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EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AT HUNGARIAN IT COMPANIES

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Abstract

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- b. Schaufeli, W., & Bakker, A. (2004). *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale: Preliminary Manual* (Version 1.1). Occupational Health Psychology Unit, Utrecht University. Last accessed: 2024, February 29. https://www.wilmarschaufeli.nl/publications/Schaufeli/Test%20Manuals/Test_manual_UWES_English.pdf
- c. Victor, J. A., & Hoole, C. (2021). Rejuvenating the rewards typology: Qualitative insights into reward preferences. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 47(0), a1880. Last accessed: 2024, March 26. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v47i0.1880>

3. Abstract

Increasing employee engagement is a key factor for organizations to keep talented employees. It is a positive psychological state when employees are dedicated to performing their tasks, are generally satisfied, and typically do not intend to leave the company. This study investigates the factors influencing engagement focusing on the different rewards, and the effects of home office. Using a mixed-methods approach, first, the literature review synthesized existing research and revealed contradictions regarding the impact and dominance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors on engagement, as well as the contradicting idea of how a sense of isolation decreases employee engagement while home office itself has been considered as a positive factor in it. As a result, the findings of the literature review provided a basis for developing the research questions for the primary research within the Hungarian IT sector. Subsequently, qualitative interviews with IT project managers and a quantitative survey with 226 IT professionals were conducted to explore these factors further. To explore the results, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation analyses, and multiple regression were used. Contrary to some literature findings, respondents in this study predominantly prioritized extrinsic rewards – with salary being the absolute priority – over intrinsic ones. Age, salary range, and workplace tenure influence the perception of the rewards, however, gender does not. A statistically significant relationship between rewards and the components of employee engagement was also confirmed. Home office was found to be essential for employees, serving as a hygiene factor that, while not directly increasing engagement, could significantly decrease it if lacking. Its positive effects outweigh the possible negative impacts of isolation. The study emphasizes the importance of a future hybrid work model, combining flexibility with office socialization. These findings provide practical implications for organizations seeking to enhance employee engagement in the evolving workplace landscape.

2024, April 5.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Having a job you hate is worse than being unemployed” (Gallup, 2023, p. 1). 20-30 years ago, people started to work after finishing their education, and they planned to retire from the very same workplace. They did not have special expectations: work was work. Nowadays, job-hopping is a very common phenomenon as employees follow the world’s changes, and they want to experience new challenges, but also better work conditions, both in the physical and the emotional sense. This approach has increased the importance of Organizational Behavior (OB), more specifically those areas within OB, that consider the different aspects of attracting and keeping employees, maintaining their motivation in the long run, and increasing their overall engagement to stay. Some managers would argue that employees are at the workplace to finish their jobs, and they do not have to feel good while doing so. They claim that everyone is replaceable, and it is not the organization’s responsibility to please the employees and make them satisfied. That can be a valid point of view; however, unsatisfied employees are worse for the company as well - due to their poorer performance. In addition, higher employee turnover increases the costs spent on the personnel’s recruitment and onboarding. The current importance of the topic is also based on the fast-paced landscape of the 21st century, where companies continuously have to face various challenges. Everything is changing, and there are some really significant ones among these changes. The world has to deal with some unforeseen global issues (like the COVID-19 pandemic, the political conflicts ending up in wars, or the frequent natural disasters), but also with amazing inventions (such as different cutting-edge tools due to the relentless march of technological innovation, including the rapid development of artificial intelligence), it had never imagined before. Not only does this change the external environment, and influence competitors and customer dynamics but it also affects employee behavior, how they perceive a company’s characteristics, and what they expect from a working environment, so it requires continual internal adaptations. And people themselves - who are a company’s most invaluable asset - have been changing as well; consider, for instance, the distinct characteristics of the different age cohorts. Fortunately, more and more organizations recognize, that motivated employees who are loyal and engaged to the company show better work performance which eventually contributes to the organization’s efficiency and effectiveness. Several factors and drives affect employee engagement, and to use the right ones managers have to be aware of their effects on the different employee target groups.

Besides the general importance, the author of this thesis also has a personal interest in the phenomenon of engagement. Being a Team Leader and IT Project Manager for 10 years provided various experiences with different employees and a need for a better understanding of how to incentivize team members, how to make them satisfied and committed, and with this create a more attractive, effective, and generally positive work environment. Most organizations have started to take these questions seriously, and they work hard to increase employee engagement. Several rewards can be used for that. In the first part of this thesis, a comprehensive literature review was conducted on this topic, where two areas with significant contradictions have been identified. The second part contains the primary research, which was conducted in two research questions that have been developed based on the findings of the literature review. The research aimed to analyze 1) how the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have affected employee engagement in the last 4 years; and 2) how increased home office opportunities have affected team cohesion and the employee's sense of belonging, and with these, their overall engagement.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

This thesis focuses on employee engagement at Hungarian IT companies. Narrowing down the research topic, two main areas will be analyzed: 1) the general perception of rewards and their effect on engagement, and 2) the relationship between home office and employee engagement considering particularly team cohesion and the sense of isolation. This literature review aims to provide a theoretical background on the classification of rewards and examine the current perception of these by employees based on recent sources. The chapter's structure is the following: 1) presenting the method of how academic articles and other literature were searched for; 2) introducing the conceptual framework of employee engagement, motivation, and the different types of rewards, and declaring the latter's classification used in this thesis and in the primary research; 3) examining different research results on the perception of the different rewards; 4) analyzing the literature sources on post-Covid changes of working-from-home arrangements and how these affected overall employee engagement and team cohesion; and 5) summary as a base for the primary research.

2.1. Background of the literature review

The main sources for the theoretical background were recent research articles on the topics of employee engagement, motivation, extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, home office, and team cohesion. As the examined period was the post-2019 era, results were also narrowed down to articles published since 2019. There were some exceptions, where specific early theories or timeless ideas were introduced. The thesis does not rely only on Hungarian sources; on the contrary, the bibliography predominantly consists of international materials. Besides the increased accessibility of international academic resources, this choice was driven also by the intention to gain a more profound understanding of global trends to compare them later to the current Hungarian research's results.

The research articles have been searched for mostly in online databases, like EBSCO, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, Researchgate, and other similar repositories. In many cases, a strong Scimago ranking of the journal and the number of how many times it has been cited was a strong factor in selecting the main sources. While the approach differed from a systematic literature review, the goal was to offer a logical and comprehensive overview of the mentioned topics. The classification of sources is based on a thematic approach.

In addition to academic articles and research findings, insights from interviews, blog posts, and non-academic articles by Hungarian HR experts have been incorporated. These sources offer valuable supplementary information to the broader global academic context, beginning to shift focus on the specific characteristics of Hungary and its IT industry.

To further enhance comprehension of the subject matter, survey results from reputable companies with extensive coverage, such as PWC or Makronóm Intézet, have also been reviewed and summarized. These provide a comprehensive grasp of recent perceptions and practical aspects related to the topics under consideration. Another important source was statistical data published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. It is one of the best sources to analyze the demographical and statistical backgrounds in Hungary on various topics. As it is regularly updated, changes and trends are visible and can be effectively illustrated as well.

The summary of the literature review's findings will highlight the most important and interesting ideas, and also the main differences and gaps found while analyzing the resources.

2.2. Overview of the main theoretical elements

This chapter provides an overview of the main topics of the thesis. It explains the concept of employee engagement, motivation, and the different types of rewards at the workplace.

While discovering the theoretical background it became evident that the theories of generational differences are very widespread, especially in discussions related to the workplace; some of the resources of this thesis also used that concept. However, there is a lack of evidence that the classification of generational cohorts alone is reliable and several other demographical and sociological factors need to be taken into consideration (Laslett, 2005; Okros, 2020; Rudolph et al., 2021). Therefore, labels like “*Baby Boomer*”, “*Millennial*”, or “*Gen Z*” should not serve as a foundation for managerial decisions (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). Given this perspective, the research will consider age - among other factors - but does not aim to provide a generation-based analysis or establish generational boxes.

2.2.1. Introducing the concept of employee engagement

Firstly, the theoretical background of employee engagement will be introduced. Understanding the concept of employee engagement has been challenging, as there have been several different definitions (Byrne, 2022). After analyzing many of them, the author of this thesis aims to synthesize the commonly mentioned aspects and factors to provide a comprehensive but simplified common understanding of the main elements.

Maslach and Leiter (2008) define engagement as the opposite pole of burnout. They have researched burnout from several aspects and in their approach, it is not a result of the individual's internal emotions, but is caused by the working conditions, and so is engagement. Burnout is usually characterized by negative emotions, exhaustion, a drop in efficacy, a withdrawal from work, cynicism, and decreased social relationships. In more serious cases it can result in personal problems (both physiological and psychological), that might affect the employee's private life as well. As the opposite of burnout, engagement, on the other hand, results in the opposite of the aforementioned feelings and behavior. When employees are engaged, they are usually characterized by commitment, involvement, feeling energetic, and being professionally productive (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). However, as Schaufeli & Bakker (2004) - also highlights, this approach can be criticized: the two are not necessarily the direct opposites of each other. Being not engaged does not necessarily mean being burned out, and vice versa, being not burned out does not necessarily result in engagement, so they should be studied and measured independently. To understand engagement more thoroughly and independently from burnout, Schaufeli & Bakker worked out their own definition and measurement scale. Although there are similarities to the aforementioned characteristics - that means the opposite of burnout -, they do not fully align. The authors highlight that rather than being a momentary feeling or state towards any particular element, engagement is a more persistent state "*characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption*" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

By providing different statements that can measure the level of these three elements, they created one of the most well-known engagement measurement scales: the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The number of statements depends on the version of UWES: it can be 17, 15, or 9. The elaboration provides explanations for the three parts: vigor refers to zest, energy, resilience, and stamina; dedication means being enthusiastic and feeling strongly identified towards the job; while absorption is like a flow-experience: carried away happily by the work

(Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Although UWES was originally introduced in 1999 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), and many companies use different engagement scales as well, UWES and its versions are still very popular in measuring employee engagement. One main reason for that is its adequacy; for instance, UWES-9 has been examined under extreme circumstances during the pandemic, and its validity has been proved even among healthcare workers during a healthcare crisis (Domínguez-Salas et al., 2022).

