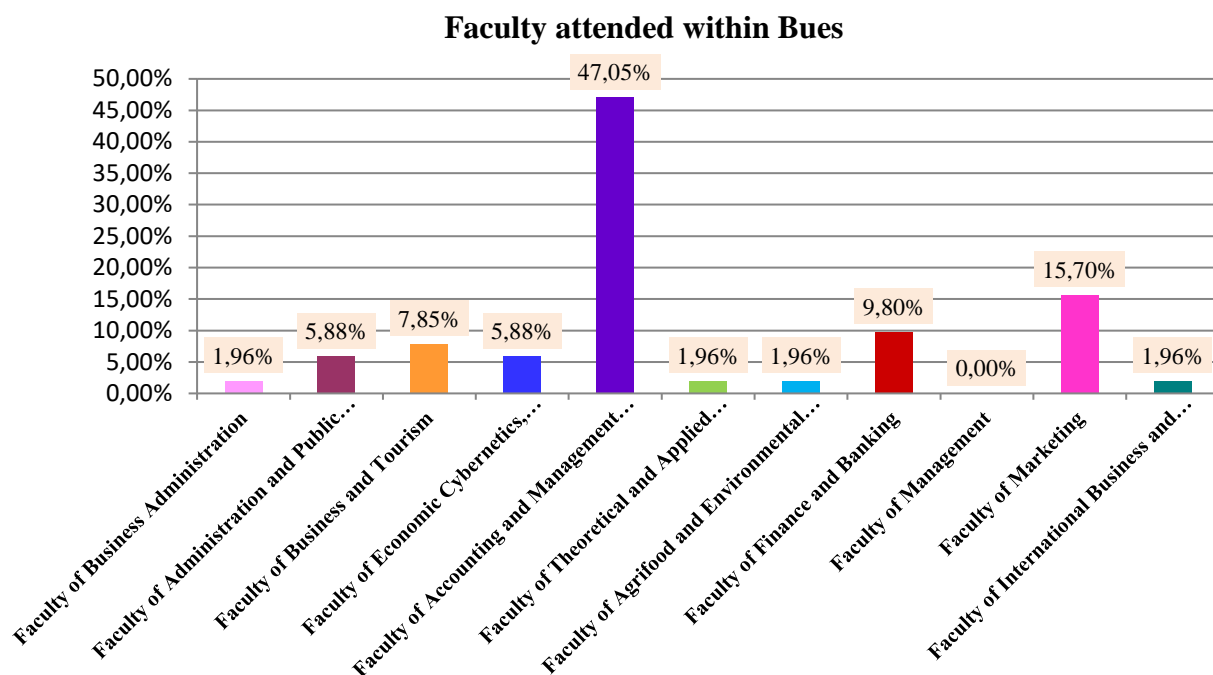
Faculty attended within Bues

Figure 4. Faculty attended

82.35% of all respondents hold the position of member within the organization, while 13.73% are members of the Board. The rest of them fall into either the project coordinator category (1.96%) or the censor category (1.96%).
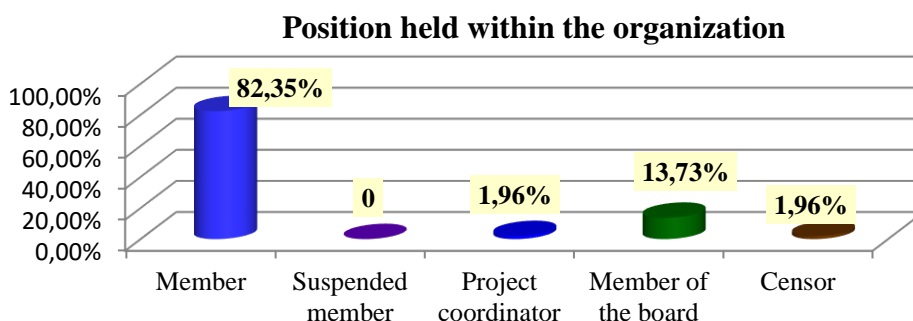
Position held within the organization

