

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND MOTIVATING MEMBERS OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY PROJECT TEAMS

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Purpose: The main aim of this article is to identify and assess the role and importance of internal communication in the process of motivating members of project teams in the construction industry.

Design/methodology/approach: The survey was conducted among project team members and project managers in the construction industry. An anonymous survey was conducted to identify and assess the role and importance of internal communication in motivating project team members in the construction industry.

Findings: Effective internal communication plays a crucial role in employee motivation. Transparency fosters trust, which is particularly important in the construction industry, dominated by teamwork, changing conditions, and time pressures. Furthermore, motivating project team members requires the use of diverse strategies, encompassing both tangible factors (e.g., bonuses, project allowances) and intangible ones (e.g., recognition, development opportunities, and autonomy). The most effective motivational practices are closely linked to the quality of the relationship between management and team members.

Research limitations/implications: The main limitation is the limited size and nature of the sample: managers and members of project teams in the construction industry, as well as the dynamic nature of the industry and project teams. The construction industry is subject to technological, regulatory, and market changes that affect the way project teams communicate and are managed.

Practical implications: The results obtained may contribute to the development of project management practices in the construction industry in the area of internal communication and motivation of project team members, providing practical guidance on key channels and forms of communication and information flow in relation to motivation.

Originality/value: Construction projects require the integration of activities carried out by specialists representing different fields, and the results of empirical research contained in this article deepen the understanding of the role and importance of internal communication in the context of motivating project team members.

Keywords: internal communication, motivating project teams members, construction industry.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Internal communication has long been a subject of interest for both management researchers and practitioners responsible for the effective coordination of organizational activities. Modern organizations operate in conditions of increasing complexity, requiring rapid information exchange, adapting to change, and making decisions in an environment of dynamic employee interactions (Schein, 2017). This is particularly evident in project-based organizations, where work efficiency depends largely on the cohesion of interdisciplinary teams and the ability to collaborate harmoniously under time pressure and high levels of responsibility (PMI, 2021). Effective internal communication is a key factor in the effectiveness of project teams in the construction industry, characterized by a high degree of complexity, changing conditions, and the need to integrate the activities of multiple stakeholders. As Schein (2017) emphasizes, communication plays a fundamental role in building organizational culture and supporting the coordination of team activities. In construction projects, where rapid response to change and effective information transfer are essential, the quality of communication becomes crucial to project success. Project management research indicates that insufficient communication is one of the most common causes of project failure (Robbins, Judge, 2021). PMI (2021) considers internal communication a key area of expertise, essential for effective information management and maintaining cohesion among project team members. At the same time, the literature emphasizes that the quality of communication affects not only operational efficiency but also employee motivation and engagement (Maslow, 1987; Hackman, Oldham, 1980). Transparent, regular, and two-way communication can strengthen a sense of meaningful work, increase identification with project goals, and foster shared responsibility for team outcomes.

From an employee motivation perspective, it's also important that internal communication influences a sense of agency, commitment, and identification with project goals. Transparent employee information policies, frequent and constructive feedback, and management's accessibility directly influence team members' attitudes and willingness to put in extra effort (Hackman, Oldham, 1980; Arnold et al., 2016). Research on project teamwork emphasizes that communication serves a regulatory and relational function—enabling both task control and coordination, as well as building social relationships based on trust, respect, and a sense of shared purpose (Bizjak, Faganel, 2020).

The construction industry, characterized by the specific nature of project work, large-scale projects, and the need to integrate engineering, economic, and management knowledge, provides a particularly challenging context for research on communication and motivation. Construction projects engage diverse groups of specialists – from architects and designers, through construction managers, to occupational health and safety and logistics specialists – which requires a constant, precise, and multi-channel flow of information (Malik, 2018). The literature indicates that project communication in construction is not only a technical

function but also a social one, influencing the work climate, collaboration, and employee engagement (Dainty et al., 2006). Detailed empirical research on the specifics of the construction industry remains lacking, as projects are dispersed, time-pressured, and coordination with multiple subcontractors is essential, creating a unique context for communication and motivation management. In the construction industry, employee motivation has traditionally been primarily linked to material factors, working conditions, and a sense of security (Malik, 2018). Significantly less research has been devoted to the role of internal communication, understood as a tool for supporting intrinsic motivation and increasing the engagement of project team members. In this area, there is a gap in the relationship between communication practices and motivation levels in teams implementing construction projects.

