

**TEAMWORK AS A FACTOR OF COMPANY SUCCESS - CASE STUDY  
AND PILOT RESEARCH IN A SELECTED COMPANY****Neda Nikolić, Jovana Radosavljević, Zoran Nešić, Jasmina Ćurčić\*, Milan Vesković***University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Technical Sciences Čačak, Čačak, Serbia;**\*Corresponding author: [jasmina.curcic@ftn.kg.ac.rs](mailto:jasmina.curcic@ftn.kg.ac.rs)***Abstract**

The aim of this research was to identify the factors that influence teamwork, identify the positive or negative effects of teamwork on employees and to examine the impact of educational outcomes through teamwork on organizational performance. This research study analyzes the impact of teamwork on the organizational performance of employees in the company "STRABAG". Several of the most popular measures for achieving better team performance are analyzed, including team trust, recognition and rewards. A self-structured questionnaire was used in data collection. The research study used correlation techniques to analyze the relationship between two variables, namely teamwork and organizational performance. The conclusion of the research indicates that teamwork and team performance are related to positive organizational performance.

**Keywords:** teamwork; organizational performance;

**INTRODUCTION**

Permanent search for improvement of organizational performance has been of serious importance since the pioneers of modern management. Robert Owen sought to motivate employees with his method known as the "silent orderly" in order to improve performance [1].

From Taylor as a representative of scientific management, to Fayol as a representative of administrative management, the goal was the same. However, with the emergence of the behavioral approach, the needs and feelings of employees are put in the center of attention. It becomes clear that human potential is a significant potential in increasing organizational performance. By developing and acting on this understanding, we arrive at modern management that recognizes teamwork as a factor in the improvement of the organization, its increased efficiency and increased performance.

A team can be described as a group of people who work together to achieve the same goals and objectives for the benefit of service users and organizations in order to provide good service quality. Team building, event planning, and activities have the potential to bring the people employed to a strong sense of direction, feasible plans and solutions, a strong sense of belonging to the team and to it, and clear strategic values focused on the customer. Poor

team building and planning sessions bring disappointment, low morale and negative motivation to the entire organization. They fail to deliver the expected results. Organizations disappear with little strategic direction. Everyone works hard, but usually on the wrong tasks and goals. Employees take small steps towards achieving key action items and nothing important is completed [2].

Musa R. I Nasiry M. u svom radu navode da je Teamwork is as old as history, and many companies use the word teamwork in either one way or the other, which may be referred to as a team in development, marketing procedures, management team, manufacturing team or an entire company [3]. Teamwork is the ability to work together towards a common vision. Teamwork enables average people to achieve above-average results. "Collective action" is widely recognized as a positive force that provides additional benefits to any organization or institution, regardless of whether it is for-profit or non-profit oriented. Teams allow individuals to empower themselves, bring out the best in themselves and maximize the benefits of working together as a group. Cooperation with the collective can also enable individuals to better understand the importance of teamwork and how the organization works, to more easily accept the corporate culture, thereby reducing

any ambiguity, misconception, misinterpretation. Company teamwork is the only sure way to make maximum use of human potential.

According to Steiner (1972), teams and teamwork are not new concepts; teams and team thinking have been around for years at companies like Procter & Gamble. In the 1980s, when competing Japanese companies threatened the United States' auto market, American companies adopted a new team-oriented approach. It is indicated that teams can be more than a traditional corporate structure for quick and efficient decision-making, and that teams are needed for future restructuring and reengineering processes, giving examples of how simple changes such as encouraging input and feedback from line workers bring dramatic improvements. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the impact that teamwork has on organizational performance.

## **TEAMWORK**

The impact of teams on organizational performance has been the subject of much research by scholars, managers, and practitioners in recent years. The main reason for this attention is the belief that teams can positively influence the performance of organizations. Some researchers believe that team work is particularly important in achieving organizational goals and eliciting performance among subordinates. Several reasons suggest that there should be a relationship between teamwork and performance. A number of authors agree and suggest that effective team behavior can facilitate improved performance when organizations face new challenges. Understanding the impact of teamwork on performance is important because some researchers see teamwork as one of the key driving forces for improving firm performance and overall company climate.

