

Motivational resources for project teams' success

Elena A. Rodionova¹
Saint Petersburg State University
E-mail: psyrea@mail.ru

Abstract: The article deals with motivational resources for effectiveness of project teams analyzing their significance in project implementation process. To determine the motivational resources of project activity success we developed a comprehensive model of project activity based on the motivational model proposed by Harvard Business School, according to which we studied: (1) subjective assessment of project implementation and resource potential; (2) opportunities for realization of motives; (3) satisfaction with intra-group relationships; (4) work satisfaction. The motivational model of project team success is developed. We demonstrate the interrelation between project team success motivation and positive resource estimates, motive realization opportunities, satisfaction with intra-group relationships and work. The proposed motivational model outlines the resources that can ensure project success. **Keywords:** project team, motivational model, motivating and demotivating factors, realization of motivational expectations, work satisfaction, satisfaction with group relationships.

1. INTRODUCTION

In modern organizations project work can be both an auxiliary and main activity type that ensures company's success. The problems faced by project teams are primarily of managerial or organizational nature, while the motivational issues are seen as secondary. In order to evaluate project successfulness, economic methods of effectiveness evaluation are usually used (Pennipeker and Kabanis-Bruin, 2003).

Considering the concept of project, the majority of researchers view it as a complex system of processes that focus on certain tasks in a clearly defined time period with fixed funding (Snetkov, 1997). In the studies of T. DeMarco and T. Lister (1999), a project is understood broadly as anything that is designed or planned.

V. D. Shapiro (1996) highlights the features that projects have:

- project goals and objectives are unique and original;
- all project work is clearly coordinated and limited in time;
- every project has a clear goal and definite result;
- projects are resource limited.

Specialists in project management (Thomsett, 1980) distinguish several stages of project development, referring to the period from the beginning to the end of a project as the project life cycle.

The American project management specialists H. Cooke and K. Tate (2011) points out that for successful project management it is necessary not only to focus on the achievement of goals, but also to ensure the unity and well-being of the team.

Various publications highlight two-levels of project management — financial and professional. The professional level includes human resource management. E. Mehrman (2007) defines the professional level as the most expensive and complex management process. T. De Marco (1999) points out that the project teams that have a high level of relationship satisfaction are highly successful. P. Drucker (2001) also emphasizes the important role of the leader in project realization management. In addition, G. Blau (1993) indicates that one of a project's

issues is the fact that even after half time allocated for its implementation, one cannot guarantee its successful completion.

Basing on the theoretical review of the problem, we put forward the hypothesis that there are motivational resources for project success, such as high estimates of project resource potential, opportunity for project participants' motives realization, satisfaction with intra-group relationships, and work satisfaction.

2. METHODS

The methods used in the study include theoretical and empirical analysis of economic and managerial resources of project team successfulness, motivation models developed in the research community (including the motivational model of Harvard Business School), content analysis, survey (subjective evaluation of project implementation process and resource potential (E. Budargina) proposed and tested in 2011 at the AIESEC project organization), the opportunities for the realization of motives (V. I. Dominyak), satisfaction with intra-group relationships (A. N. Lutoshkina), work satisfaction (A. Mayer). Eight project teams participated in the study including 120 participants aged 24 to 30; four teams were considered successful based on objective assessment of results, four were unsuccessful (projects were not fully implemented). The project work was connected with the services sector. The study took place in St. Petersburg. Over the years, the company has launched several projects on personnel management in cleaning companies, on financial literacy of small business managers, on social advertising, business education, etc.

Twenty people were involved in expert evaluation, 12 females and 8 males —former leaders of successful projects, the company's specialists in training and development, heads of project departments working in the organization for more than 2 years. On the whole, the main study encompassed 100 participants. As a result of classifying the projects as either successful or unsuccessful, two groups were formed with four projects in each. The first group included the employees whose projects were successfully implemented, 24 females and 25 males, aged 24 to 30. The second group included the employees whose projects were not implemented, did not attain their goals, 21 females and 30 males, aged 24 to 30.

For processing the data we used the IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 software; the following criteria were calculated: the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test — to check the parameter value compliance with the normal distribution, the Liven test — to verify the hypothesis about the difference of variances of the two samples, the size of which was different, the Mann-Whitney U criterion as a non-parametric analogue of the t-Student test was used in those cases when there was the difference of variances of the two samples, the r-Spearman correlation coefficient — to test the hypothesis about the relationship of the studied phenomena; for qualitative data processing the content analysis method was used. To reduce the probability of statistical error, the Bonferroni correction was used.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We conducted a comprehensive study which confirmed our hypotheses.