The main purpose of the article is to identify and assess the role and importance of internal communication in the process of motivating members of project teams in the construction industry. Three research questions were formulated: (1) What is the relationship between internal communication and the motivation level of project team members in the construction industry? (2) Does the lack of clearly defined internal communication policies impact the motivation and performance of project team members? (3) Does a formalized reward system shape employees' positive attitudes toward their responsibilities?

The article begins with a theoretical section, including a review of the literature. This is followed by a description of the methods and tools. The results are presented and discussed in the next section. The work ends with a summary, conclusions, and indicated limitations of the empirical research.

2. Literature review

The literature on construction project management increasingly emphasizes that the quality of internal communication and employee motivation have a significant impact on project effectiveness. Communication is a hot topic nowadays and many studies have been developed on its basis. Nevertheless, in the project management field, the research developed is still scarce (Barros, et al., 2024). Research suggests that internal communication is crucial for organizational outcomes (Ruck, Men, 2021). Given the high organizational complexity, volatile work environments, and dispersed project teams, communication is becoming one of the most important factors determining the success of construction projects (Dainty et al., 2006; Agyekum et al., 2021). Internal communication is pivotal to a company's performance during construction projects (Chi et al., 2021). Research shows that ineffective information exchange and a lack of clear communication channels lead to delays, implementation errors, and an increased risk of conflict between project participants (Çelik, Kamali, 2021; PMI, 2019).

Hernández et al. (2019) revealed that internal communication is the most important aspect of project management, as most project managers communicate to coordinate their activities. One of the key challenges in internal communication is ensuring equal access to relevant information for all team members. Therefore, it is important to utilize a variety of communication channels, such as regular meetings, emails, digital platforms, and discussion forums, to ensure that all voices are heard. By creating a culture of inclusive communication, organizations can empower employees to share ideas and opinions, ultimately enriching the creative process (Safapour, 2019).

Internal communication is defined as the process of transmitting information between project team members, construction managers, designers, and subcontractors. As Love et al. (2016) note, the complexity of the construction environment makes quality communication crucial for accurate planning, progress control, and decision-making.

Zulch (2014) argued that communication is the process of gathering all relevant information, interpreting it, and effectively communicating it to those who may need it. Project team members must collaboratively share, gather, and integrate information and knowledge to achieve project goals. Meta-analyses indicate that implementing digital tools such as BIM, integrated communication platforms, and mobile apps improves the transparency and accuracy of information, although their effectiveness is limited by barriers related to user competence and organizational culture (Zhou, Zhang, 2024; Oraee et al., 2017).

Gamil and Rahman (2019) found that a lack of communication also leads to negative consequences, such as frustration, confusion, discouragement, and a tense atmosphere in which construction personnel are reluctant to be productive and collaborate. Good communication within a team is essential to determining project success or failure. Frequent communication between members strengthens trust and, consequently, the relationship between them, which translates into increased performance (Júnior, Chaves, 2014; Sarhadi, 2016). However, motivation does not stem solely from communication. A project manager must play a leadership role alongside a communicator role to motivate people (Zulch, 2014).

In the area of employee motivation in construction projects, research shows that both external factors (remuneration, working conditions, safety) and internal factors (autonomy, meaningful work, professional development) have a significant impact on employee engagement and performance (Hashiguchi et al., 2020; Al-Sabah et al., 2022). Construction as an industry is characterized by specific conditions, including the temporary nature of project teams, high physical demands, and dynamically changing working conditions. For these reasons, motivational models must be adapted to the project realities and take into account the specific needs of different employee groups (Shen et al., 2017). Leadership also plays a significant role. Larsson's (2018) research showed that leadership behaviors based on trust, support, and clear goal communication are crucial for maintaining high team member motivation. Similarly, Alabdulkarim and Haq (2020) emphasize that effective leader communication increases job satisfaction and employee engagement in project tasks.