Teamwork is the concept of people working together, as in a sales team, a sports team, etc. It has also become so valued that many large corporations have developed specific tests to measure a potential employee's teamwork ability. Hence, it has become an important goal in most workplaces, the belief being that teamwork gives employees a sense of ownership and encourages cooperation [5].

## **FORMATION OF TEAMS**

When forming a team, attention must be paid to three important factors:

- team size,
- knowledge and skills of members i
- roles in the team.

The limitation of the number of team members is due to the reason for the lack of communication in large teams. In such a case, members need more time to agree, misunderstandings become more common. A smaller number of people more easily achieves cohesion, mutual respect and interests.

Another important factor for establishing a successful team is the necessary knowledge and skills. The most important are technical knowledge, the ability to solve problem situations and make decisions, as well as interpersonal skills, and the most important skills for a team leader are conceptual skills. It is important to take care of the coverage of all skills because the overrepresentation of one skill at the expense of others will reduce the effectiveness of the team.

If some of the team members do not have certain skills, it is not a reason that the team will not be successful. It is the team that serves to supplement the skills that an individual lacks, for the individual to improve and acquire new skills. Scientists agree that the process of creating teams results from the following steps:

- Recognizing problems in teamwork,
- Team work in order to collect and analyze data related to the problem,
- Development of an action plan,
- Action implementation,
- Evaluation of results

## **STRUCTURE AND FACTORS OF TEAM EFFICIENCY**

Organizations can be structured in different ways, and the structure of an organization can determine the ways in which it functions and acts. There are many divisions of teams, which depends on the author and the classification criteria applied. They are most often divided by the content of work into work teams and work improvement teams. According to the time dimension, there are permanent, temporary and occasional teams, and according to the degree of team independence, we can distinguish between autonomous teams, semi-autonomous teams and teams with low autonomy [6].

It is necessary to thoroughly consider the structure and goals of the team, in order to identify, group and motivate team members to work together. What is extremely important is the education of team members about the

benefits of teamwork for the organization and for each team member individually.

The two main team structures that the organization forms are reflected in:

1) Functional teams:

These teams mostly deal with finance, sales and marketing, so they are formed by functions in the organization and are considered a functional part of the entire organization.

They generally operate in accordance with broad guidelines and policies formulated by the organization's top executives, and generally in a steady flow without much fuss. These teams with their members follow a routine and pattern set in advance by the managers. They are more or less permanent.

2) Project teams:

They are put together to perform specific tasks, achieve specific goals within a precisely defined time frame, for a specific project. Hence the name project teams. With the completion of the task, these teams are in most cases disbanded and the team members return to their routine tasks. For example, the accreditation of a new study program at the university can be the goal of forming a project team that will include members who are skilled and capable of successfully implementing the project within the stipulated time, after which they return to their routine jobs. achieved by one team, then the project is broken down into smaller goals and set to be accomplished by sub-teams within the team matrix.

In the realization of the set goals and the realization of the vision, team members must be ready for mutual openness and honesty, decent communication, mutual motivation, as well as to understand and overcome difficulties and differences. It is important for them to tolerate disagreements and overcome them constructively. Team members have different stakes in achieving the goals. It is closely related to their knowledge and skills.

The contribution itself ensures the status that the member will have both in an informal and a formal sense. Therefore, the team is in constant decomposition and adaptation both according to the external environment and the internal structure [7]. Effectiveness criteria are established according to the goal and have different manifestations. At the same time, the goals are not the only success criteria, but also the mutual relations of the members, their satisfaction with the membership, their attitude towards the leader and the mission of the team,

internal harmony, cohesion and other characteristics [7].

Employee performance is an important factor in the effectiveness of teamwork. Organizations that emphasized teams resulted in increased employee performance, higher productivity, and better problem solving at work [8].

Teamwork is an important means of a new type of work organization. Teamwork is a precise organizational measure that shows many different characteristics in all types of organizations including non-profits [9].