The comparative analysis of evaluations of project implementation process showed significant statistical differences in almost all studied aspects except for “topic relevance” and “clear goals” (Fig. 1).

Thus, the groups of successful projects evaluate the process as positive and satisfying. Project participants clearly understand project goals, share them, know and perform their functions.

The analysis of the project resource potential evaluation made by the employees also revealed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.01$) in a number of parameters (Fig. 2).

The results of the content analysis of the survey regarding the project resource potential evaluation showed that the members of two groups evaluate resource potentials of their projects differently.

For the “successful” group of employees, the most valuable resources were well-coordinated team work, the relevance of the project topic, shared understanding of the topic, as well as clear goals set by a competent leader. It was also important for all employees to have an opportunity to realize their abilities, which increased the motivation for success.

Significant differences ($p < 0.01$) were also revealed in the assessments of satisfaction with intra-group relationships (Fig. 3).

Thus, we can say that in the group of successful projects, people worked as a united team focused on achieving a common goal.

Statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) differences were revealed in satisfaction with various work aspects (Fig. 4).

In the study, we analyzed the extent to which employees’ important motives were realized in both groups. The obtained data showed that in many parameters there were significant ($p < 0.01$) differences (Fig. 5). For all the given motives, the successful project group demonstrated higher values of realization opportunity.

The correlations at a high level of statistical significance ($p < 0.01$) were revealed for a large number of parameters. These parameters serve as the resources for successful implementation of a project (Fig. 6).

The presented factors correspond to different aspects of project work: employee selection, formation of a united team, planning, setting clear goals and objectives, competent management. All put together, they contribute significantly to project implementation, achieving goals and gaining expected benefits.

As a result of the research, we developed a comprehensive model for evaluating the success of project activity (see Fig. 7). The model consists of two parts. The first one includes the diagnosis of expectations of the future project employees prior to beginning the work, helps to evaluate the attractiveness of the proposed work for them, their subjective assessment of project implementation feasibility. It includes the following components:

1. feasibility of project implementation
2. potential evaluation of the project resource potential
3. evaluation of the possible process of project implementation
4. work attractiveness
5. appeal of intra-group relationships

The second part of the proposed experimental model also consists of five components, the diagnosis is carried out in the process of work. Here, instead of studying the aspects of subjective potential evaluation of a number of parameters, their evaluation occurs during the course of work; these parameters include the following:

1. feasibility of subjective motives realization
2. evaluation of the project resource potential
3. evaluation of the project implementation process
4. work satisfaction
5. satisfaction with intra-group relationships

Based on the expert review, a number of criteria of project activity success were identified, according to which we evaluated the studied projects and divided them into two groups: successful and unsuccessful projects.

Statistically significant differences were found in evaluation of the project implementation process in the two groups. For the group of successful projects, it was a positive and satisfying process. In the group of unsuccessful projects, the project was perceived as something with an interesting idea, but the implementation process of this idea was not clear, not everyone was clearly aware of their role.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of our work was to identify motivational resources of project activity success. This is a relevant topic today, as projects are being implemented in more and more organizations and, of course, each of them is interested in achieving maximum positive results.

In order to comprehensively evaluate the studied projects, a comprehensive experimental model was proposed for evaluating the success of project activity.

We identified nine components of project work that may contribute to its success: team unity, opportunities for everyone, clear goals, duties assignment, ability to work as a team, trust in the project, motivated team, work planning and deadlines meeting, availability of work resources for the team members.

The obtained results showed the importance of taking into account a whole range of parameters for achieving success in project work: careful selection of employees, united team formation, having a plan, clear goals and objectives, competent management. All these characterize a particular style of project activity that helps to successfully implement a project, achieve its goals and gain the expected benefits.