The strong psychological factors of employee engagement have been discussed already in earlier years as well. Kahn (1990) highlighted physical, cognitive, and emotional presence and the importance of three psychological factors: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Meaningfulness is also a key according to Liu, Chen & Li (2021) and Byrne (2022). The latter suggests that instead of considering work as just work, it should be transformed – cognitively and emotionally – into a purposeful and meaningful achievement. Engagement also can be expressed as an employee's self-investment in a role (Rich et al., 2017). It is a psychological state, an energetic and enthusiastic dedication to work, sometimes used interchangeably with other connecting concepts like loyalty, happiness, or commitment (Brown, 2021). Byrne (2022) also highlights the psychological presence and the alignment with the company's goals. She provides a picture of how employee engagement is reflected concerning the behavior of the employees and the overall atmosphere of the organization: energetic, committed, and enthusiastic employees work with effort to provide high quality. They like their job and are often immersed in it (Byrne, 2022).

Another important phenomenon related to employee engagement is job satisfaction. When Saks (2006) studied the antecedents and consequences of engagement, he found that there is a positive relationship between engagement and job satisfaction; the former has a mediating role in creating the latter; similarly to the engagement's relation with quitting intentions (Saks, 2006). Spector, the inventor of the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) also states that many definitions of employee engagement contain the concept of job satisfaction (Spector, 2022).

The relationship between employee engagement and quitting intentions appears in other studies as well. Putri & Setianan (2019) discussed the non-financial factors that affect employee turnover and found empirical evidence that employee engagement affects negatively the intention to quit. They also suggest that the efforts of the managers to improve

engagement in the organization can prevent the employees' intention to quit (Putri & Setianan, 2019). Another research also confirmed that employee engagement has a strong positive effect on the intentions to stay. However, the study highlights that it is empirically proved that engaged employees can intend to leave as well (Saurage-Altenloh et al., 2023). At this point, job-hopping – as one of the possible reasons for the latter – needs to be mentioned as well. It refers to the phenomenon when employees change jobs between companies more frequently (Larasati & Aryanto, 2020). As mentioned earlier, although this thesis does not intend to create generational boxes, some of the resources use those, and this topic is one of them. Based on several analyzed literature, Larasati & Aryanto (2020) found that job-hopping is a concept more likely arising among Millennials, despite their generally positive perception as employees. They found that job-hopping can be caused by several internal and external factors – most of them identifying the possible intrinsic and extrinsic rewards detailed in the following chapters – however, there can be other factors that are independent of the organization, like the employees' age (younger employees tend to change more often and more easily). Additionally, it can be simply seen as a result of the broader job choices, or an opportunity that contributes to employees' future career options and expands their network (Larasati & Aryanto, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, employee engagement and employee loyalty are often used interchangeably (Brown, 2021). However, they refer to slightly different concepts. Loyalty refers to a longer-term feeling. Randels (2001) refers to it as a social passion; it is based on emotions. In the organizational context, it is based on relationships, and it is similar to a membership: the employees need to feel that they are part of the organization and even identify themselves with the company - in a positive way. It is a more lasting connection to the organization and often needs more time to develop (Randels, 2001). Nevertheless, it is important to mention, that it has a reason why engagement and loyalty are often discussed together: several studies show a significant relationship between these two concepts (Ibrahim & Al Falasi, 2014; Suharti & Suliyanto, 2012; Nargotra & Sarangal, 2021).

This research aims to get a comprehensive grasp of the perception of employee engagement and its main elements at IT companies and examine the relationship between them and the different rewards. Therefore, the author of this thesis did not pick one or more of the definitions or approaches above to use but summarizes the main points based on the provided

theories, definitions, and aspects to create a simplified definition and to provide clear factors that can be compared to the availability of the different rewards at a workplace. With this in mind, this thesis provides its own definition and index number of employee engagement.

In essence, employee engagement is a positive psychological state - when employees are emotionally present, they are committed and dedicated to meaningful tasks and goals, and are generally satisfied with their workplace – typically with a decreased intent to leave the company.

Employee engagement is often mentioned together with motivation. Byrne (2022) even added it to her definition of employee engagement. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) also highlight the psychological aspects in creating engagement, and the role of intrinsic motivation in it. Evangeline & Ragavan (2016) suggest that “*motivating employees (...) act as a best tool for employee engagement*”. Lartey (2021) also highlights the role of motivation in employee engagement but he highlights motivation’s internal nature. He states that the relationship between the employer and the employee under the concept of engagement is mutual: the employer provides the right circumstances, and the employees provide their self-motivated and positive attitude to help the company reach its goals (Lartey, 2021). The UWES Manual also suggests that job resources that perform as motivators strengthen employee engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Therefore, understanding employee motivation has a significant role in creating an engaging working environment (Singh, 2016). The next paragraphs will provide a theoretical background to the most fundamental motivation theories that are most relevant to the current research.

2.2.2. The theoretical background of motivation at the workplace

Secondly, as a concept often mentioned together with rewards and engagement, the theoretical background of motivation is introduced. “*To be motivated means to be moved to do something*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For a more profound grasp of the motivation concept, this section revisits traditional motivational theories as a foundation, complementing them with contemporary perspectives.

One of the most renowned motivational theories is Maslow’s theory of human motivation. The highlights of this are that individuals aim to satisfy five hierarchically arranged basic

needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization, and two extra levels: the desires to know and understand, and the aesthetic needs (Maslow, 1954). Artaya et al. (2021) show how Maslow's basic needs can be applied in a workplace environment. The physiological needs are the most basic expectations, like the availability of drinking water, clean air, restrooms, and breaks (during the day and holidays as well), and the salary and remuneration package also belong here. The safety needs cover mostly safe working conditions, and different savings, like pension benefits or insurance. Social needs can be satisfied by belonging to groups, which can be enhanced by different company-sponsored activities and events. Esteem needs are based on the ego and power, and can be fulfilled by recognition, promotions, positive feedback, and rewards. The self-actualization needs at the top level mean skill development, interesting and challenging tasks, and creative work (Artaya et al., 2021).

Another traditional theory is Herzberg's two-factor theory which differentiates job factors into two classes depending on whether their availability causes motivation or their lack results in dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 2011). The former category is the motivational factors consisting of endeavors like progress, responsibility, appreciation, and creative and challenging work. When compared to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, these can be identified with the esteem and self-actualization levels. The latter group is the hygiene factors including remuneration, job security, personal life, suitable company policies and administration, status, and interpersonal relationships. These can be the first three levels of Maslow's model, namely the physiological, the safety, and the belonging needs (Artaya et al., 2021).

In both theories mentioned above, the basic needs, i.e. the hygiene factors usually can be satisfied extrinsically, while the top levels, the motivating factors are generally intrinsic motivators (Victor & Hoole, 2021).

The last traditional theory mentioned in this thesis is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). STD distinguishes motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation based on its intention. Engaging in an activity for its interesting and enjoyable nature represents intrinsic motivation, whereas seeking a particular outcome characterizes extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation can be further classified based on autonomy and control

(Hagger et al., 2020). Ryan & Deci (2000) provide an illustrative example to get a grasp on this: a student can study hard to avoid sanctions for bad grades, but also for a chosen career. Both are extrinsic motivations but their nature differs in the amount of external control and their proximity to the intrinsic motivations. The detailed classification is out-of-scope for this thesis, however, the idea that external motivations can be “*somewhat internal*” (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is important in the current research as well.

These previous explanations provide a basis for understanding the nature of the different needs and whether they can be satisfied with extrinsic or intrinsic rewards.

2.2.3. *Classification of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards*

Finally, after having grasped the main employee engagement definitions and the essential motivational theories, this chapter proceeds to introduce the final theoretical foundation relevant to them within the context of this study - namely, the concept of rewards.

“Reward is defined as anything that can reinforce, maintain and strengthen the behavior of individuals in an organization” (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2013, cited in Nazish et al., 2019). It can be classified into two main groups: intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. In the case of intrinsic motivation, the reward is the activity itself (Ryan & Deci, 2000), so these regards include achievement, interesting work, recognition, and development (Evangeline & Ragavan, 2016). Extrinsic rewards come from outside, like salary, bonus, different benefits, allowances, and promotions (Emmanuel & Nwuzor, 2021). Malek et al. (2020) classify extrinsic rewards into three main groups: financial, social, and recognition. Victor & Hoole (2021) conducted in-depth interviews with 47 participants on how rewards should be categorized. They found a slightly different version of the classification and also provided a more comprehensive list of the potential rewards. Their results have been illustrated in a decomposition diagram (see Figure 1). The author of this thesis agrees with the basics of this classification as it provides a rather practical approach. As a result of their interviews, they also considered nuances that other authors mentioned earlier might have ignored. They divide rewards into two main categories, namely the extrinsic and the intrinsic rewards. The latter means the psychological rewards which are the internal perceptions of the different job characteristics – generally independent from the external influences. This group contains 1) autonomy, i.e. the freedom in how the employees perform their tasks; 2) meaningful work,

which covers the identity and the significance of the tasks; 3) competence, i.e. how capable the employees feel themselves to perform their tasks; 4) enjoyment, which means enjoyable tasks but also passion towards the job as well; and 5) challenging work. The external rewards can be divided into two subgroups: the financial rewards and the non-financial rewards. The financial rewards mean the 1) salary and the 2) other benefits. The non-financial rewards are those incentives that - similarly to the internal rewards - have psychological aspects, but rather than being fully internally perceived, they generally have some kind of relationship with the external environment. The elements of this group are 1) good relationships, that can be understood for both the relationships with colleagues and superiors; 2) learning and development opportunities, that help with growth and improvement and provide practical experience; 3) organizational culture and how employees can fit into that and to what extent they can feel being included; 4) communication, i.e. how smooth and easy it is with others; 5) recognition, both in the formal and the informal sense; 6) working environment, i.e. what resources and conditions have been provided by the company; 7) feedback about the performance; and 8) work-life balance, including flexibility (Victor & Hoole, 2021).