One research study concluded that a good manager is one who assigns responsibilities to his employees in the form of a group or team in order to get maximum performance from employees. Teamwork is a strategy that has the potential to improve the performance of individuals and organizations, but needs to be nurtured over time. Organizations need to consider strategies to improve performance in light of an increasingly competitive environment. Another study concluded that it should be possible to design a team building system within each organization for employees to promote and disseminate best practice and maximize performance [10]. The main emphasis for designing and implementing such a system is ultimately to improve employee training.

Conti and Kleiner (2003) reported that teams offer greater participation, challenge and a sense of achievement. Organizations with teams will attract and retain the best people. This in turn will create a high performing organization that is flexible, efficient and most importantly, profitable [11]. Katzenbach and Smith (1993) are convinced that people who work in a team function more effectively, are less susceptible to stress and such individuals put more effort into their work. Such individuals are less prone to stress because the organization's tasks or problems are broken down, thus reducing the burden on the individual. When the workload is reduced, it encourages employees to expand their skills and knowledge and this leads to higher performance and productivity.

"Team Trust" as an efficiency factor, implies that trust among team members comes when team members develop trust in each other. One research study concluded that trust among team members develops unique skills and coordination of individuals [12].

According to Manz and Neke (2002), high performance teams within an organization exist when there is cooperation and unity among

members [13]. Reduction of errors, quality of results, increased productivity and customer satisfaction are various criteria through which team performance is evaluated [14].

### **EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES OF TEAMWORK AND PERFORMANCE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

It is difficult to formulate an unambiguous and definitive description of the "effects." The spectrum of performance indicators has been investigated in organizations, so in this aspect we are interested in the relationship of educational and operational outcomes to the improvement of organizational results. The first would include knowledge, skills, motivation, improved communication, the second would include productivity, product or service quality, innovation and customer satisfaction while the organization's output could be measured as value added per employee and return on invested capital. Although some of these measures - job satisfaction, for example, or work absenteeism - may not seem to be of great importance, practice nevertheless shows that there are important connections with organizational performance. Theoretical arguments explaining why teamwork can lead to improved organizational performance are numerous. Some theories focus on the effort and motivation of individual workers and claim that workers work harder and better in a team. The strategic orientation of human resources management says that an adequately designed human resources system through teamwork will have a positive effect on job satisfaction, self-satisfaction, commitment and motivation of the employee, which will lead to changes in behavior that result in improved organizational performance.

When evaluating work functions, it is important to look critically at whether employees are in the best position for their knowledge skills. It is wise to think about the distribution of jobs in order to use people's skills and abilities [15]. A recent study shows that employees working in teams can produce more results compared to individuals [16].

According to Cohen and Bailey (1997), an employee team is a set of individuals who are interdependent on tasks and who share responsibility for outcomes.

One research study concluded that teamwork is necessary for all types of organizations

including non-profit organizations (Pfaff & Huddleston, 2003).

The impact of teams on organizational performance has been the subject of much research by academics and practitioners in recent years (Jones, 2007). The main likely reason for this attention is the belief that teams can influence the performance of organizations. Some researchers believe that team work is particularly important in achieving organizational goals and eliciting performance among subordinates. Several reasons suggest that there should be a relationship between teamwork and performance. Understanding the impact of teamwork on performance is important because some researchers see teamwork as one of the key driving forces for improving firm performance (Jones, 2007).

Team work implies a concept in which, by educating employees to work in a team, you improve the quality of each team member individually, thereby maximizing joint work. In practice, we meet people who are strong individualists, who have no desire to work in a team and objectively cannot achieve the desired performance on their own. For such human potentials, it is necessary to provide education in order for the organization to achieve additional value. The educational contents relate to the acquisition of knowledge and skills of employees in communication, mastery of teamwork and group decision-making techniques, skills of improving interpersonal relations, improvement of modern and professional competences.

### **THE EXAMPLE OF STRABAG AS A LEADER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEAMWORK**

STRABAG SE is a European construction company founded in Villach, Austria, with headquarters in Vienna. It is the largest construction company in Austria and one of the largest construction companies in Europe. The company provides services in the field of construction and civil engineering, construction of infrastructure and tunnels, facility management. It is active in the home markets of Austria and Germany and in all countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in selected markets in Western Europe, on the Arabian Peninsula, as well as in Canada, Chile, China and India. In these markets, STRABAG has branches or works on specific projects.