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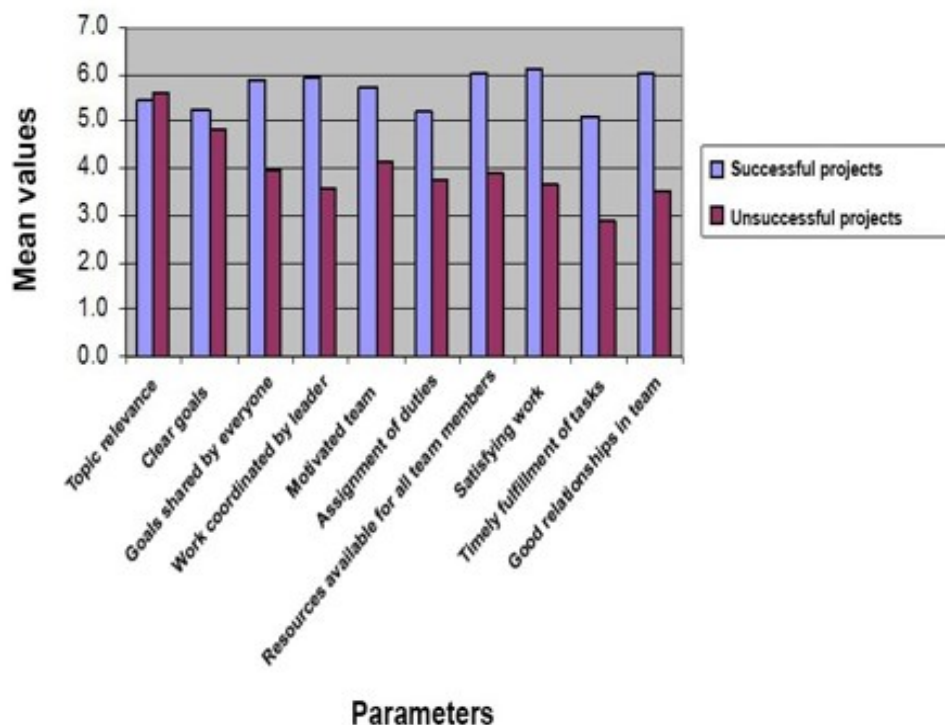


Figure 1. Evaluation of project implementation process — mean values for the two groups

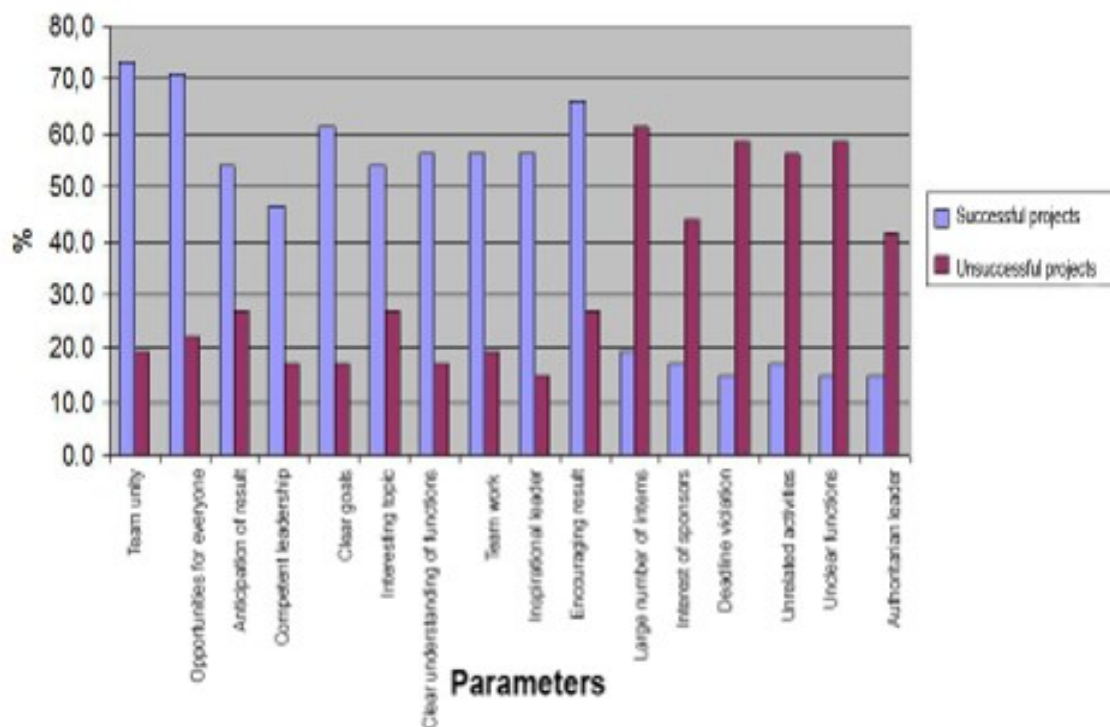


Figure 2. Evaluation of project resource potential (in percentages)

