

IMPLEMENTATION OF SELECTED MANAGEMENT 3.0 PRACTICES IN PROJECT TEAMS – CASE STUDY OF A COMPANY FROM THE IT INDUSTRY

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Purpose: The aim of this paper is to increase the knowledge on how particular practices recommended within M3.0 framework stimulate motivation and commitment of project team members.

Design/methodology/approach: The paper – based on literature studies - describes a theory of M3.0 and selected M3.0 practices. Then a case study method is used. This paper presents results of interviews collected in three different project teams.

Findings: The introduction of selected M3.0 practices in the organization was met with positive feedback from both employees and their superiors. Their positive impact on both motivation and commitment was presented. However, some practices need to be adapted to the organization's current needs. These insights provide valuable guidelines for other organizations considering the implementation of the M3.0 concept.

Originality/value: This study contributes to the emerging research area of Management 3.0, where most existing studies focus on organizational structures. It is the first to examine the effectiveness of selected Management 3.0 practices in fostering motivation and commitment among project team members.

Keywords: Management 3.0, Leadership, Agile Project Management.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Management concepts continuously evolve as organizations face the challenge of implementing significant transformations efficiently and sustainably. According to Kotter (1996), a compelling sense of urgency and a cohesive guiding coalition are essential for driving change. Clear and transparent communication of the vision helps maintain motivation and commitment during transitions.

Management 3.0 (M3.0) builds on its predecessors, Management 1.0 (M1.0) and Management 2.0 (M2.0). M1.0 represents the early foundations of management, which later influenced organizational methods, including traditional (managerial) and modern (agile) approaches in project management. Understanding this evolution from rigid structures to flexible, people-focused practices highlights M3.0's role in fostering adaptability and engagement within organizations.

Nowadays, there are a lot of studies dedicated to agile project management, but there is not that much research concerning implementation of selected M3.0 practices (Piwowar-Sulej et al., 2022). There are some studies devoted to relations between general human resource management practices (such as mentoring) and employee motivation (Appelo, 2016; Adewuyi, Gbemi-Ogunleye, 2023). But there are no studies related to M3.0 tools and their influence on team's members motivation and commitment. The problem has not been discussed or empirically examined before.

The present paper addresses this very issue. Its purpose is to present how the implementation of M3.0 concept affects the motivation and commitment of project team members. Motivation may be described as the process of initiating and maintaining activities directed toward achieving specific goals (Schunk et al., 2014). In turn, commitment is a driving force that compels an individual to adhere to a specific course of action directed toward one or more objectives (Meyer, Herscovitch, 2001). The dependence of employees' motivation and commitment in the context of the implementation of M3.0 will be verified through a case study. In particular, the authors will examine M3.0 practices such as Mentoring, Moving Motivators, Kudo Box and Idea Box.

2. Literature Background

The classical school of management developed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. (Kitana, 2016). In 1903, Taylor (1903) published an article on the sciences of organization and management. According to M1.0 organizations were managed from top to bottom, and power was exercised by only a few (Appelo, 2016). These practices worked well in large projects in which there was high repeatability of processes, and the manufacturing processes were very well known and burdened with low, predictable risk (Asthana, 2017).

In the concept of M2.0, the perspective and understanding of the employee's role in the organization has changed. It has come to be considered that people are the most valuable assets (Appelo, 2014). M2.0 models are based on M1.0, so organizations which implement this concept are still top-down in a hierarchical structure. M2.0 was to help managers better manage the organization with the use of one-on-one conversations, but the hierarchy remained in the management architecture 2.0 (Appelo, 2016).

According to Appelo M1.0 is doing the wrong thing and that M 2.0 is doing the right thing in the wrong way. In turn, M3.0 is guided by three principles: engaging people, improving systems, and delighting clients. It is built on six pillars: Energize People, Empower Teams, Align Constraints, Develop Competence, Grow Structure, and Improve Everything (Appelo, 2014). Furthermore, Appelo (2014) proposed a set of practices to align with M3.0's principles and pillars. Companies are not required to use all of them but should select those that best fit their needs and adapt them accordingly. He also encouraged companies to create their own M3.0 practices, as long as they align with the core assumptions of M3.0.

When implementing Mentoring or the Moving Motivators practice, it is useful to remember that intrinsic motivation often involves autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Pink (2009) underlines that people thrive when they are granted the freedom to approach tasks on their own terms, the chance to improve their skills, and a clear link between their work and a broader goal. According to Yang (2024) it is possible to enhance proactive behaviors among employees by fostering a sense of security through psychological support. These perspectives align with M3.0 emphasis on empowering teams and fostering individual growth.