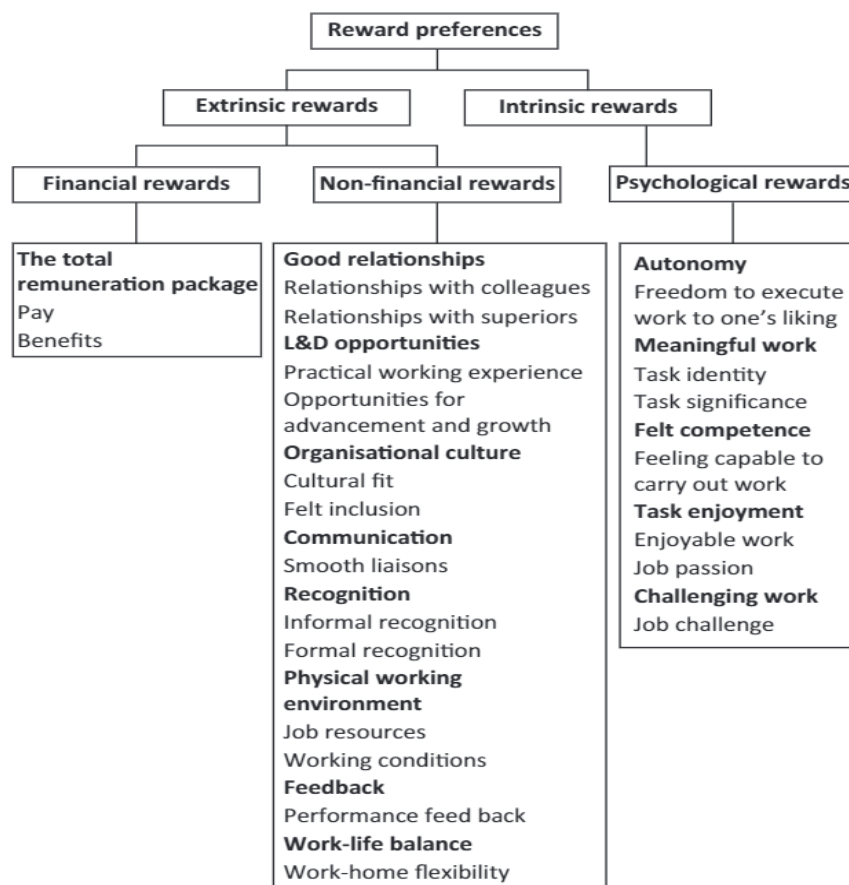


Figure 1 - Classification of rewards

Source: Victor & Hoole, 2021

2.3. A practical perception of rewards – recent research results

A recent survey on labor market preferences conducted by PwC Hungary encompassing more than 80 000 respondents outlines, that although salary and other financial rewards are the most important factors for both employees and university students; intrinsic, and partially intrinsic extrinsic rewards also hold significant importance. These include factors such as respect for privacy, meaningful work, and a supportive team. Workplace stability ranked as the third most crucial factor in 2022 has notably dropped from the list, indicating a decreased concern about job security. In addition to the commonly shared expectations, employees highlighted flexible working hours and the avoidance of overtime, while university students emphasized training and career advancement opportunities (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2023).

The importance of salary is supported by other sources as well. Some of them are in alignment with Maslow's theory referring to money and salary as possible physiological needs as they are the tools for buying food or shelter (Acquah et al., 2021; Anjanaben & Mehta, 2019). An article on profession.hu also asserts that achieving a decent salary is the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a prerequisite for setting higher goals (Durbák, 2009). In essence, for individuals to progress and pursue higher needs, a decent salary serves as the foundation.

Conversely, Bereczki says that free time – when they can spend their income – is even more important for younger employees than the money itself, however, their financial expectations are often high (Bereczki, 2022, p. 217.). Bhuvanaiah & Raya (2015) also suggest that there is a need to shift from financial incentives to psychological satisfaction, with an emphasis on the importance of four intrinsic factors: decision-making authority, development opportunities, empowerment, and leadership. Controversially, another study proposes that – although the relationship is positive in both cases – extrinsic motivation has a stronger impact on employee engagement than intrinsic motivation (Engidaw, 2021). Evangeline & Ragavan (2016) highlight that both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards are vital in motivation which eventually results in employee engagement.

As demonstrated by the previous examples, there is no clear consensus on the topic. Therefore conducting novel research is worthwhile, especially in growing industries, like IT,

where attracting and retaining employees, both in terms of quantity and quality stand out as recent years' most significant challenges (Makronóm Intézet, 2023).

2.4. Changes in home office arrangements after the pandemic

This thesis focuses on employee engagement at Hungarian IT companies. The research examines the current perception of it, but it has to be mentioned that there was a strong shift during and after the pandemic in how companies – especially in the telecommunication and IT sectors – use different incentives. One of the most significant changes can be observed concerning one specific element, namely the home office opportunities.

After clarifying the definition of working-from-home (WFH) arrangements, this chapter will show its current state in Hungary with an insight into where the spread of home office is rooted, and how it has become a basic expectation by the employees. Finally, the advantages and disadvantages will be shown, specifically highlighting the recent impacts on team cohesion.

According to the Hungarian Labor Code, the definition of working from home or home office is not equal to the definition of remote working. In Hungary, the Labor Code defines what remote working is: *“In case of remote working the employee performs the work full-time or part-time at a location separate from the employer's premises”* (2012. évi I. törvény a munka törvénykönyvéről [Act I of 2012 on the Labor Code], 2012). However, it is not equal to home office as remote working specifies some specific rules (like the maximum amount of work per year at the company's premises (2012. Évi I. törvény a munka törvénykönyvéről [Act I of 2012 on the Labor Code], 2012)). Still, recent – especially international – sources use them interchangeably, together with teleworking, telecommuting, and working-from-home arrangements (WFH). Nonetheless, it needs to be clarified that these expressions do not have the exact same meaning. WFH or home office is a simpler concept – without the specific rules of remote working specified by the Hungarian Labor Code –; it refers simply to the concept when employees work from home via digital platforms (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). Considering the differences in the original definitions and to avoid misunderstandings, this thesis does not use more different expressions interchangeably but uses only working-from-home (WFH) and home office (the latter being

the most often used expression by employees referring to the option when they work from home or anywhere but their workplace).

Although – based on their profile – IT companies have had the technological background and the infrastructure for WFH for a long time, it was not a broadly used opportunity. In 2020, a huge shift happened: the lockdowns due to the pandemic resulted in many companies changing their work model from onsite to working-from-home or hybrid. According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2023), in 2019, there were 90 363 employees who claimed that they had worked regularly or occasionally from home in the preceding 4 weeks. This number increased to 385 067 in 2020, and then to 419 005 in 2021. By 2022, there was a modest drop but there still were 341 653 WFH and hybrid workers which was more than 3.5 times as much as it had been before the pandemic. However, the ratio slightly changed: instead of the full-time working-from-home, the occasional WFH has become more frequent (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2023). In Hungary – due to its modern approach and advanced digitalization – the telecommunication and information technology sector experienced the most significant adaption of WFH practices during the pandemic: the ratio of those companies where more than 50% of the employees worked from home during the pandemic was 61.1%, thus being the highest portion of all industries, and the planned ratio for after the pandemic also stayed at 46.3% (Pató Gáborné Szűcs et al., 2022).

The original aim of changing the work arrangements was the health aspect: to reduce the spread of the virus (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2020). Many companies realized during the lockdown that people need to feel that – besides the profit – their employer cares about their health and welfare as well (Kicheva, 2022, citing Petrov, 2020); so letting the employees avoid exposure to the virus while commuting or working on-site was essential, as working from home decreased both the spread of Covid-19 (by avoiding crowds, close contacts, and close spaces) and the infection anxiety caused especially by public transportation commuting (Ando et al., 2021). The opportunity was not given in any industry, but where the infrastructure was available – like in IT –, most companies implemented WFH arrangements to “*create safe working conditions*” (Németh, 2021). As a result, offering working-from-home opportunities contributed to staying safe and healthy, but it also has started to become a “*new normal*” (Vyas & Butakhieo, 2020).

After COVID-19 had shown WFH was a feasible concept, the perception of it has been reshaped. Instead of being a precautionary measure, it has become a basic need expected by many employees. Diána Müller, Head of Organizational Development at Telenor explains in a recent interview with Inforádió that where the infrastructure is given, employees expect to work in a hybrid method that they usually articulate already in their job interviews. The most preferred version is 2 to 3 days at home due to its flexibility and other positive aspects (Rezsek, 2021). As cited by Bereczki (2022) in her interview with futurist András Kánai, the pandemic has led to the perception of employees as customers, providing them with increasing opportunities for comfort, with the availability of working-from-home being one such option (p. 201). Referring to a recent survey conducted by MISZISZ, a Piac&Profit article also highlights that more than 80% of employees articulate WFH as a basic expectation. Approximately half of the respondents would expect to work from home for the majority of their working hours; one-third of the respondents would require it during a smaller portion of their working hours or occasionally (*Nem számít a rezszi, mára már elvárás az otthoni munkavégzés [Utility Costs Don't Matter, Home Office is Now an Expectation]*, 2022). With numerous studies affirming that working from home is now a fundamental expectation, its availability has a crucial role in maintaining employee engagement. The concept is now unavoidable, but a reality that companies must embrace.