STRABAG SE was founded in 1835, that is, it has its roots in two companies "ILBAU" and "STRABAG". These two companies entered into joint ownership in 1998, and from 1999 until today they are listed on the Vienna Stock Exchange with a total number of shares of 110 million. Each share carries one vote.

The majority shareholders of the company are Haselsteiner Group with a share of 26.4%, Raiffeisen NO - Wien Group and UNIKA Group own 27.5%, while Rasperia Trading Limited has 25.9% of shares.

The slogan of the entire STRABAG concern is TEAMS WORK. The success of this company lies in strong teams. The focus is on preserving personnel, encouraging the employment and education of young people, through various types of seminars, team-building, foreign language courses and other forms of professional training and education of employees. Special attention is paid to encouraging the employment of women in the STRABAG concern.

AD PUTEVI ČČAK was founded in 1991. They were privatized in 2006 - STRABAG AG. With the status change in 2019, all STRABAG companies in Serbia were united. Putevi Ččak continues to perform its usual activities as a branch within the STRABAG group. The company employs 204 workers, in accordance with the qualification structure of the employees.

In order to verify the defined theoretical claims of numerous previously mentioned authors about the importance of teamwork for improving organizational performance, we conducted research in the company "STRABAG", branch in Ččak. It is interesting that there is a different perception of the importance of teamwork within the same company, in different teams. In the continuation of the work, we will compare the research results.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

### **Place and time frame of the research:**

The research was carried out in the city of Ččak, in the period from the beginning to the end of May 2023 in the company "STRABAG".

### **Type of research:**

The research is classified as descriptive research. A descriptive research approach was used because it provides detailed information about a specific subject by describing it from different angles.

## **Research objectives**

Objectives of the study: To identify the key success factors of the company related to teamwork; identify positive or negative attitudes of employees about teamwork; determine the impact of teamwork on organizational performance.

### **Subject of research**

The subject of the research is the attitudes of the employees in the selected pilot study company, about the impact of teamwork on the success of performing work tasks and, consequently, the success of the company

### **Target group:**

The target population for the study consisted of management and staff of the company "STRABAG". The surveyed teams were divided into red and blue teams, due to the different approach and organization by team leaders within the same company.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique:**

The size of the sample is the total number of employees in the Strabag branch in Ččak. The total number of employees of the company in Ččak is divided into two teams: red and blue.

Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents based on the fact that they have expertise in the field under investigation as well as the fact that they have been employed in the company for a sufficient period of time.

### **Data Collection:**

Data collection includes type of data, data sources and data collection instrument and data collection procedure.

**Type of data:** The researcher used a five-point Likert scale model. The responses to the questionnaire were based on a rating scale and could be ranked.

**Data Source:** The primary type of data is collected by the researcher. It was obtained from respondents through questionnaire administration. The researchers used primary data because it helps to know what is actually happening in the field and to come out with findings and recommendations.

**Data Collection Instrument:** Questionnaire was the main instrument used to collect data for the study. The company and all respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and the fact that the results of the research will be presented exclusively for scientific purposes.

Anonymity is guaranteed to every respondent. This was to increase the veracity of the data related to the research.

## Structure of the instrument for achieving the research objectives and Method of data analysis

The questionnaire was designed to contain a simple question based on the set objectives of the study. It was simple and easy to understand to ensure that respondents provided relevant data to meet the objectives of the study. The questionnaire that was distributed to the respondents contained relevant closed-ended questions for the purpose of achieving the research objectives of the study. The questionnaire was anonymous.

Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used. The questionnaire was implemented in GOOGLE FORMS. The option of protecting the respondents' anonymity was selected, by not collecting and not displaying email addresses. Out of the total distributed 100% questionnaires, all 100% were properly returned, 50% from each team. All questionnaires were validly filled out and the collected data were presented in tables and graphs.