Superiors play a key role in employee mentoring. According to Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence fosters effective communication, empathy, and trust. Applying these principles helps leaders address team members' concerns, creating a psychologically safe environment that encourages open dialogue and empowers employees to take on responsibilities confidently.

To better understand their subordinates' motivations and values, managers use the Moving Motivators (CHAMPFROGS) exercise from M3.0 concept. Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasize the strong impact of intrinsic motivation on performance and satisfaction. By exploring employees' internal drives, teams can enhance engagement and investment in projects. CHAMPFROGS represents ten intrinsic motivators: Curiosity, Honor, Acceptance, Mastery, Power, Freedom, Relatedness, Order, Goal, and Status (Appelo, 2014). In this exercise, the manager and subordinate prioritize motivators and discuss their choices. This helps both parties understand each other's values and drivers, fostering better communication and cooperation. For mentors, it provides insight to better guide and support the development and motivation of their mentees.

The Happiness Door method evaluates team mood and satisfaction using icons (e.g., smiling, neutral, sad) displayed on a door or board, with team members selecting the icon that reflects their emotional state. The Idea Box is a structured tool within M3.0 for collecting and implementing ideas, fostering innovation and engagement. Finally, the Kudo Box allows teams to express gratitude and reward each other, following six guidelines: no pre-promised rewards, small rewards, continuous rewards, public recognition, rewarding behavior, and peer-to-peer rewards (Appelo, 2014).

At this point it is worth noting that M3.0 is an emerging research area. Almeida and Espinheira (2021) identified only 23 publications about M3.0. Most of them explored an organizational structure. Qualitative research approaches through the adoption of case studies, focus groups, and action research dominate in this area.

3. Methods

Due to the extensiveness of the researched issue, the case study method was chosen for the study, thanks to which its in-depth analysis and assessment was possible. This method makes it possible to collect a very large amount of qualitative data. In qualitative research such as case study during interviews we can ask people about all the things that are behind a given level of correlation (Kotter, 1996).

In a 25-person IT company composed mainly of recent graduates in their first jobs, selected M3.0 practices (Kudo Box, Happiness Door, and Mentoring) were introduced. Three teams of up to nine people worked using Scrum project management methodology. Data was collected through structured, casual interviews with Likert-scale questions on motivation and commitment. Interviews were conducted before and six months after the M3.0 implementation to assess its impact. Employees were asked about feeling appreciated, supervisor care, being heard, encouragement for development, teamwork quality, their progress, and learning opportunities.

4. Results

Table 1 presents results for the three teams before the implementation of M3.0 practices. The percentages in the table represent the proportion of employees within each team who responded positively to specific interview questions.

Table 1.

Baseline results for employee perceptions before the implementation of M3.0 practices

Issue	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
Feeling of being appreciated at work in the last 3 months	60%	60%	60%
Supervisor's care about them as people	50%	50%	50%
Employee opinion taken into account	45%	45%	45%
Encouragement to develop professionally	40%	40%	40%
Co-workers' care about doing their job well	55%	55%	55%
Experience of talking to someone about progress in the last 3 months	35%	35%	35%
Opportunity to learn and develop	50%	50%	50%
Assessed level of motivation as 3 or higher*	50%	45%	45%
Assessed level of commitment as 3 or higher*	40%	55%	50%

* Where 1 represents no motivation/commitment and 5 represents high motivation/commitment.

Source: The authors' own work

Mentoring was the first M3.0 practice introduced in the company. Initially, project managers had limited open communication with team members about human resource development. As the team progressed through formation stages, mentoring yielded increasingly positive results. Beyond regular meetings, employees began seeking support from mentors for

work-related challenges. Before M3.0, employees felt hesitant to approach supervisors for development support, but mentoring fostered more comfort and frequent feedback on performance.

With the passage of time, there was also a visible change in the reported readiness of employees to take on more and more demanding tasks or those which made them leave their comfort zone. The relationships that developed during the mentoring programs in the organization meant that over time some employees also approached their mentors asking for support in private matters.

CHAMPFROGS complemented the mentoring program by having supervisors and subordinates prioritize motivators and discuss their choices during the first meeting. While some pairs used Moving Motivators only once, in successful cases, mentors applied the insights to goal-setting and addressing challenges aligned with mentees' values. Revisiting the exercise after three months helped assess changes in motivations, gather feedback, and improve communication, enhancing support and alignment of expectations.

The Kudo Box was introduced one month after the team was formed and started with the mentoring program. The Kudo Box was placed in a visible and easily accessible place for all team members. Team members did not have any awards announced based on the number of thanks in the Kudo Box. In the first iteration, people put in their main thanks and admiration for the work done or the help they were given. In subsequent iterations, cards that they appreciated also began to appear, e.g. the way of talking to the client, open feedback during the meeting, a joke, or preparing tea for someone from the team.