The field has presented a new area for researchers to explore the enduring impacts, both positive and negative, and how companies can optimize this situation. In the last few years, several articles have been published about the effects of work-from-home arrangements. There has been a debate when comparing the advantages and disadvantages. The most frequently mentioned positive effects of WFH are reduced commuting time (Kaushik & Guleria, 2020; Stalmachova et al., 2022), lower stress level (Contreras et al., 2020), increased productivity (Contreras et al., 2020; Kazekami, 2020), and work-life balance (Ipsen et al., 2021; Kaushik & Guleria, 2020). The most highlighted negative effects are the decreased focus when children are at home (Ipsen et al., 2021; Stalmachova et al., 2022) and the sense of isolation due to the lack of social interactions (Contreras et al., 2020; Danilova et al., 2022; *Home Office*, 2022; Neeley, 2021; Vold et al., 2022).

This latter phenomenon leads to a paradox, as working-from-home opportunities contribute to employee engagement, however, sociability and a sense of belonging are crucial factors

in it as well. They are traits that have already been considered by earlier social scientists. One of the first sociologists who connected this characteristic to the operation of organizations was Émile Durkheim at the end of the 19th century. He stated: “...*(A) people’s mental system ...depends really on the grouping and organization of social elements*” (Lincoln & Guillot, 2004, citing Durkheim, 1966 [1897]). Another unavoidable theory is the sense of belonging in Maslow’s already-mentioned theory of motivation which dates back as far as 1943 but is still a base of several theories and practices (Navy, 2020). Recent studies have delved into the dynamics of belonging within the workplace, revealing that a sense of belonging significantly influences emotions, cognition, self-perception, and performance (Waller, 2020). Maintaining social connections in the workplace also fosters energy among colleagues and serves as a preventive measure against burnout (Helstáb, 2020). These examples show the importance of sociability in a workplace and its effects on the employees’ attitudes and motivation.

As a consequence, the sense of isolation created by working from home seems to contradict the idea of increased employee engagement caused by WFH opportunities, as a sense of belonging is also crucial for engagement. This sets up a paradox where these two seemingly conflicting aspects need to be understood in a more nuanced way. Exploring the topic is especially significant as maintaining personal bonds normally is a result of being physically together, and the majority of the available organizational development literature is also based on physical in-person contact at the workplace (Vold et al., 2022).

2.5. Summary of literature review findings

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the main topics relevant to the author’s current research. It introduces the method of seeking the resources; provides a conceptual framework and theoretical background, and also an insight into the current perception of the related topics. Certain concepts have still remained somewhat abstract, so the author of this thesis attempted to provide detailed descriptions and understandable own definitions by summarizing and synthesizing the information found in the literature.

Interesting ideas and also some contradictions have been found during the literature review, which can be examined further during the primary research. Two primary contradictions have been identified:

- 1) There is no clear consensus on how different extrinsic and intrinsic rewards affect motivation and employee engagement. Most resources indicate salary as the most important reward, however, there have been some different research results as well, and even with the assumption that remuneration is the top priority for employees, there are controversial articles about the role of the other, non-financial extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. Most studies agree on the existence of a correlation, but the degree and the predominant influence of either intrinsic or extrinsic factors may differ.
- 2) An intriguing anomaly surfaced in the literature review regarding the shifts in working-from-home practices. WFH contributes to employee engagement, however, sociability and a sense of belonging play also pivotal roles in it. Therefore, the sense of isolation (resulting in lower engagement) caused by working from home conflicts with the idea of increased employee engagement also caused by the WFH arrangements. This establishes a need for a more thorough understanding of these apparently contradictory aspects and the possible solutions.

As implied earlier, IT is one of those areas that were most significantly affected by last years' changes, and the availability of IT professionals both in the sense of quality and quantity is lower, so employee engagement can be a crucial area here to understand. Conducting research on the mentioned topics is particularly worthwhile to get a deeper understanding, and with that be able to suggest solutions.

The research questions were developed based on the two controversial findings in the literature:

- 1) How do the extrinsic and intrinsic rewards affect employee engagement?

The overview of the theoretical backgrounds of motivation and employee engagement provides a fundamental grasp of the internal and external factors that have a crucial role in satisfying the employees' needs. It has been suggested that these have an impact on employee engagement. Therefore, it can be assumed, that rewards (as independent variables) have an impact on the employees' motivation and on the different elements of

engagement (as dependent variables). The question is what kind of relations and how strong correlations can be identified based on the employees' recent feedback.

- 2) How have increased working-from-home opportunities affected team cohesion and the employees' sense of belonging, and with these, their overall engagement?

The aim of the research is to understand how IT project teams collaborate in the terms of these new work arrangements and resolve the contradiction arising from the conflicting effects of WFH on employee engagement.

The primary research has been carefully structured with the aim of understanding these phenomena and offering potential solutions for enhancing employee engagement within Hungarian IT companies.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Finding the right research methods is essential in every research: not only does it help to properly answer the previously set research questions, and conduct a thorough research, but it also makes the research more understandable and also repeatable for other researchers (Kovács, 2013). After having introduced the main research topic and having provided a literature review to show the theoretical background and the current perception of the narrowed-down topic, two main research questions have been formulated.

The first one was how extrinsic and intrinsic rewards affect employee engagement. To analyze this question two main steps were needed: to define a list of rewards and to grasp the main elements of engagement.

The base was Victor & Hoole's (2021) list of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. It was complimented for the survey with a 'secure and stable workplace' element considering the importance of the security needs – especially since the pandemic – mentioned in The theoretical background of motivation at the workplace chapter. In the original classification, 'home office' was mentioned as a part of work-life balance but as it is a very crucial part of the current research, in the actual questionnaire they became two separate factors.

After making these first adjustments based on the literature review, the list was discussed with three IT experts to check the clarity and comprehensiveness. The participants were a project manager, an IT team leader, and a software developer. These discussions resulted in some minor adjustments. The 'good relationships' was originally one main point, but in the final list, it is in two separate lines about colleagues and superiors. To the recognition part, explanatory details have been added. A few new elements have also been suggested: the traveling opportunities; the international environment and using languages; the health and wellbeing-related benefits; and the extra equipment were put on the list as well, as the participants voiced these as essential elements. The 'communication' point has been cut out; they felt it redundant as it is part of the 'relationships'. The 'feeling capable to carry out work' and the 'challenging work' also have been deleted – they both can be understood under the 'enjoyable work' category for those who prefer these work characteristics.

The second step was to cover the concept of employee engagement. As the research aimed to measure the relationship between the different rewards and the main elements of employee engagement, the author of this thesis created her own definition to cover the main points of earlier theories, definitions, and aspects. The second part of the research aimed to inquire about these.

A key part of the preparation was to analyze the possible methodologies to find those that are the most suitable ones for the empirical research and to analyze the data. Besides evaluating the possible advantages and disadvantages of the specific methods, time, budget, and other resources (for instance the availability of a professional network) also were taken into consideration. These reasons and the methods of how data have been collected and analyzed are part of the establishment of the research methods (Kovács, 2013), so the next paragraphs will provide a more detailed background about them.

As the main idea of the planned evaluation was to compare the perception of the different rewards to other factors and search for statistical relationships between them, it was clear that quantitative research was needed. Apart from the descriptive statistics, two types of special analysis have been planned: first to understand the general perception of the importance of the different rewards (as independent variables) and whether they correlate with the different backgrounds of the respondents, like salary level, gender, age, and workplace tenure (as dependent variables). For this evaluation, a contingency table analysis with Chi-square tests has been planned (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011). For the second part, where the actual availability of the different rewards at the respondents' workplace (as independent variables) and the respondents' feedback on the elements of engagement (as dependent variables) were planned to be compared, multiple regression was chosen as the analyzing tool (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011).

The survey questions were prepared thoughtfully and thoroughly considering the execution of the aforementioned statistical methods. The question list was assembled consciously and directly targeting those two test types. That was especially important, as there was no way to supplement or fix the survey questions after conducting the research (Kovács, 2013).

Before distributing the finalized questionnaire to IT companies, five other IT professionals completed the revised version to assess its clarity, evaluate the time required for completion, ascertain the ease of ranking 20 elements, and offer overall feedback on the survey experience. It served as a pilot test, which is really important in providing quick feedback about the quality of the questionnaire (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). Once the pilot test reassured the positive perception of the questionnaire, snowball sampling was used to reach the targeted audience. Based on the recommendation of Ghauri & Grønhaug (2011) on a classical sample size, the intention was to reach 200 respondents. As subgrouping was used only in the form of a smaller number of contingency table analyses, and the area is very specific, they recommend a sample size above 200 persons. Due to the specific target group, it was more challenging than in the case of a general topic with a general audience, and also considering that there was no dedicated budget for the research. The target group was specifically IT professionals, and the author of this thesis did not want to share the survey without limitation - to avoid contamination; so instead of general sharing, former business relationships and professional networks were the starting points.

The survey was prepared with Survio app. Considering the characteristics of the targeted respondents, it was conducted in Hungarian but the English version of the original question list is included as an Appendix of this thesis (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

The second research question was how increased working-from-home opportunities affected team cohesion and the employees' sense of belonging, and with these, their overall engagement. The idea was to understand how IT project teams work in WFH arrangements and how this affects the operation of employees and their engagement and its elements.

It is a significantly softer topic; it targets a deeper understanding of personal and team behavior. The concept is complex, where unforeseen topics may arise based on last years' experience, so in-depth interviews are the best possible tool to capture all aspects (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011).

As the target group of the research was IT companies, it was clear that the interviewees had to be professionals from the IT sector. After thorough consideration, IT project managers

were chosen as they can provide both a personal aspect as an employee and also share experiences about other colleagues from a managerial point of view.

Five interviewees were chosen. The main idea was to cover different genders and age cohorts, and also different kinds of organizations – all five project managers work for different companies. All of them were part of the author's professional network, so it could be known that they were thorough and hard-working people with good managerial skills that made them credible interviewees. They are Hungarians, so the interviews were conducted in Hungarian, and then translated to English for the analysis. The English version of the original interview guide and the Hungarian question list are also included as an Appendix (see Appendix 3 and Appendix 4).