The link between communication and motivation has been extensively explored in recent research, which indicates that communication also serves a motivational function—building trust, reducing uncertainty, and strengthening interpersonal bonds (Owusu-Manu et al., 2023). Regular feedback, recognition, and clarity about employees' roles and responsibilities increase a sense of belonging and positively impact their performance (PMI, 2019; Han et al., 2021). In multicultural teams, which are increasingly common in construction, communication is a key factor in minimizing the risk of conflict and supporting team integration (Agyekum et al., 2021).

A review of the main studies in this area is included in Table 1.

Table 1.

Selected studies on communication and motivation in construction projects

Author/ year	Country/ Region	Topic	Main findings
Larsson (2018)	Europe	Leadership and motivation	Leadership style strongly influences the motivation of project teams and the efficiency of construction processes.
Hashiguchi et al. (2020)	Japan	Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation	The value of motivators depends on employee age and experience; intrinsic factors have a strong influence on older employees.
Owusu-Manu et al. (2023)	Africa	Communication and productivity	Improving communication increases overall project efficiency and reduces conflict.
Zhou, Zhang (2024)	Japan	Communication-motivation relationships	Communication supported by digital technologies improves team motivation and collaboration.

Source: own study.

In summary, the literature consistently confirms that both internal communication and employee motivation are key elements of construction project success. The strong relationship between these areas indicates the need to analyze and integrate them concurrently in project management practices. However, a contemporary approach to human resources management in construction requires in-depth and multidimensional research that takes into account both the influence of psychosocial factors and the dynamic development of communication technologies.

3. Methods

This section presents the results of empirical research on the role of internal communication and motivational practices in project teams operating in the construction industry. In this sector, characterized by highly complex processes, a highly volatile environment, and the need for close cooperation between specialists with diverse competencies, effective communication and adequate employee motivation are key determinants of project success. The main purpose of the article is to identify and assess the role and importance of internal communication in the process of motivating members of project teams in the construction industry. Three research

questions were formulated: (1) What is the relationship between internal communication and the motivation level of project team members in the construction industry? (2) Does the lack of clearly defined internal communication policies impact the motivation and performance of project team members? (3) Does a formalized reward system shape employees' positive attitudes toward their responsibilities?

In order to achieve the objective of the article and obtain answers to the research questions, empirical research was conducted in February and March 2025. The tool used in the research was a questionnaire containing a total of 17 research questions in the main part and metric questions.

The survey used a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). In addition to addressing the link between internal communication and employee motivation, the role of project managers and their involvement in the communication and motivation process, the questions also referred to the lack of clearly defined internal communication rules and the reward system in shaping positive employee attitudes towards their work. The research was conducted among 147 members of project teams and project managers in the construction industry, where the main objective was to collect respondents' opinions on the issues analyzed, identify links between them, and possibly identify areas for improvement.

The survey was conducted online and was completely anonymous. The questionnaire was made available in electronic form to a total of 197 managers and members of project teams implementing construction projects in southern Poland. A total of 147 fully completed questionnaires were returned. Twenty-three were not completely filled out and were therefore excluded from further analysis. The description of the research sample is included in Table 2.

Table 2.
Sample description

Respondent	Statistics	
Age	20-25	8 %
	26-35	29%
	35-50	39%
	> 50	24%
Gender	Male: 98	66 %
	Female: 49	34%
Work experience	< 5	18%
	6-10	43%
	> 10	39%

Source: own study.

The survey questionnaire was completed by 98 men and 49 women. People aged 26-35 accounted for 29%, and people aged 20-25 accounted for 8%. The largest group (39% of respondents) were people aged 36-50, and 24% of respondents were over 50 years old. The most numerous group in the sample were employees with 6 to 10 years of service (43% of respondents). Another large group consisted of employees with over 10 years of service (39% of respondents), while the smallest group consisted of respondents with less than 5 years of service in the industry (18% of respondents).