During regular meetings, teams opened the Kudo Box to share gratitude, which was well-received and strengthened team bonds. Recipients were often surprised by the recognition, boosting their motivation, confidence, and willingness to take on challenges. Employees noted that the practice helped "strengthen workplace relationships" and "recognize their strengths".

At the end of each meeting, participants were asked to leave feedback on the door, though not everyone participated. Some opinions were too general or vague, and anonymous suggestions prevented follow-up for clarification, often rendering the feedback unhelpful for improving future meetings.

The interviews provided valuable qualitative insights into the impact of Management 3.0 practices on employee motivation and commitment. One of the participant remarked: *The introduction of Kudo Cards made me feel more appreciated by my colleagues. It's a simple gesture, but it has a big impact on morale.* Another employee admitted: *I noticed that after implementing the Happiness Door, our team started communicating more openly about challenges and successes, which made me feel more involved and valued.* These statements highlight how specific tools fostered a sense of recognition and collaboration within teams, aligning with the quantitative findings of increased motivation and engagement.

Due to the above, after two months, the approach to collecting feedback after the meetings was changed. It usually took place immediately at the end of the meeting, and each participant was asked to briefly summarize the meeting and highlight its strengths and weaknesses. This solution gave much more benefits because the lecturer had the opportunity to ask for details when getting to know the opinion, what gave the opinion, and what is the exact vision of the person who gave the feedback. Such open conversations in front of all meeting participants often activated other people who, hearing opinions or suggestions of other team members, gave their solutions to the problem and at the same time gained awareness of what is important for individual team members.

The Idea Box, based on M3.0 pillars of "Empower Teams" and "Improve Everything", was a recurring organizational practice. For four weeks, employees could submit improvement suggestions visible to all staff. Proposals were reviewed by management, who provided feedback or requested revisions if they were not feasible. Employees then voted, each having 10 points to distribute among proposals. The highest-scoring idea was implemented. Unselected proposals remained available for future voting rounds if still relevant.

The introduction of the above-mentioned practices in the organization was met with great enthusiasm by the employees. The results of the implementation of individual practices are presented in Table 2, broken down by the type.

Table 2.

M 3.0 Practices' impact on motivation and commitment

Practice	Impact on Motivation and Commitment
Mentoring	Built strong, open relationships between employees and supervisors. Increased willingness to share feedback, take on challenging tasks, and develop professionally and personally. Enhanced trust and motivation.
Moving Motivators (CHAMPFROGS)	Helped understand individual motivators, enabling tailored goal-setting. Improved communication and alignment of values between mentors and mentees, fostering personal growth and engagement.
Kudo Box	Strengthened team bonds by encouraging gratitude and recognition. Boosted motivation and self-confidence, leading to greater willingness to take on challenges and support team members.
Happiness Door	Initially ineffective due to anonymity and lack of actionable feedback. Modified approach (open discussions) improved feedback quality, encouraged participation, and fostered collaborative problem-solving.
Idea Box	Empowered employees by involving them in decision-making processes. Increased commitment by providing transparency about organizational constraints and enabling employees to influence their work environment.

Source: The authors' own work.

Employees were enthusiastic about the new improvements that emerged as a result of the votes, and clear and transparent rules regarding this practice ensured that even if one of the employees' proposals was rejected, it did not make them discouraged or incomprehensible to the new practice.

The results were formulated based on the responses provided by employees. Participants were asked to indicate either affirmative or negative answers to the specified question. The percentage of positive responses to the questions assessing motivation and commitment after six months of implementing M3.0 practices is shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Baseline results for employee perceptions after the implementation of M3.0 practices

Issue	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3
Feeling of being appreciated at work in the last 3 months	80%	85%	75%
Supervisor's care about them as people	85%	90%	80%
Employee opinion taken into account	75%	80%	70%
Encouragement to develop professionally	70%	75%	65%
Co-workers' care about doing their job well	90%	85%	80%
Experience of talking to someone about progress in the last 3 months	65%	70%	60%
Opportunity to learn and develop	80%	85%	75%
Assessed level of motivation as 3 or higher*	60%	70%	65%
Assessed level of commitment as 3 or higher*	55%	60%	70%

* Where 1 represents no motivation/commitment and 5 represents high motivation/commitment.

Source: The authors' own work.

These results suggest that while all teams benefited from the implementation of Management 3.0 practices, differences in team dynamics or initial conditions may have influenced the degree of impact. No participant who provided an affirmative response in before implementing M3.0 practices gave a negative response after implementation.