Similarly to the questionnaire, the interview questions were prepared thoughtfully and thoroughly as well. The interview guide aimed to provide a strong basis for the interview covering not only WFH topics but also a general understanding of the employees' practices in this new arrangement.

Although the main questions were prepared, as Mason (2005) also highlights – besides the researchers' friend-like role – reflexivity is key. Active listening is very important, resulting in reactions to the interviewee's statements, and also added or modified questions if the topic requires it.

The interviews were recorded and a basic transcript was prepared immediately after every interview, so the memories of the author's perceptions and the interviewees' reactions still could be sharp and relevant (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011). After finishing all the interviews, the essence of the contents and key thoughts or quotations were collected into a matrix to provide a thorough overview of the topic and a basis to compare the similarities and differences as the basis for creating a comprehensive summary of the findings.

A non-disclaimer agreement has been signed with all five interviewees stating that the content of the interviews will appear in the thesis only as summaries, and all sensitive data (both personal and company-wise) will be deleted. The recordings and the transcripts were accessible only for the preparation of the summaries; after that, they were destroyed.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND MAIN RESULTS

The following chapters provide a detailed and thorough summary of the main results of the survey and the in-depth interviews.

4.1. Survey results

The survey was active from February 4, 2024, to March 22, 2024. During this period, 226 participants responded. The sample is not representative. However, this number of respondents is satisfying based on the research methodology principles. Additionally, the survey could not be filled out by individuals outside a specific demographic: it targeted exclusively IT professionals working in Hungary. The respondents work either for independent Information Technology companies (47.3%) or for the IT departments of companies in other sectors (52.7%).

The location of the respondents is almost entirely Budapest. 92.9% out of the 226 respondents work in Budapest and an additional 2.2% in Pest county (95.1% altogether), so only 4.9% of the respondents were from other parts of Hungary. On the one hand, this phenomenon can be explained by the location of the professional network of the author; on the other hand, Budapest generally serves as the venue for more IT companies. Nonetheless, different salary levels, different infrastructure, different working conditions, and attitudes can be observed here, so while evaluating and generalizing the results, this background has to be taken into consideration.

The gender distribution among respondents is as follows: 6 respondents did not provide their gender, so the sample size was 220; 68.6% of them were males, and 31.4% of them were females. This distribution may also reflect the general ratio between men and women in the IT industry.

The educational background of the respondents is predominantly tertiary education, with 86.7% of the respondents holding Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD degrees. This proportion likely reflects the general educational level of IT professionals.

The age range of the respondents is highly diverse, with respondents' ages ranging from 21 to 67 years old. The survey collected precise ages from each respondent, allowing the author

of this thesis to create suitable age bins during the evaluation process for data analysis. See Figure 2 for a visual representation of the age groups and the distribution of respondents within each age bin.

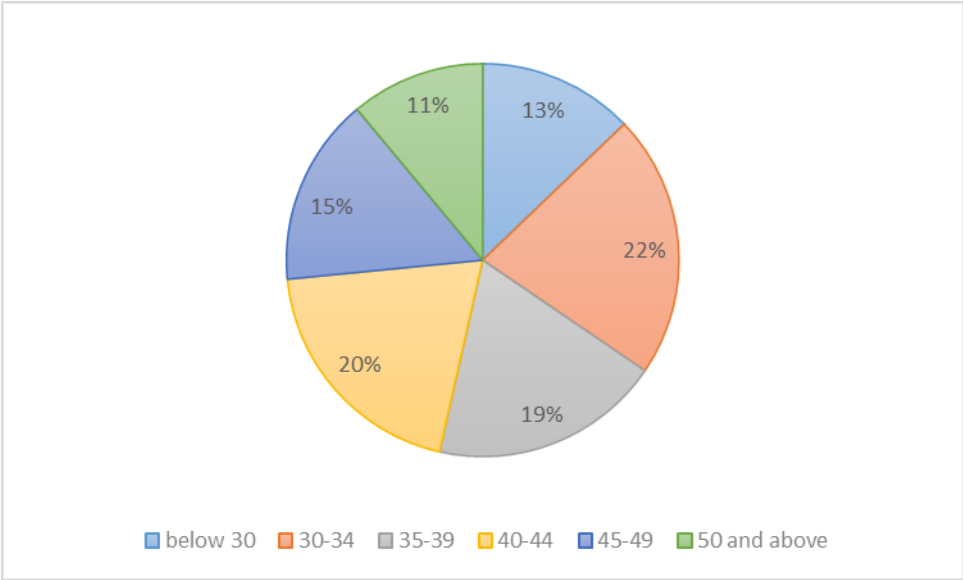


Figure 2 – Distribution of respondents across different age categories (%)
Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

To provide a more detailed background of the respondents, they were asked about the number of years in their current position and in their current workplace. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show this distribution.

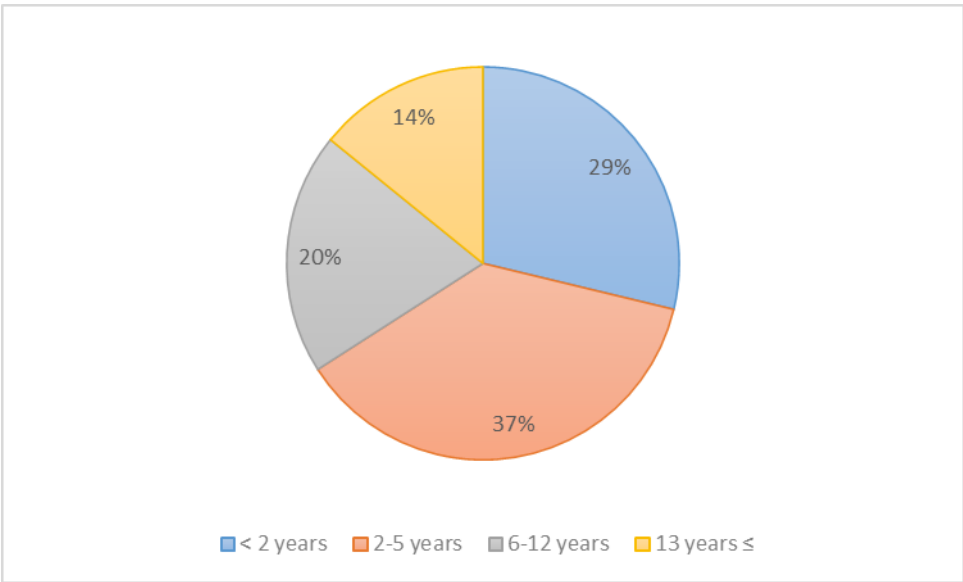


Figure 3 - Distribution of respondents based on their tenure in their workplace (%)
Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

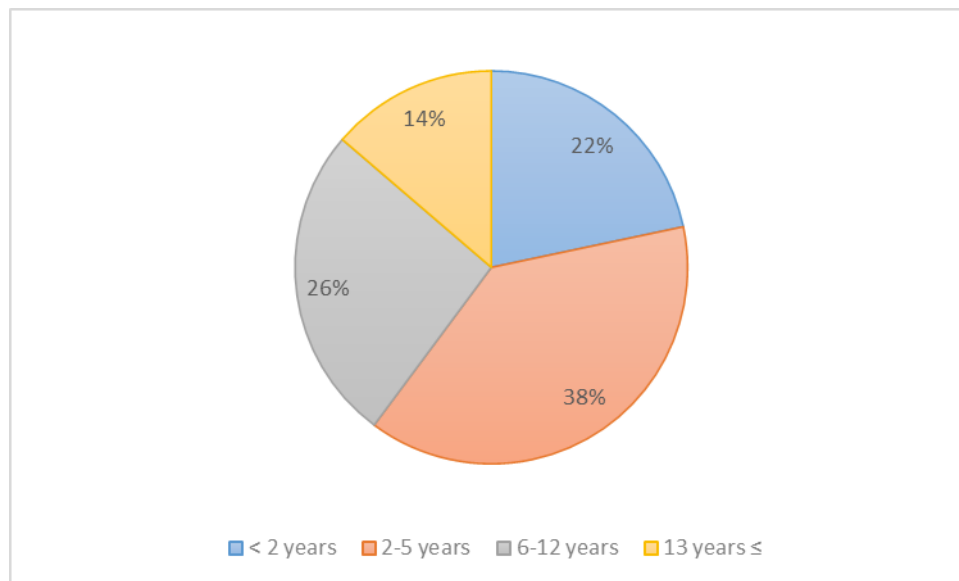


Figure 4 - Distribution of respondents based on their tenure in their position (%)

Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

After evaluating the demographic background of the respondents, three kinds of statistical evaluations have been conducted on the collected data: 1) general observations and different descriptive statistics about the sample; 2) contingency analysis to compare the perception of the importance of the different incentives within different kinds of groups; and 3) regression analysis to discover the statistical relationships between the actual availability of the different incentives and the elements of employee engagement. The following chapters show the detailed results of these statistics.

The following paragraphs often use abbreviations and shorter versions for the questionnaire elements, so after closing the survey and exporting the raw data, one of the first steps was to create a coding table. The questions and elements of the survey have been converted to keywords to create simplified data labels for the data table (see Appendix 5).

4.1.1. Descriptive statistics – General observations

The first question was an open-ended question to engage respondents and to gain insight into their overall perception of the topic. It aimed to set the tone for the survey and provide the author with an initial understanding of respondents' viewpoints. They were asked for a simple association about employee engagement. The responses were translated into English, cleared up, and collected into key categories to provide a basis for an overview, see Figure 5 below.