### Description of the teams

The interviewer obtained information about the team members and their job description through direct communication and a tour of the teams at the workplace.

#### Red Team:

Occupations in the team - Safety Officer, Economist, Site Manager, Traffic Engineer, Administrative Worker, Civil Engineer, Accountant, Branch Representative.

The team makes up 50% of the employees in the company's branch in Čačak.

The key role on the construction site is played by the site manager, he coordinates everyone. Monitors the work of the construction site and all documentation related to the construction site. In the team, everyone cooperates with each other and forwards the necessary documentation to each other.

#### Blue Team:

Occupations in the team - construction site manager, road worker, manual workers, qualified workers.

The team consists of 50% of employees in the company's branch in Čačak, with the fact that their involvement in this team is not always 100% because it depends on the needs of the construction site and the scope of work. The work is done on the roads, under traffic, so the most important thing is to secure the construction site, and then the work and

rehabilitation of bad places on the roads, removing the old and installing new material.

As can be seen from the attachment, it is a question of surveying two teams with completely different types of work, scope of work, and way of functioning within the same company.

## OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH

The first part of the questionnaire refers to demographic data, and in the second part of the questionnaire, respondents expressed their degree of agreement with the statements made according to the principle of the five-point Likert scale as follows:

- 1) I absolutely disagree,
- 2) I do not agree,
- 3) I do not have a clear position on the given statement,
- 4) I agree,
- 5) I absolutely agree

### How many years have you been in your current position?

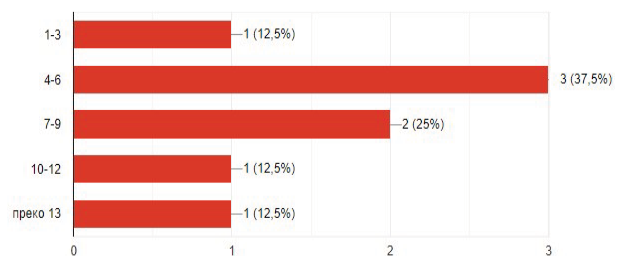


Fig. 1. Red team answers

In the red team, 12.5% of employees have been in their current position for 1-3 years, 37.5% for 4-6 years, 25% for 7-9 years, and 12.5% for 10-12 years and over 13 years each. The result represents that this team has a very diverse time of employment in the current position.

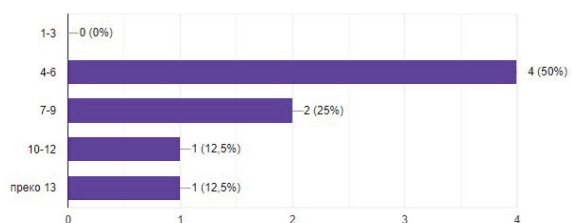


Fig. 2. Answers from the blue team

In the blue team with the most employees, 50% have been in their current

position for 4-6 years, while 25% of them have been in their current position for 7-9 years, and 12.5% have been in their current position for 10-12 years, that is, over 13 years.

**My education level is:**

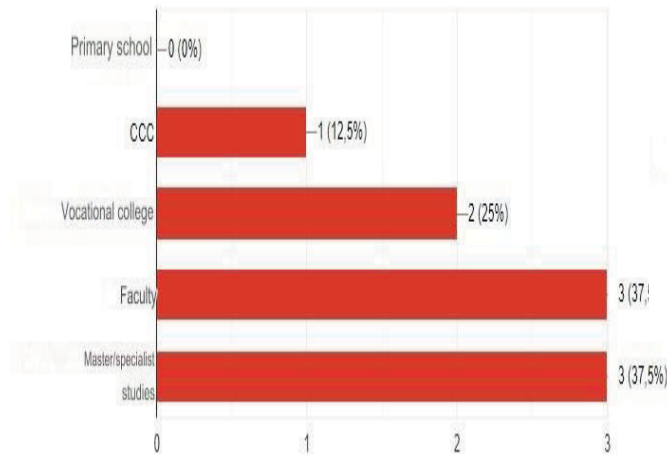


Fig. 3. Education level of the red team

In the red team, the level of education of the employees is presented in the following percentages: 37.5% of the respondents have a university education and master's/specialist studies, 25% have completed a higher vocational school, and 12.5% of the respondents have a secondary vocational education.