4. Results

The main part of the questionnaire consisted of 17 questions. The first question concerned the link between internal communication and motivation and commitment at work. A significant proportion of respondents recognized the important role that communication plays in this area, with 40% selecting “definitely yes” and 53% selecting “yes”. Only 6% of respondents said they had no opinion on the subject, and only 1% believed that communication did not affect their motivation and engagement. The second question concerned receiving feedback on their work and its results during project implementation. The largest number of respondents, 41%, indicated that they receive such information sporadically. 29% of respondents admitted that they receive such information regularly. In turn, 27% admitted that they receive this information very rarely. Only 3% of respondents indicated a complete lack of feedback on the results of their work and commitment to the tasks assigned to them.

The next question concerned the respondents' opinion on the transparency of internal communication rules during project implementation and whether these rules are understandable and widely communicated to project team members. A decisive “yes” was indicated by 19% of respondents, while “yes” was chosen by 21%, suggesting a moderately positive assessment of level of an internal communication. The answer “I don't know” was chosen by 11%, which may suggest a lack of clear opinion or insufficient experience with information flow in the project team. In turn, 33% of respondents gave a negative answer, while 16% selected “definitely no”.

The next question concerned whether there were areas in which internal communication could be improved. Twenty-seven percent of respondents answered “definitely yes”, and 33% answered “yes”, meaning that a total of 60% of respondents believed that there were areas where internal communication could be improved. Twenty-two percent answered “I don't know”, and 16% answered “no”. Only 2% of respondents answered “definitely no”.

The fifth question concerned the attitude of project managers and their approach to communication. A definite positive assessment was given by 11% of respondents, while 41% chose the answer “yes”. The “I don't know” option was selected by 36% of respondents, which may suggest a lack of contact with management. In turn, 12% of respondents answered “no”. None of the respondents selected the “definitely no” option.

The next question concerned attitudes and practices related to sharing experiences, ideas, and opinions within the team, as well as open communication during project implementation. 19% of respondents answered “definitely yes”, while 27% answered “yes”. In total, 46% of respondents responded positively to open communication within the project team and sharing experiences. A significant number of respondents, as many as 34%, chose the answer “I don't know”. A total of 20% of respondents believe that there are no practices that encourage the sharing of ideas and opinions or open communication. Respondents were then asked to indicate whether they had access to all the information necessary to perform their tasks while working

in a project team. The majority, as many as 52% of respondents, answered “yes”, which clearly indicates that more than half of the employees have access to the information necessary to perform their professional duties. 19% of respondents selected “I don't know”. Twenty-nine percent of respondents, which is almost one-third of those surveyed, indicated that they do not have access to all the necessary data and information. None of the respondents selected “definitely yes” or “definitely no”.

Next, respondents were asked about the possibility of direct, open communication about problems with the project manager and within the project team. Twelve percent of respondents answered “definitely yes”, and 37% chose “yes”, which means that almost half of the respondents perceive project managers as accessible and open to discussions about difficulties and problems during project implementation. The answer “I don't know” was selected by 18% of respondents, which may indicate uncertainty about the actual openness of supervisors and colleagues. The answer ‘no’ was selected by 33%, while no one selected the option “definitely not”.

The next question concerned the use of internal communication tools, including platforms and instant messengers. A positive response, indicating their use, was given by 76% of respondents, which indicates the widespread use of tools that facilitate communication during the implementation of projects. The answer “I don't know” was selected by 6% of respondents, which may indicate a lack of awareness of their use or limited access to these tools. The answer ‘no’ was selected by 18%, while no one selected the answers “definitely yes” or “definitely no”.