Figure 5 - Engagement Associations: A Visual Representation

Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=225

17.8% of the responses were negative associations, all of the others rather positive or neutral. However, a visible relationship cannot be drawn between the emotional valence of the expressions and the scores of engagement. The word cloud also illustrates the frequency of the expressions. Supporting the idea of the strong relationship between engagement and loyalty as described in the literature review, loyalty was the most frequently mentioned concept, it occurred 71 times. It was followed by the 23 mentions of esteem; but motivation, mutuality, team, trust, respect, and financial incentives were also frequent connotations. The negative responses mostly covered the idea that employee engagement is either an outdated view or just a fake and deceptive ‘marketing trick’ from the employer’s side, in some cases even an unfair scheme, for instance, resulting in lower salaries or ‘slavery-like’ conditions.

More than half of the respondents (58.4%) were thinking about quitting in the preceding 3 months. However, a significant number of these employees (59.8% of those who have been

thinking about quitting) also provided high scores (7-10) for their overall satisfaction, supporting the idea of increasing job-hopping even among those who like their current workplaces.

The overall satisfaction scores provide a slightly positive but not outstanding picture. Figure 6 shows the frequency of the scores given for the question ‘How satisfied are you with your current workplace and position?’.

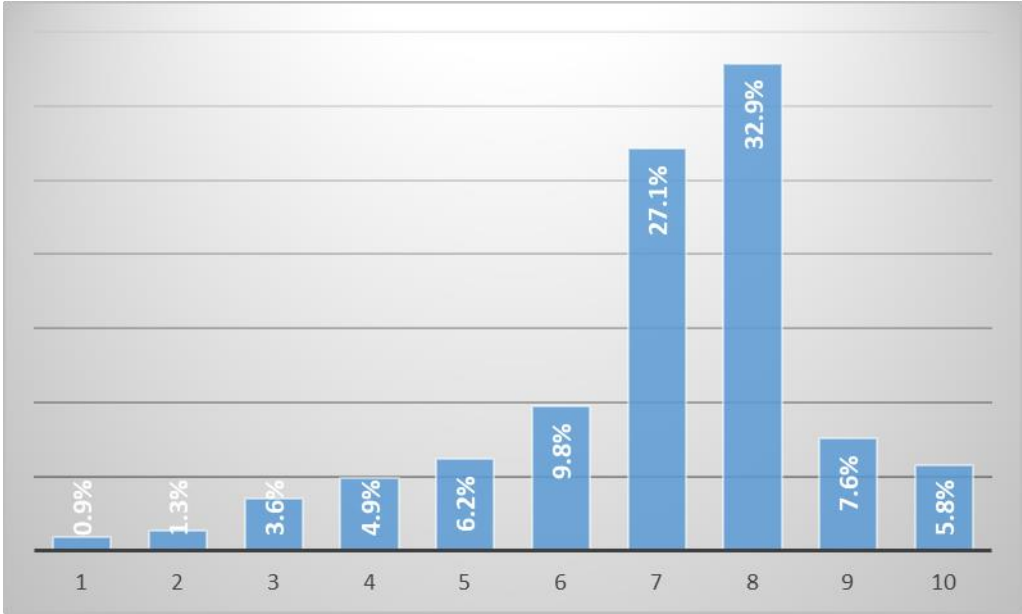


Figure 6 - Frequency of general satisfaction scores (%)
Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=225

As can be seen based on the shape of the curve, the distribution is not normal, it is skewed to the moderate positive area. The mode, i.e. the most frequently chosen value was the score ‘8’. The average overall satisfaction is 7.02 with a standard deviation of 1.78 suggesting a moderate spread around the mean, so it can be said that the respondents’ satisfaction level is generally rather positive but not excellent with their workplaces and positions.

Another important part of the survey was a general ranking of the different extrinsic and intrinsic incentives. The ranked elements’ values have a simple coding table: Survio creates score values for the ranked elements in a reverse order meaning rank1 gets 20 scores (not 1), rank2 gets 19 scores, etc. so the higher scores mean higher importance. The summarized general result – without considering the backgrounds of the respondents or grouping them – is shown in Figure 7 below.

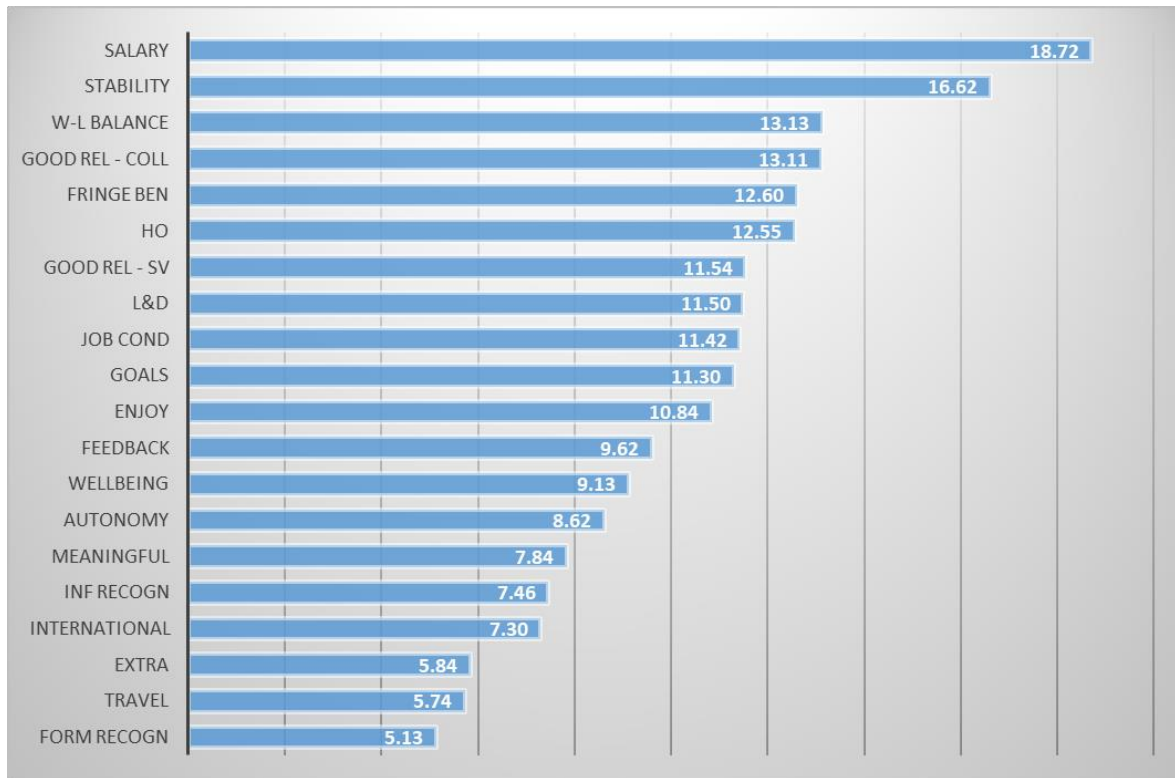


Figure 7 - Perception of different rewards.
General ranking without grouping (based on score means)

Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

As depicted in the figure, despite part of the literature suggesting the predominant importance of intrinsic rewards, the respondents of this survey still almost unanimously ranked salary and bonuses as their top priority, and the diverse fringe benefit package also secured 5th place in the ranking. One possible reason for this could be last years' significant inflation rate, which made higher remuneration more important again. The second place is reserved for another extrinsic but non-financial reward, namely the secure and stable workplace. As suggested by the literature too, it still might be the result of COVID-19, when several basic conditions were questioned; many people lost their workplaces they had not even thought they would, so hygiene factors like stability and security have been revalued. It is followed by work-life balance and good relationships with colleagues, and the home office opportunities also secured a decent 6th place. Good relationships satisfy social needs, so the result confirms their relatively high importance which was expected based on the literature. As the in-depth interviews also confirmed, home office has become a basic expectation in IT since the infrastructure was established during the lockdown. A later

section of the thesis evaluates the general perception of the rewards further, comparing the raking results within different cohorts like age or salary range.

In order to examine the relationship between the actual availability of the different rewards and the five most common elements of employee engagement (as defined in the author's definition), the respondents were asked to provide their current level of motivation, dedication, psychological state, satisfaction, and willingness to stay on a scale of 1-10. In a later chapter, these scores are compared to the rewards as well, but before that, they also can be analyzed independently to provide a grasp of the current engagement level of the respondents.

Firstly, the five elements can be evaluated independently. In this case, the results are the following: there is a mean of 6.35 for the motivation scores, a mean of 7.63 for the dedication, a mean of 6.72 for the psychological state, a mean of 6.60 for the satisfaction, and a mean of 6.73 for the willingness to stay. These can be considered middle-level values, leaning towards the positive side but not exceptionally high. Overall, they reflect moderately positive perceptions.

There were only 10.6% of the 226 responses where the standard deviation from the mean of the five elements' scores was higher than 2.0. In these cases, one or two elements out of the five were provided with an extremely low or extremely high value compared to the other factors. For instance, either the motivation or the willingness to stay is low despite the other elements' higher scores; or in other cases, the employees' dedication toward performing their tasks is still very high regardless of the significantly lower value of the other factors. Besides these relatively low numbers of more inconsistent values, in 48.2% of the cases, the standard deviation from the mean of the five elements was below 1.0, and in 41.2% of the cases between 1.0 and 2.0, resulting in generally consistent responses to the five questions.

Considering the consistency of the provided scores, and the literature's suggestions that these are the most important elements of the engagement, the five individual results were summarized to provide an aggregated index number for the overall engagement level. This was calculated as the average of the five scores and is called the 'Employee Engagement

Index’ within the frames of this thesis. Figure 8 shows the frequency of these aggregated average values to provide a concise picture of the general level of employee engagement.