The interviews conducted before and after the implementation of Management 3.0 practices provide a basis for assessing changes in employee motivation and commitment (see: Table 4). Percentages presented in Table 4 were calculated by dividing the number of positive responses by the total number of respondents (25) and multiplying by 100.

Table 4.

Comparison of employee perceptions before and after the implementation of M3.0 practices

Issue	Before implementation	After 6 months
Feeling of being appreciated at work in the last 3 months	60%	80%
Supervisor's care about them as people	50%	85%
Employee opinion taken into account	45%	75%
Encouragement to develop professionally	40%	70%
Co-workers' care about doing their job well	55%	85%
Experience of talking to someone about progress in the last 3 months	35%	65%
Opportunity to learn and develop	50%	80%
Assessed level of motivation as 3 or higher*	47%	65%
Assessed level of commitment as 3 or higher*	48%	62%

* Where 1 represents no motivation/commitment and 5 represents high motivation/commitment.

Source: The authors' own work.

5. Discussion

The study demonstrates that M3.0 practices significantly improved employee motivation and commitment. For instance, the percentage of employees feeling appreciated increased from 60% to 80%, while those perceiving supervisor care rose from 50% to 85%.

The findings align with the theoretical foundations of M3.0, demonstrating its positive impact on employees-related outcomes when tailored to organizational needs. Mentoring emerged as the most effective practice, fostering strong, open relationships between employees and supervisors. This aligns with Goleman's (1995) emphasis on trust and emotional intelligence in creating psychologically safe environments. Regular mentoring sessions enabled employees to share feedback openly, enhancing their professional and personal development. This study contributes to research on mentoring (Czeska, 2023) through demonstrating that mentoring plays a crucial role in building a sense of self-efficacy which has been confirmed in conducted studies. This was also supported by research findings, which indicate that assuming the role of a mentor can enhance both commitment and the perceived psychological meaningfulness of work among mentee (Lin et al., 2021).

The Kudo Box strengthened team cohesion by fostering a culture of recognition and appreciation. This practice aligns with Deci's and Ryan's (1985) theory of intrinsic motivation, emphasizing relatedness as a key driver of engagement. Team members reported feeling more connected, which increased collaboration and willingness to take on challenges. Aligning the recognition process with organizational values enhances awareness of the company's mission, stimulates creativity, and promotes the appreciation of both major and minor contributions. Integrating this approach into daily operations fosters a culture of mutual recognition and strengthens the overall workplace environment (Rusin, 2025) what also been confirmed in research.

The Idea Box empowered employees by involving them in organizational decision-making. It enhanced transparency regarding company constraints and goals, increasing employees' commitment. This reflects M3.0 principles of empowering teams and improving systems. However, not all practices were equally effective. The Happiness Door technique faced challenges due to its anonymous feedback mechanism, limiting actionable insights. Adjusting the approach to open discussions improved feedback quality and engagement.

6. Conclusions

This study provides empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of M3.0 practices within modern management frameworks. The results have practical implications for managers seeking to improve team dynamics and engagement. By adopting M3.0 tools, organizations can create a more motivated and productive workforce.

Mentoring, *inter alia*, by ensuring the confidentiality of conversations and meetings, had a positive impact on the willingness to share feedback during meetings and open discussions thanks to the management's feeling of security to employees. The Happiness Door practice has not proved to be successful in a given organization. Lack of knowledge about who is the author of the feedback, and thus the inability to talk and learn about the source of the problem or what a given person would see as an improvement, often left feedback turned out to be of little value, without the possibility of working with it. In summary, the organization adopting a methodological approach to the implementation of M3.0 could find and adapt those practices that worked and give up those that did not bring much-added value to the organization.

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the case study method, while allowing for an in-depth exploration, restricts the generalizability of findings to other industries or cultural contexts (Goleman, 1995). Additionally, the reliance on interviews and observations introduces subjectivity, as factors like interviewer bias or respondents' reluctance to share honest opinions may have influenced the results. Another limitation is the short evaluation period of six months, which may not capture long-term impacts of M3.0 practices on team motivation and commitment. Lastly, challenges with anonymous feedback mechanisms, such as the Happiness Door, reduced the ability to derive actionable insights from employee input. Future research are enhanced to address these limitations. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the sustained effects of Management 3.0 practices over time. Incorporating quantitative methods alongside qualitative approaches could provide more robust evidence of correlations between practices and outcomes like employee satisfaction or productivity. Lastly, integrating emotional intelligence principles into future studies may help better understand their role in enhancing team dynamics and individual performance within this framework.

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