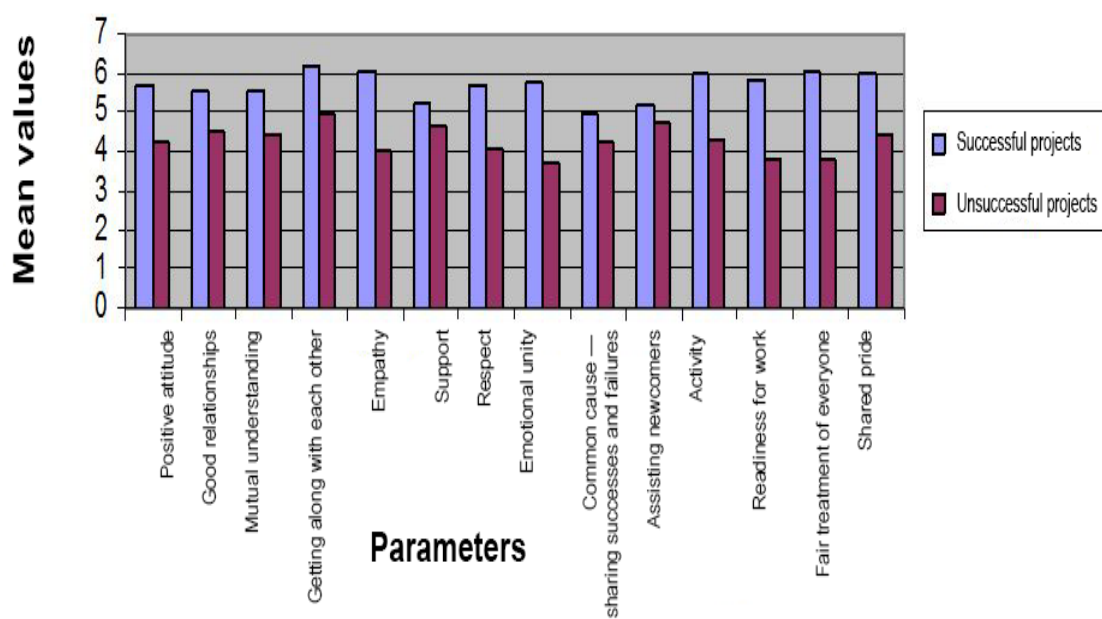


Figure 3. Satisfaction with intra-group relations — mean values for the two groups