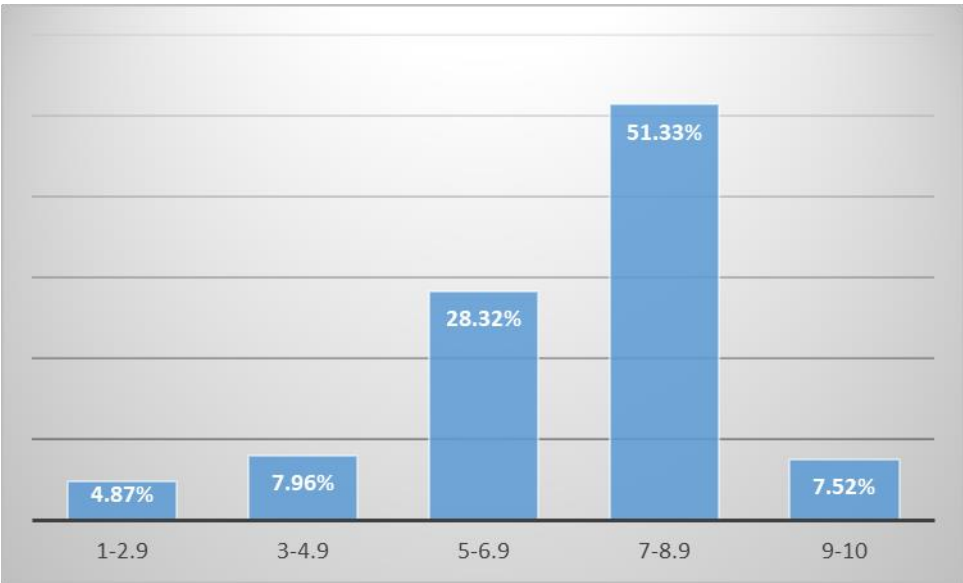


Figure 8 - Frequency of Employee Engagement Index values (%)

Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

As shown in the figure the extremes are rare. The majority of employees exhibit generally satisfying engagement levels, with values above 7, and a relatively higher ratio falls within the moderate range of 5-6.9 as well.

The availability of the different rewards was also examined. A general overview of the average scores is provided in Table 1 below. However, it should be noted that the standard deviations from the means are generally high, indicating significant diversity in incentive levels across different companies.

An interesting observation is that if the rankings of the general perception of the rewards and their actual availability are compared, there is no identification between the two lists. Three of them are among the first six elements in both lists, but in different orders, namely the secure and stable workplace, the good relationship with colleagues, and the home office opportunities, meaning these are the rewards that are among the most important ones for the employees and are generally provided by the IT companies as well. However, salary or fringe benefits that - based on employee responses - would be also highly prioritized, obtained lower scores on their actual availability.

Table 1 - Ranking of rewards based on their availability level at different companies

REWARD	MEAN	ST. DEV.
Good relationship with colleagues	8.09	1.88
Home-office opportunities	7.91	2.59
Autonomy in performing tasks	7.74	1.91
Secure and stable workplace	7.65	2.09
Good relationship with superiors	7.50	2.18
Work-life balance	7.10	2.34
Meaningful work	7.01	2.22
Working conditions	6.89	2.23
Salary (with bonuses)	6.77	2.04
Informal recognition	6.66	2.23
Enjoyable work, job passion	6.53	2.34
Fit to organizational culture and company's goals	6.10	2.28
Performance feedback	5.83	2.51
Diverse fringe benefit package	5.77	2.73
Learning & development opportunities	5.62	2.61
International environment, the opportunity for using languages	4.74	3.38
Formal recognition	4.44	2.63
Health and wellbeing related benefits	4.04	2.86
Extra office equipment	4.01	2.96
Traveling opportunities	2.94	2.47

Note: Table 1 illustrates the average scores for the availability of rewards. High standard deviation values in the table indicate significant differences among the various companies.

Source: created by the author, based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

As can be seen in the table, the first place on the ‘availability list’ was secured by good relationships with colleagues. Unlike the other rewards, this is the one that is partially under the control of the organization itself. Naturally, they can manage employees who tend to create negative dynamics or rearrange teams if necessary to reduce conflicts, however, it largely depends on the attitudes within the community. It can be said that employees generally intend to maintain positive dynamics resulting in this factor being the first in the list which likely reflects its significant importance; it also had the 4th rank in the general ranking.

It also can be observed that those rewards that need financial investment from the organization's side start from the middle of the list, including salary, various fringe benefits, but even good working conditions, like tools, equipment, or technology; and the extra factors still are on the bottom of the list.

4.1.2. Contingency tables – How different cohorts perceive the different rewards

In the previous part of the thesis, a general perception of the different rewards and their importance has been provided. The next sections aim to analyze the same perception but with the goal of discovering possible differences across different cohorts. Four contingency analyses based on four different groupings were conducted: it was analyzed whether there is a statistical relationship between the importance of the rewards and the different salary ranges, gender, age, and years spent in the current company. The analyses were conducted with Chi-square tests. The confidence level was 95% in every case. The following chapters do not contain the contingency tables, however, Appendix 5 provides the Excel sheets containing all the supporting tables.

The first contingency table was created based on the salary ranges. To illustrate the employees' salary levels, Figure 9 below shows the respondents' distribution across salary ranges.

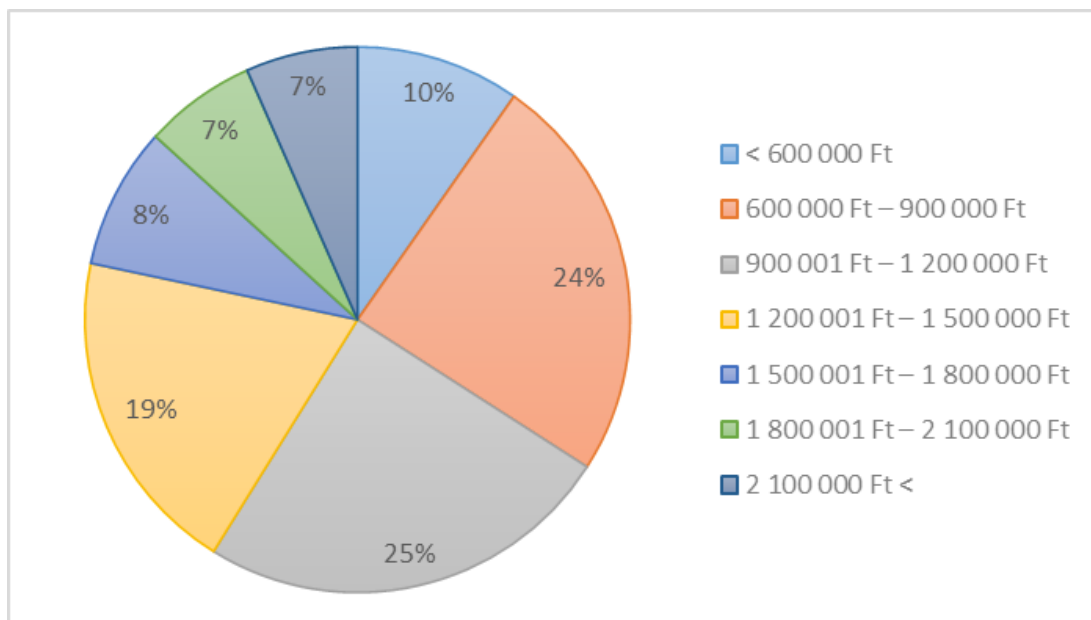


Figure 9 - Distribution of respondents across salary ranges (%)

Source: created by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

The question was whether salary level as the independent variable affects the perception of the different rewards' importance as the dependent variable. For the statistical analysis, two statistical hypotheses were developed:

- H_0 : There is no statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' salary.
- H_1 : There is a statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' salary.

The used tool was the Chi-square test. Here, the main logic of the statistical method is to assess whether the observed categorical data significantly deviate from the expected frequencies, thus determining if there is a statistically significant association between the two variables (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011). The analysis was conducted in Microsoft Excel. First, the summary table of the actual data was prepared with the help of the Pivot table, aggregating the ranking scores for all 20 rewards within each of the 7 different salary ranges. The next step was to create the table of the expected data, to specify what the scores would be if there was no statistical relationship between the variables, using purely the ratio of the actual row and column totals. The chi-square test is for analyzing whether the deviation of the actual data is great enough from the expected data to show a statistically significant relationship. If the observed frequencies deviate significantly from the expected frequencies, it suggests that there may be a relationship between the variables (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011). To conduct the analysis in Microsoft Excel, besides the described actual and expected data tables the confidence level, the significance level, and the degree of freedom are needed as input parameters. The research used a 95% confidence level and a 0.05 significance level. Degree of freedom (DOF) is calculated by multiplying the (number of rows – 1) with the (number of columns – 1), which is - given that there are 20 types of rewards and 7 salary ranges - (19*6). The output data are the p-value, the Chi-square test, and the Chi-square criteria. The p-value quantifies how likely it is to obtain the observed data if there is no association between the variables, i.e. the null hypothesis is true. It provides evidence against the null hypothesis. It is calculated using the tables of the actual and expected ranking results based on the respondents' salary ranges. If the p-value is below the predetermined significance level (0.05), it supports the validity of the test and provides evidence against the null hypothesis (Greenberg, 2009). The Chi-square test quantifies the overall deviation

between observed and expected frequencies, while the Chi-square critical value (or Chi-square criteria) takes into account the degree of freedom and significance level. If the calculated Chi-square statistic (from the test) exceeds the Chi-square critical value at a given significance level, it suggests that the observed deviation is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone. This provides support for rejecting the null hypothesis in favor of the alternative hypothesis, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the variables being studied (Varghese et al., 2023).

After conducting the analysis detailed above on the rankings within the salary ranges, the values shown in Table 2 were calculated:

Table 2 - Salary range Chi-square test results

p-value =	1E-46
DOF =	114
CHISQ =	481.27
CHISQ CRIT =	139.92

Source: calculated by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

As the p-value value is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, the test is valid, the null hypothesis might be rejected, and the analysis can be continued. Based on the data the CHISQ and CHISQ criteria values were calculated. The Chi-square statistic exceeds the Chi-square criteria, so H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted, meaning there is a significant relationship between the variables.