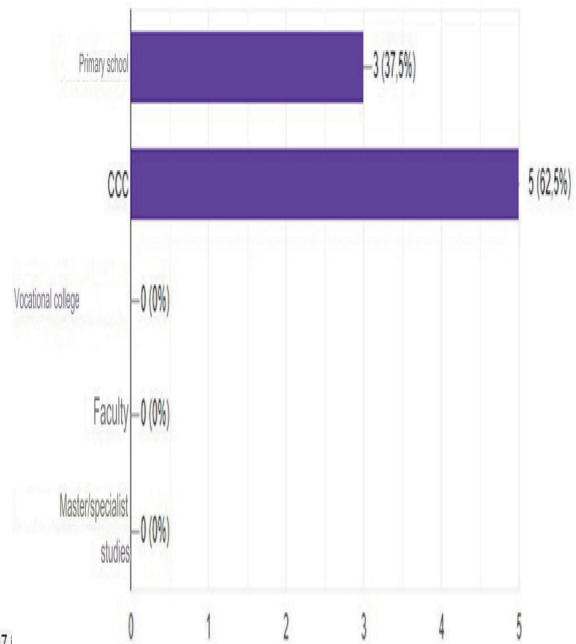


Fig. 4. Education level of the blue team

With the blue team, the result is significantly different from the red team, and here we have 37.5% of employees with primary education and 62.5% of employees with completed high school.

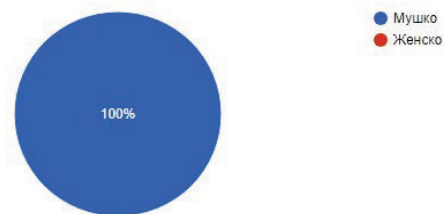


Fig. 5. The gender structure of the blue team

We observe the red team's answers to the gender question. 62.5% of the red team are female, and 37.5% are male.

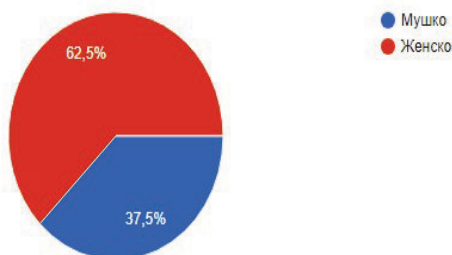


Fig. 6. The gender structure of the red team

In the blue team, as we can see, the situation is completely different, 100% of the blue team is made up of men.

**I am satisfied with the team spirit:**



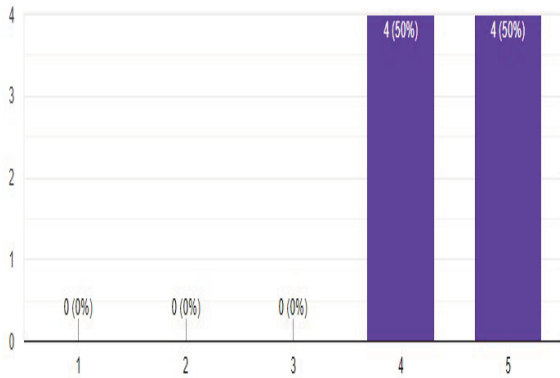


Fig. 7. The blue team answers with the satisfaction of team spirit

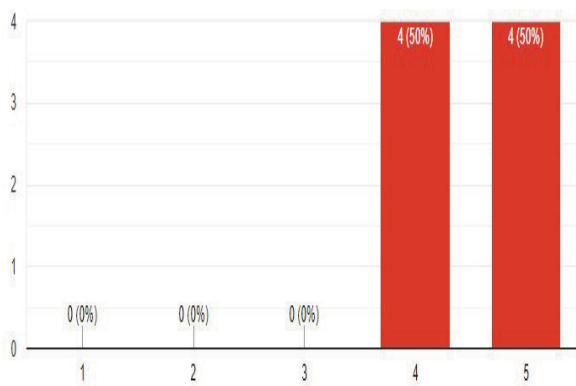


Fig. 8. Red team answers with team spirit satisfaction

The results of both teams are identical, i.e. 50% of respondents agree with this statement, and 50% of them absolutely agree, Fig.7, Fig. 8.