Figure 5. Position held by respondents within the organization

Analyzing the distribution of the respondents depending on the amount of time spent in the association, according to the figure below, 39.22% of the respondents have been involved in the organization's activities for less than 6 months, while 43.14% have a seniority of 1 to 2 years. 17.65% have a longer tenure in the association, between 3 and 5 years. The high percentage of respondents in the 1-2 years range means that most members are in their second and third year of bachelor's degree. The low percentage of those in the 3 - 5 years range could be due to the completion of bachelor's or master's programs, which may subsequently lead to membership relinquishment.
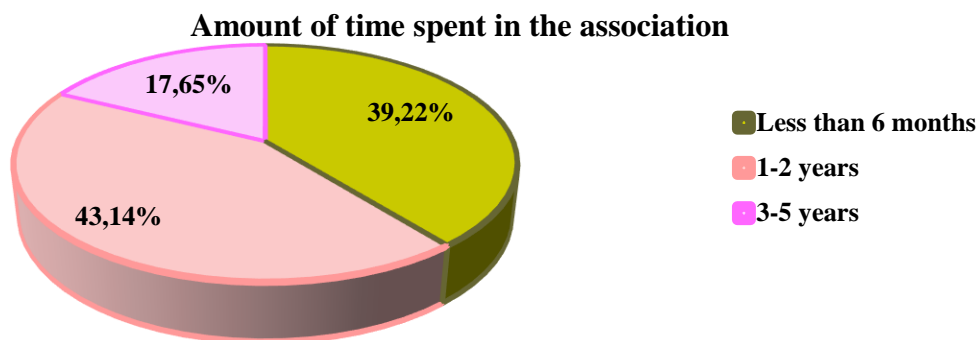
Amount of time spent in the association

Figure 6. Amount of time spent in the association

4.2. Respondents' perception on the ways of motivating the members of the Association
Compared to 7.2% of the respondents not having a good opinion about the motivation practices used by the organization (figure 7), most of them are satisfied and very satisfied with this aspect.

Respondents' satisfaction regarding members motivation within the association
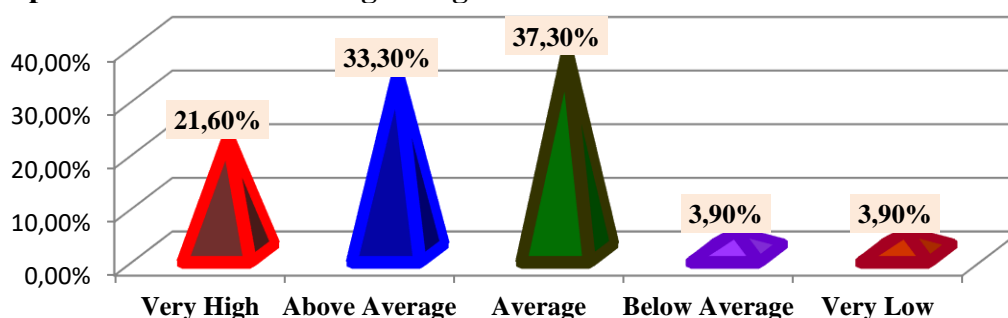

Figure 7. Respondents' satisfaction regarding members' motivation within the association

Question no. 8 refers to the association departments responsible for members motivation. Thus, according to what is mentioned in the figure below, 43.5% of the participants in the research consider that this activity falls under the responsibility of Human Resources Department, while 31.5% have a different opinion, including it in the responsibility of the Board members. Only 20.4% checked the option project coordinators, while the remaining 4.6% consider that each member is responsible for his own motivation.

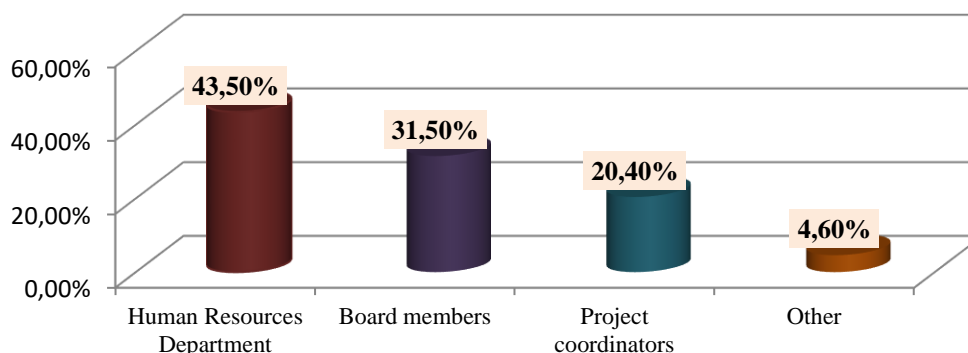**Responsibility to motivate the members of the organization**