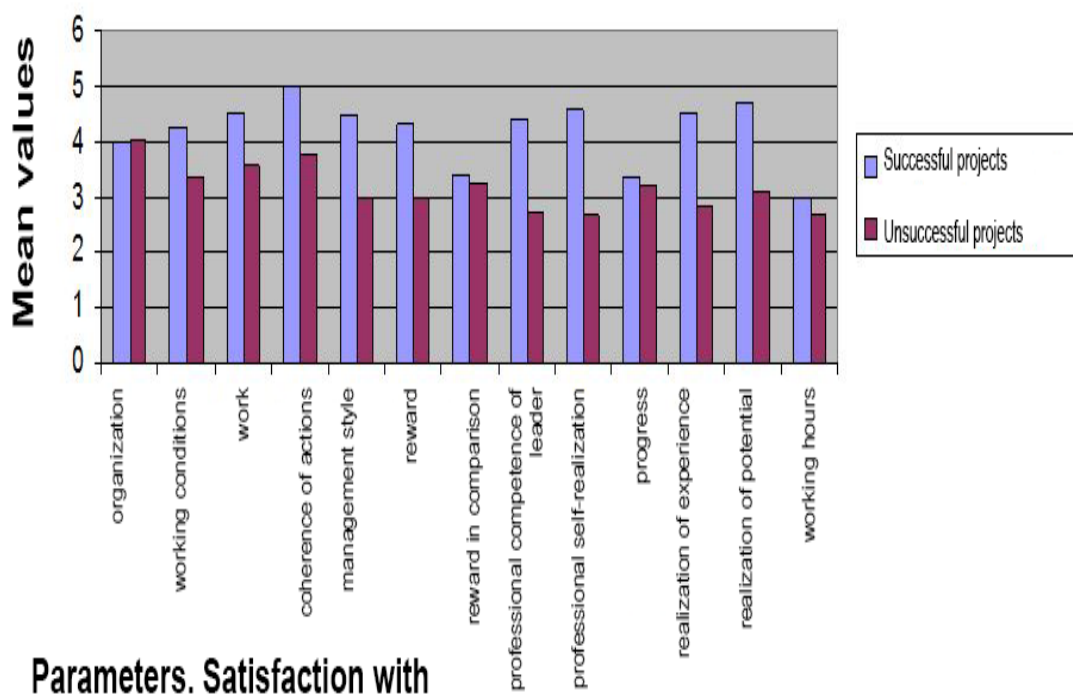


Figure 4. Work satisfaction — mean values for the two groups

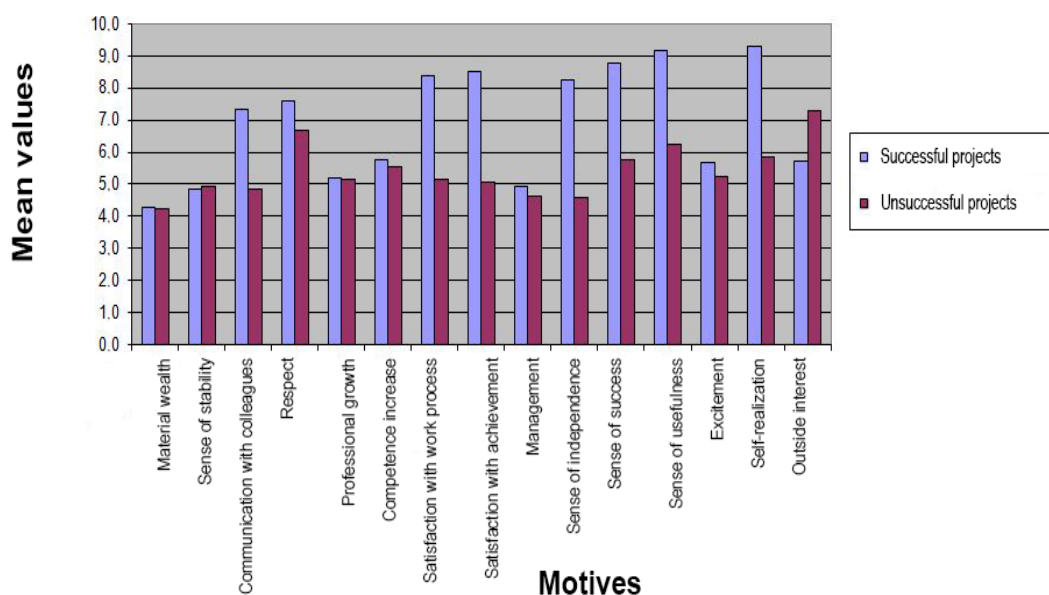


Figure 5. Opportunity for motive realization — comparative analysis of results for the two groups



Figure 6. Resources for project success

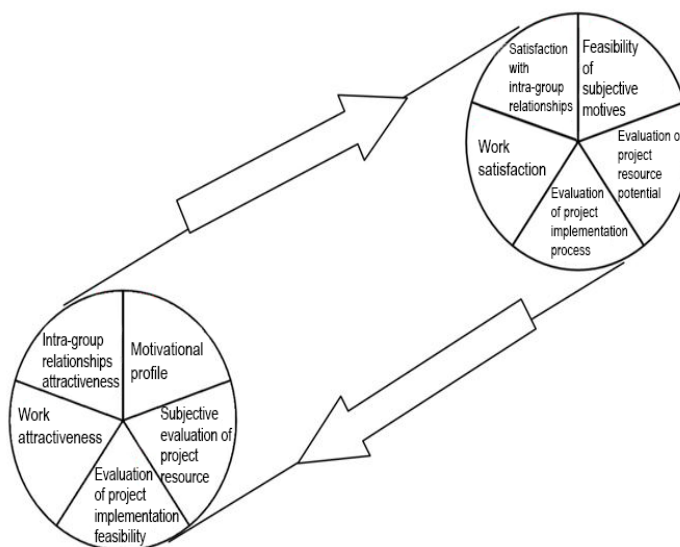


Figure 7. Resource model of project activity success