Next asked about the most frequently used methods and channels of communication during project implementation. Respondents could select more than one answer. The most frequently chosen method of information exchange was face-to-face meetings, selected by 29% of respondents, followed by online meetings (28%). Next were instant messaging (Messenger, WhatsApp) (26%) and telephone (24%). The least popular, but still important, channel of communication is email, which was indicated by 18% of respondents. The next question addressed the issue of balance between electronic and face-to-face communication. Twenty-two percent of respondents answered “definitely yes”, while 50% answered “yes”, indicating that almost three-quarters of respondents perceive the relationship between electronic and face-to-face communication as balanced. Seven percent of respondents selected “I don't know”. Twenty-one percent selected “no”, while no one selected “definitely no”.

The next question concerned appreciation of commitment and recognition for their work. Only 6% of respondents answered “definitely yes”, while 22% chose “yes”. Twenty-eight percent answered “I don't know”, and 44% of respondents gave a negative answer—23% chose ‘no’ and 11% chose “definitely no”.

The next questions concerned financial and non-financial tools and instruments used to motivate employees working on construction projects. At the beginning, respondents were asked to indicate which of the listed financial motivational factors they had encountered while working in project teams. Respondents could select more than one answer. The most frequently

indicated form of financial motivation was discretionary bonuses, which was selected by 69% of respondents. Respondents also indicated gift cards (21%), material rewards (19%), and training subsidies (15%).

The next question concerned non-financial motivation tools used in the implementation of construction projects. Respondents could select more than one answer. The most frequently indicated form of non-financial motivation was additional training, which was selected by 41% of respondents. This was followed by flexible working hours (32% of respondents). Opportunities for development and promotion were indicated by 31%, and recognition and praise from superiors by 23%. Respondents were then asked which of these instruments most effectively motivate them to work in a project team. Respondents could select more than one answer. By far the most frequently cited factor was discretionary bonuses for a job well done, which 73% of respondents indicated as one of the most effective forms of motivation. In second place was the possibility of promotion, which was indicated by 42% of the survey participants. Training and professional development were indicated by 28% of respondents. Positive relationships with colleagues received 16% of responses, and flexible working hours received 13%. The least frequently indicated factor was educational subsidies, which received only 7% of the votes.

In the next question, respondents were asked to assess whether the way management communicates with employees is related to their motivation to perform their work. The answer “definitely yes” was chosen by 29% of respondents, and “yes” was indicated by 36% of respondents. In total, more than half of the respondents believe that the manner of communication has a significant impact on their motivation to work on projects. Fifteen percent of respondents selected “I don't know”. Eleven percent selected “no”, and 9% selected “definitely no”.

The last question concerned the most common internal communication challenges during the implementation of construction projects. The most frequently mentioned challenge was the lack of clear guidelines, which was indicated by as many as 37% of respondents. Less numerous, but still noticeable challenges included communication noise (26%) and interpersonal conflicts (20%). Difficulties in accessing information were indicated by 15% of respondents, and the lack of effective communication tools by 2%.

5. Discussion

Empirical research clearly shows that internal communication plays a significant role in shaping the motivation levels of project team members in the construction industry. An analysis of the collected results shows that effective information exchange between the manager and project team members is not limited to an informational function, but can also serve as

a motivational tool, supporting commitment and activity in achieving project goals. Most respondents indicated that messages and information from managers were an important factor influencing their willingness to work and perform the tasks assigned to them in the project. Such a high percentage indicates that the quality of internal communication at the project site can be an integral part of human resource management strategy, especially in the context of strengthening internal motivation. Despite the significant and positive role of internal communication, the survey results also revealed a number of serious shortcomings in this area. The process of information transfer is not always carried out in a systematic, regular, or orderly manner.

In many cases, the process of information transfer is not carried out in a systematic, regular, or orderly manner. A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they receive messages concerning important aspects of project implementation sporadically. The lack of regularity in the communication of guidelines or the evaluation of work to date results in a sense of confusion about the tasks being performed, a lack of transparency about current project priorities, and an inability to respond to various project situations on an ongoing basis, all of which have a negative impact on the sense of security and job stability. The responses also suggest that motivating project team members is largely based on financial instruments, with little use of intangible factors such as recognition, praise, opportunities for development, or promotion. The results of the study clearly indicate that non-financial motivation also plays an important role in shaping proactive attitudes and strengthening commitment.