Figure 8. Responsibility to motivate the members of the organization

Question 9 refers to the types of motivation used within the association. According to the evaluation system based on giving small points to the most used types of motivation, positive motivation is the most used within the association with a total of 124 points. The second position is held by moral-

spiritual motivation with 141 points, while affective motivation ranked third with 147 points. At the opposite pole are cognitive motivation (163 points) as well as negative motivation (190 points). Thus, these types of motivation have a low degree of use in the association. Therefore, while the respondents place positive motivation and negative motivation at opposite poles, a possible cause could be the organizational culture and the particularities of the association.

Types of motivation most used in the association (where 1 = least used and 5 = most used)
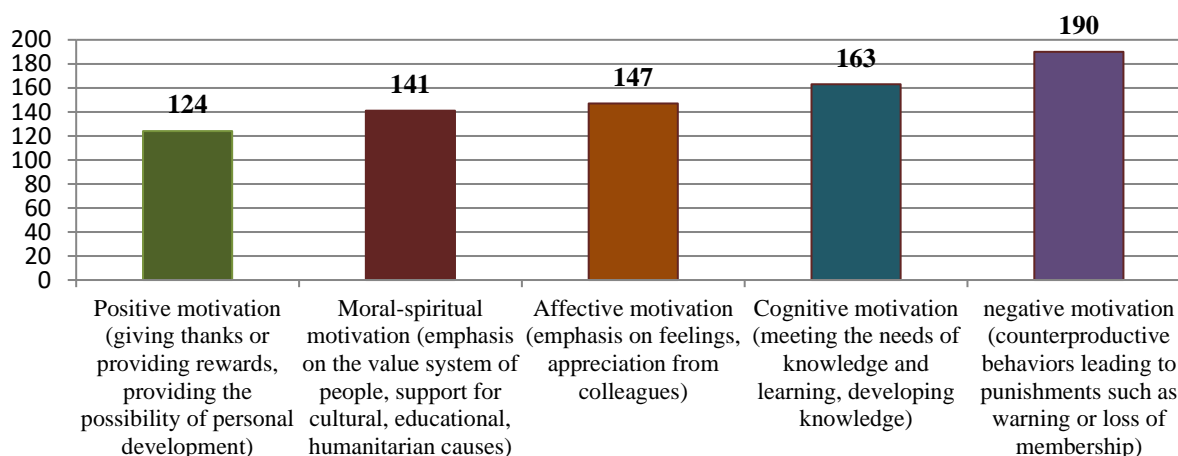

Figure 9. Types of motivation most used in the association

Question no. 10 regarding the ways of motivating the association members highlights the respondents' options as follows: possibility of personal and professional development (19.6%), delegating tasks whose fulfillment leads to increasing self-esteem (17,64%), receiving moral support (15.7%), organizing training and events for members (15.7%) are on the first three positions having close or equal percentage; providing financial reward ranked last in respondents' preferences.

In fact, professional development is very important for those aiming at career success. Moreover, it is closely related to personal development which allows students to become aware of their potential. Thus, in order to cope with this diverse and complex world, students want to discover their talents and passions as well as to train professionally in the field that would ensure them a decent living (Vârtosu, 2016).