**As a team, you get the job done successfully in less time.**

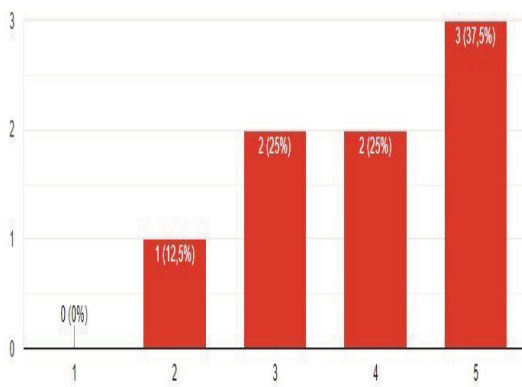


Fig. 9. The red team's views on the impact of teamwork on the speed of work

37.5% of the respondents of the red team absolutely agreed with the statement whether they successfully completed the work as a team in a shorter time, 25% agreed, 25% of them did not have a clear opinion on this statement, and 12.5% of the respondents disagreed with the same, Fig. 3.

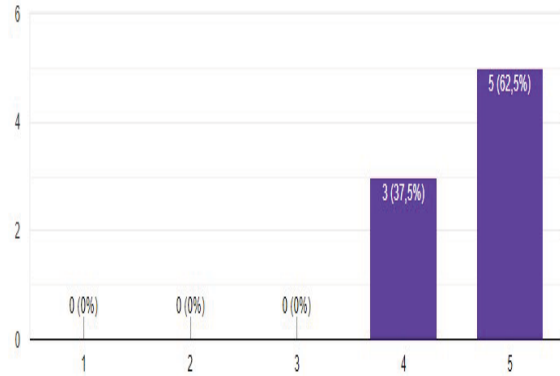


Fig. 10. Attitudes of the blue team on the impact of teamwork on the speed of work

The blue team absolutely agrees in the percentage of 62.5% and 37.5% agree, with the statement that as a team they successfully complete the work in a shorter time, because the blue team's job description itself is such that they depend a lot on each other in speed and success performance of work, Fig. 10.

**Working in a team boosted employee motivation**

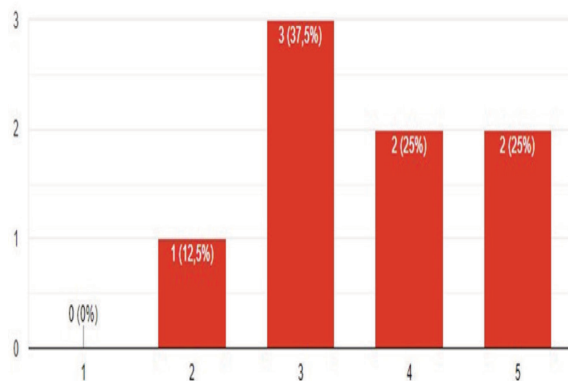


Fig. 11. The red team's views on the impact of teamwork on employee motivation

If working in a team boosted motivation among employees, 12.5% of the red team disagree, 37.5% of them do not have a clear



opinion on this, while 25% of respondents agree and absolutely agree with the given statement, Fig. 11.

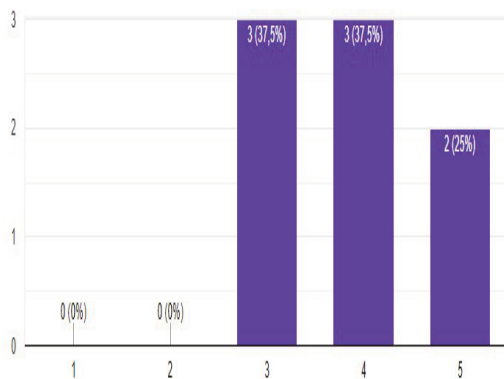


Fig. 12. Attitudes of the blue team on the impact of teamwork on employee motivation

The Blue Team responds to this statement about motivation with 25% absolute agreement, 37.5% of them agree, and 37.5% of respondents do not have a clear opinion on whether teamwork has boosted employee motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the received answers shown in the Results section, the opinions of the employees are different. The results show that the respondents of both teams are of diverse age groups, but also that not a single respondent is over 60 years old, which tells us that they are younger teams, and at the same time, they have better communication and cooperation because they are of similar age.