Another area requiring attention is the low level of feedback received by project team members. More than half of respondents indicated that they receive feedback rarely or sporadically, which undoubtedly limits the possibility of self-correction and professional development. These practices could be supplemented by the development of uniform standards for periodic performance reviews, which could serve as a basis for motivational discussions and support employees in identifying their strengths and areas for improvement. The survey results indicate an imbalance between individual communication with employees and discussions during general meetings. Furthermore, the lack of regular and scheduled meetings has a negative impact on building relationships based on trust, understanding, and mutual respect.

The issue of professional development and improving qualifications is also important. Respondents emphasized that they value the opportunity to participate in training and acquire new skills. Unfortunately, in the group surveyed, these were not often used as motivational tools that also support professional development.

6. Conclusion

The main purpose of the article was to identify and assess the role and importance of internal communication in the process of motivating members of project teams in the construction industry. Three research questions were formulated: (1) What is the relationship between internal communication and the motivation level of project team members in the construction industry? (2) Does the lack of clearly defined internal communication policies impact the motivation and performance of project team members? (3) Does a formalized reward system shape employees' positive attitudes toward their responsibilities?

Based on the results, several recommendations can be made to improve internal communication and increase employee motivation. The first step is to implement regular, periodic project team meetings. This will enable the systematic sharing of key project-related information and allow for direct recognition of individual employee contributions. Consider implementing short, weekly one-on-one meetings, which would facilitate ongoing information exchange and allow for the submission of comments, suggestions, and ideas. It is also recommended to create a constructive feedback system based on standardized evaluation forms, enabling comprehensive analysis of work results and providing project team members with the opportunity to correct any errors on an ongoing basis. It is also crucial that feedback is not solely critical in nature but also demonstrates appreciation for effort, progress, and commitment. Recognition also plays a significant role in building motivation. It is also worth considering implementing mixed, traditional and digital forms of communication with project team members.

In answering the first research question regarding the relationship between internal communication and the motivation of project team members in the construction industry, it should be emphasized that the majority of respondents indicated that the clarity of information provided, the availability of superiors, and open relationships significantly impact their motivation to work. Internal communication not only fosters a better understanding of expectations but also builds a sense of belonging and influence on the professional situation. The second research question concerned the effects of a lack of formalized internal communication policies. Respondents' responses indicated that the lack of clearly defined communication channels and policies leads to information chaos, a lack of control over one's work. This negatively impacts motivation and reduces the effectiveness of tasks performed. Respondents indicated that they do not always know what is expected of them or how their work is assessed, which translates into their attitudes when carrying out assigned tasks. The final research question addressed the relationship between the reward system and the attitudes and motivation of respondents. The empirical data obtained indicate that although financial elements (bonuses, allowances) are important, many respondents also expect non-material forms of recognition, such as praise, distinctions or recognition.

In summary, the empirical research confirmed that effective internal communication plays a significant role in employee motivation. As the literature emphasizes, organizations characterized by clearly defined communication channels and regular information exchange between management and the team demonstrate higher levels of coordination and a reduced risk of errors resulting from misunderstandings. Transparency in communication fosters trust, which is particularly important in the construction industry—dominated by teamwork, changing conditions, and time pressures. Motivating project team members requires the use of diverse strategies that incorporate both tangible motivators (e.g., bonuses, project allowances) and intangible ones (e.g., recognition, development opportunities, autonomy in action). The most effective motivational practices are closely linked to the quality of the relationship between management and team members. Good communication practices increase the effectiveness of motivation, and properly motivated employees are more willing to engage in the project implementation process.

The main limitations of the research are: the limited sample size and nature. The research was conducted on a limited number of respondents and project teams, which may not fully reflect the diversity of communication practices across the construction industry. The sample selection was partially purposive, further limiting its representativeness. The second limitation is the dynamic nature of the industry and project teams. The construction industry is subject to technological, regulatory, and market changes, which impact how teams communicate and manage.

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