Respondents perception regarding the ways of motivating the association members
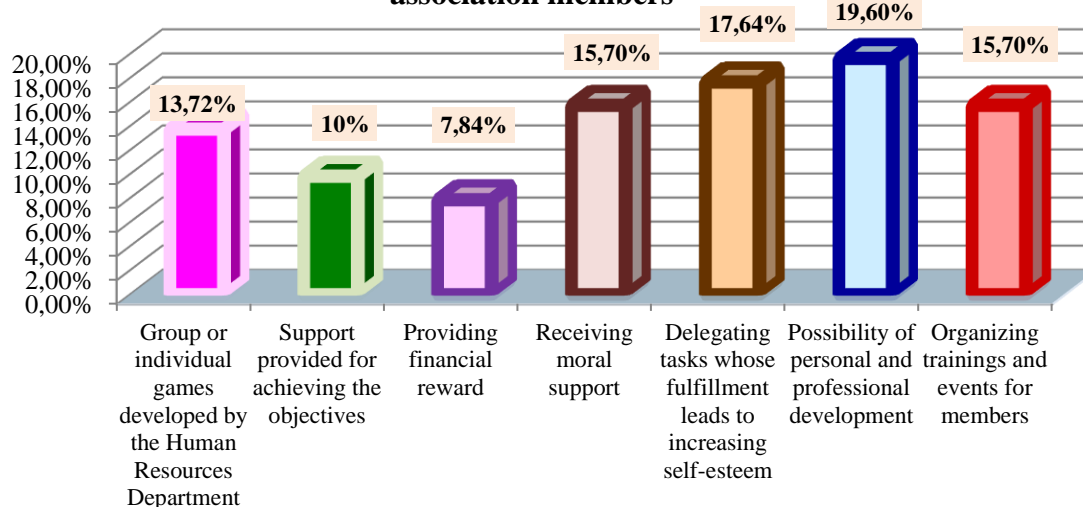

Figure 10. Respondents' perception regarding the ways of motivating the association members

As regards the relationship between the motivation ways used by the association and the integration of new members (question no. 11), it can be noted that the majority of those surveyed ticked off the answering options to a very large extent (41.2%) and to a large extent (39.2%). In addition, the way members are emotionally and socially integrated will considerably influence their future activity. They should be given the opportunity to make the best contribution of which they are capable and which is needed to the organization. They should also be organized and rely on each other in order to achieve the desired results. Moreover, the way in which decisions are made, conflicts are resolved, communication is done and the activity is carried out is as important as the way in which the work is planned, the positions are organized in relation to each other and the tasks are distributed (Opportunity Associates Romania, n.d.).

Contribution of motivation ways used by the association to the integration of the new members

Figure 11. Contribution of motivation ways used by the association to the integration of the new members

A similar situation to the one described above was recorded in question no. 12 regarding the relationship between the motivation ways used by the association and the members cohesion. As with the previous question, the majority of respondents ticked off the answering options to a very large extent (35.29%) and to a large extent (47.05%). Cohesion can be considered the most important group variable. Due to cohesion, the group exists and operates as a coherent, independent entity. An effective motivation system taking into account the specifics of activities, socio-economic realities and personal characteristics leads to increased team cohesion.

Contribution of motivation ways used by the association to the members cohesion

Figure 12. Contribution of motivation ways used by the association to the members' cohesion

As regards the relationship between the motivation ways used by the association and the long-term retention of members (question no. 13), the situation is a little different compared to the previous questions because only 60.8% of the respondents ticked off the answering options to a very large extent (13.70%) and to a large extent (47.10%). Retention is often considered an important performance parameter in human resource management. The organization should cover quite well the area of members motivation by recognizing their merits in various ways. On the other hand, the members should feel they are part of an environment allowing them to evolve and to feel that their
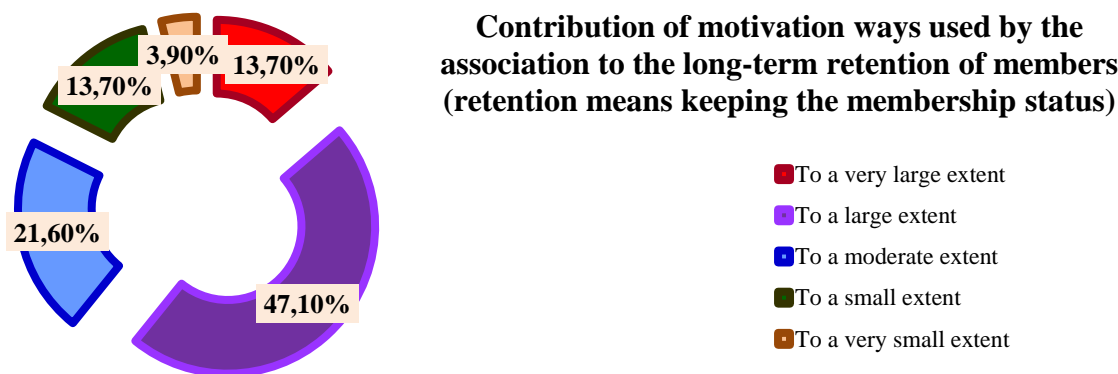
efforts are appreciated and recognized.