Through research, we have established that the Red Team is a team of mostly highly educated people, with an approximate percentage of both women and men. All respondents are permanent employees of the STRABAG company, and most of them have been working in their current position for over 4 years. This leads us to the conclusion that the members of the red team are very satisfied with their company and their position. The results show that the members of the red team are satisfied with the team spirit, but also that working in a team in this case does not encourage the motivation of the employees completely. By improving team spirit, conflicts in the organization were completely reduced. What we also notice from the answers of the red

team is that the majority of the members are interested in personal and professional development, but also that a certain percentage of them do not perceive the team's success as a personal success. We hope that the situation in this field will improve a little in the future.

The respondents of the Blue Team are men who have completed primary or secondary education. They perform mostly physical work on construction sites, and these are the main differences between these two teams as far as basic data is concerned. The answers to the statements about the satisfaction of working in a team, motivation and other things generally do not differ much from the answers of the red team. The blue team is very satisfied with the team spirit in the company. Because of the job description itself, they depend a lot on each other, and the success of the team depends on how quickly and well each individual in the blue team will do their work. Based on the obtained results and discussion, it is concluded that the teams differ in many ways. The teams differ first of all in the level of education, which further implies different answers, depending on common or personal expectations and interests, which would contribute to the better success of the company's work, as well as the desire for further advancement. On the other hand, the teams are very similar in that they are satisfied with the team spirit, the work of their leaders, as well as in the fact that both teams reduced conflicts by improving team spirit.

The recommendations are that the management of those organizations that have poor teamwork must start to constantly organize training and development programs for employees in the organization on how to form and work in teams before its implementation in order to improve organizational performance.

Teamwork is an effective way to achieve success in the workplace or in an organization. It helps in increasing the productivity, effectiveness and efficiency of work, as well as the performance of the organization as a whole.

Organizations prefer teamwork in performing their activities as well as in achieving goals and objectives. Some of these activities, goals and tasks are; gaining a competitive advantage in the market, providing quality services to customers, increasing the productivity of employees as well as individuals, encouraging trust and a spirit of cooperation among members, eliminating tribalism between employers and employees, improving relations (that is, between

management and employees, employees and other employees, employees and customers ), strengthening the creativity of individuals in solving problems and conflicts, enabling good decision-making and implementation among members.

Team work has more positive sides than negative sides, it can motivate members more, help the individual in self-realization, acceptance of more demanding tasks and greater creativity.

Desirable characteristics of a team are: balance of roles, honesty, clearly defined goals, conflict resolution and joint decision-making. The advantage of teamwork is that the team gathers people of different levels of knowledge, abilities and characteristics, who know how to solve a large number of problems in crisis situations.

During this research, we noticed that the STRABAG company fully advocates teamwork. Their motto is "TEAMS WORK". They believe that the work of people and their smooth cooperation is important in the construction industry, and that only with the power of teams can they overcome challenges and find the best solutions for future projects.

Through research, we found that there are many different teams in this company, and we analyzed two, the Blue and the Red team, where the blue team has the majority of employees with lower education, while the case is different in the red team.

Through a questionnaire and analysis, we presented their attitude towards the team and their satisfaction with teamwork, and noticed that teamwork is very important for both teams, even though they are doing completely different jobs..

Most of the respondents participate in teamwork every day and have positive experiences, and they are of the opinion that teamwork can help in establishing interpersonal relations in the organization.

The blue and red team, as representatives of the STRABAG company's teams, showed us in this research that it is very important to work together to achieve goals, and that the diversity of teams within the same company can have a positive effect on the company's overall performance.

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