Figure 13. Contribution of motivation ways used by the association to the long-term retention of members (retention means keeping the membership status)

Question no. 14 analyzes the respondents' perception regarding the appreciation of their efforts within the association. In this regard, most responses are positive: while 9.80% of the respondets ticked off the answering option *I feel appreciated*, almost three quarters of them (74.48%) declared they feel very appreciated. Members appreciation brings benefits to the organization, leading to increasing productivity and employees retention, but also to strengthening organizational culture.
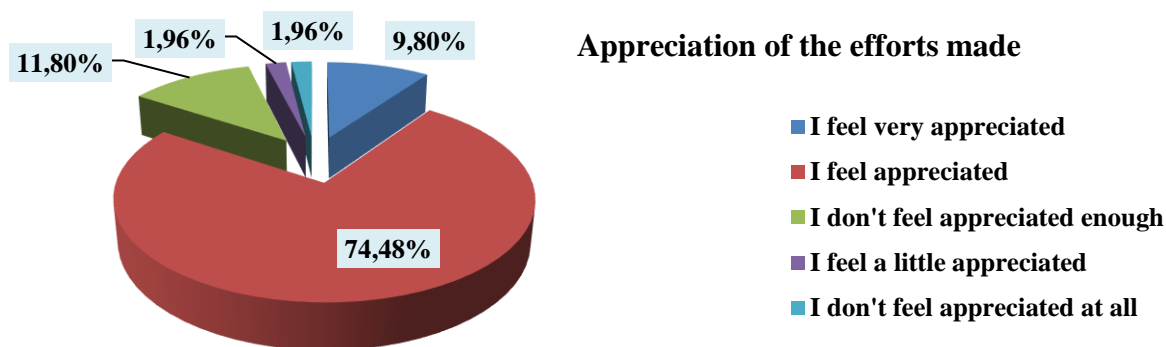

Figure 14. Appreciation of the efforts made

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper attempted to contribute to better understanding the ways of motivating members of the Association of Students in Accounting and Management Information Systems (ASCIG) within Bucharest University of Economic Studies. The research has been done during the academic year 2019 – 2020 among 51 active members of the organization mentioned above. In this regard, the study paid special attention to the following aspects: satisfaction regarding members motivation within the organization, association departments responsible for members motivation, types of motivation used, ways of motivating members, contribution of motivation ways to the integration of the new members, association to the members' cohesion and to the long-term retention of members, appreciation of the efforts made.

The findings support past studies (Andreica et al., n.d.; Tippet and Kluvers, 2009; Phillips and Phillips, 2010) suggesting that recognition of merits and opportunities for professional and personal development within the organization are much more appreciated than material rewards.

Moreover, the association has developed an organizational environment where members feel they have value and receive the necessary support to capitalize on their potential by contributing to developing the organizational strategies, structures and processes in order to improve the

organization's efficiency.

As regards the difficulties encountered in developing this paper, one of them refers to the number of respondents. Although half plus one of the total members of the organization participated in the research questionnaire, this may not fully reflect the perception of all the members of the association. Moreover, the data has been collected through the questionnaire consisting of questions with predetermined choices in order to process the data more easily. However, this kind of questions could lead to a certain degree of rigidity, the impossibility of respondents to freely express their opinion on the proposed topics as well as possible errors in data analysis.

Taking into account the findings of this research, a series of recommendations are made aiming at improving the methods of motivation within the Association of Students in Accounting and Management Information Systems:

- ▪ Developing procedures focusing on aligning the members' interests with the organization's goals.
- ▪ Carrying out a proactive dialogue with the members in order to know their expectations and thus be able to manage them more easily.
- ▪ Updating the motivation policy according to the particularities of the members, especially when the association receives new members
- ▪ Collaborating with similar organizations in order to exchange good practices regarding the ways to motivate the association's members.

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