After verifying the statistical significance, the individual rankings created within the different salary ranges could be compared. Salary and a stable workplace were the first two rewards in every ranking. After these, slight differences could be observed in the lists, for instance, a good relationship with colleagues and work-life balance are slightly less important for employees in the highest salary range. Similarly, the learning and development opportunities have a bit lower score in the highest salary range, as well. However, the international environment is significantly more important for the most highly paid employees and they also tend to consider traveling as a plus. It also can be observed that feedback got lower scores in the upper-middle groups. There are other factors where this

either bell or 'U'-shaped phenomenon can be observed: for instance, enjoyable work is a bit more important in the middle categories, while identification with the company's goals is not that important for them; the latter is visibly more significant among the lowest-waged employees and among the highly paid ones. A various fringe benefit package also seems to be more important in the lower and higher categories and a slightly less important factor in the middle ranges.

The second contingency table was created based on the employees' gender. Here, the ranking, i.e. the perception of the rewards stayed as the dependent variable, but the independent variable was the gender to analyze whether the latter affected the rankings. Two statistical hypotheses were developed:

- H_0 : There is no statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' gender.
- H_1 : There is a statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' gender.

There were 6 respondents who did not provide their gender; they were taken out of the calculation, and the cross-tabulations table was prepared for the male and female respondents. When calculating the p-value, it showed a 0.1158 value, which means that H_0 could not be rejected, and there was no statistical evidence to support the alternative hypothesis. When comparing the two individual rankings created by men and women, it really is visible that the two lists are predominantly identical. Nonetheless, two observations can be made that stand out from the homogeneity: the working conditions were valued as less important, however, the good relationship with the superiors was more important by the women respondents, but based on the p-value it cannot be statistically confirmed.

The third contingency table was created based on the employees' age cohorts, age being the independent and the importance of rewards the dependent variable. Two statistical hypotheses were developed:

- H_0 : There is no statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' age.

- H_1 : There is a statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' age.

The methodology was the same as in the previous cases: the cross-tabulation tables with the actual and the expected ranking results were created, then the Chi-square test was conducted. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Age range Chi-square test results

p-value =	1E-17
DOF =	95
CHISQ =	262.93
CHISQ CRIT =	118.75

Source: calculated by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

The p-value was calculated using the tables of the actual and expected ranking results based on the respondents' age cohorts. Its value is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, so there is evidence against the null hypothesis, and the test can be considered valid. Degree of freedom (DOF) was calculated by multiplying the (number of rows – 1) with the (number of columns – 1), which is (19*5) here - given that there are 20 types of rewards and 6 age cohorts. CHISQ and CHISQ criteria values were calculated based on these data. The Chi-square statistic exceeds the Chi-square criteria, so H_0 is rejected, and H_1 is accepted, meaning there is a significant relationship between the variables.

After confirming the statistical relationship, the rankings provided by the different age cohorts were compared. One of the most visible differences is the slight bell-shaped changes in the work-life balance scores. It reaches its peak among the 35-44-year-old respondents. This is likely explained by their family status: employees in their early married years or with young children may anticipate needing more time for their personal lives as well. The need to fit into the organizational culture and the company's goals shows an increasing tendency: the older the employee is, the more important it gets. Autonomy also shows a similar trajectory: it is more significant among older colleagues. Learning and development opportunities seem to be more desired by the younger employees, while the wellbeing-related benefits show a slightly decreasing tendency as employees grow older. Home office

opportunities are among the top results for employees below 40, and then start a decreasing trajectory, but with an outlier among the 45-49-year-olds. The in-depth interviews supported the idea, that generalizations can be made based on age; however, personality is also key and can make exceptions, so this outlier might be the reason of the 45-49-year-old respondents' personal preferences and not necessarily a general characteristic of this age cohort. Compared to the other rewards, the extra working conditions show a slightly outstanding rank among the youngest, however, it is not among the most important ones for them either.

The fourth contingency table was created based on the employees' years in their current workplace to analyze whether they – as an independent variable – affect the perception of the rewards. Similarly to the previous cases, two statistical hypotheses were developed:

- H_0 : There is no statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' workplace tenure.
- H_1 : There is a statistical relationship between the ranking of the rewards and the employees' workplace tenure.

Based on the employees' tenure four bins were created: those who have been working for their company 1) for less than 2 years, 2) 2-5 years, 3) 6-12 years, and 4) for 13 or more years. The biggest groups are the first two, as pictured in the Descriptive statistics chapter. After creating the cross-tabulation tables, the Chi-square test was conducted here as well. The results are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Tenure range Chi-square test results

p-value =	1E-17
DOF =	57
CHISQ =	198.71
CHISQ CRIT =	75.62

Source: calculated by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

The p-value was calculated using the tables of the actual and expected ranking results based on the respondents' tenure bins. Its value is smaller than the significance level of 0.05, so there is evidence against H_0 . Degree of freedom (DOF) is calculated by multiplying the

(number of rows – 1) with the (number of columns – 1), which is (19*3) here - given that there are 20 types of rewards, and 4 tenure bins were created. The calculated Chi-square statistic exceeds the Chi-square criteria, so the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, meaning there is a significant relationship between the number of years in the workplace and the importance of the different rewards.

After confirming H_1 , the four individual rankings were compared to analyze the differences. The trajectory of the importance of home office exhibits a bell-shaped curve. It could be explained by the idea that also was mentioned during the in-depth interviews: younger employees expect it more, however, in the first period of working for a company, it can be a drawback as it prevents the establishment of proper social relations. Due to that, in the first 1-2 years it is not needed to a high extent, then it has a peak in the 2-5 years range and starts to decrease after that. As those who work for a company longer usually are older as well, it could be related to the perception of home office by the different age cohorts. Work-life balance shows a slightly decreasing tendency during the years.

The alignment with the company's culture and goals appears to be more crucial in the initial stages. However, its significance diminishes somewhat between 2 to 5 years. Subsequently, it gradually increases with tenure again. Job conditions also show this interesting 'U' shape curve, showing higher importance while starting work at a company, and then above 12 years again. This could be explained by the idea, that these factors might affect the employees' attitude about staying, and later they can be a significant contributor to staying somewhere for so long. The most visible difference is that the need for formal recognition, autonomy, and enjoyable tasks is significantly increasing with the number of years spent in the workplace.

4.1.3. Regression – How actually available rewards affect employee engagement

After evaluating the general perception of the importance of the different rewards, it was researched whether their actual presence in the workplace really affects the employees' engagement. As described in the literature review chapter, the author of this thesis aimed to provide a comprehensive and general definition of employee engagement and define its main elements; and in order to assess the current level of engagement of the respondents they were asked to provide scores for each of these five elements. The independent evaluation of the

elements and the overall engagement of the respondents - with the earlier introduced Employee Engagement Index value – was elaborated in the General observation chapter; the current chapter examines whether the results (as dependent variables) were influenced by the availability of the different rewards (as independent variables) which was also provided in the questionnaire.

The relationship was analyzed using regression analysis. Regression analysis is a statistical method used to understand and quantify the relationship between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable. Its primary purpose is to examine how changes in the independent variables are associated with changes in the dependent variable, allowing for prediction, explanation, and understanding of the relationship between variables (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011). After running the analysis with computer software, the coefficients, the significance F (also called p-value), and the R values have to be evaluated to understand the correlations between the variables. Coefficients represent the estimated change in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the independent variable, holding all other variables constant. Each coefficient provides information about the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The p-value, similarly to the Chi-square tests, shows whether the given independent variable is useful and has a statistically significant relationship with the dependent variable. If the p-value is smaller than the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level, then the null hypothesis can be rejected. R, also called Pearson's correlation coefficient can have a value between -1 and 1, where the sign shows the direction of the relationship between the variables and the value shows the strength of it; the closer to ± 1 , the stronger the relationship is. R^2 represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables in the model (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2011).

There were 20 independent variables, i.e. the different rewards, which were compared to the 5 elements of the employee engagement and to the previously calculated Employee Engagement Index, so multiple regression analysis was conducted, for the 20 times 6, i.e. 120 cases.

For every case, two statistical hypotheses could be developed:

- H_0 : There is no statistically significant relationship between the specified reward and the corresponding engagement component.
- H_1 : There is a statistically significant relationship between the specified reward and the corresponding engagement component.

The calculations were conducted in PSPP software. The detailed PSPP results can be seen in Appendix 5. Table 5 provides a concise summary of the main results containing the p-values for all cases. Where p-value < 0.05, H_0 can be rejected. The coding table for the labels is the same as used previously; the detailed description can be checked in Appendix 6.

Table 5 – Summary of p-values of the initial multiple regression results

	MOTIV	DEDICATED	PSYCH	SATISF	STAY	EE - avg
SALARY	0.021	0.018	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000
FRINGE BEN	0.799	0.449	0.482	0.014	0.272	0.321
STABILITY	0.357	0.697	0.724	0.037	0.144	0.437
JOB COND	0.549	0.074	0.751	0.362	0.836	0.285
EXTRA	0.181	0.392	0.694	0.579	0.186	0.436
WELLBEING	0.480	0.200	0.151	0.71	0.407	0.301
GOALS	0.251	0.310	0.058	0.043	0.011	0.013
TRAVEL	0.457	0.127	0.066	0.258	0.103	0.043
INTERNATIONAL	0.703	0.133	0.262	0.063	0.547	0.177
L&D	0.391	0.323	0.315	0.786	0.885	0.824
FEEDBACK	0.767	0.305	0.341	0.724	0.497	0.409
GOOD REL - COLL	0.066	0.980	0.599	0.459	0.780	0.988
GOOD REL - SV	0.001	0.114	0.012	0.053	0.002	0.000
INF RECOGN	0.116	0.796	0.738	0.879	0.296	0.841
FORM RECOGN	0.198	0.781	0.065	0.231	0.651	0.165
W-L BALANCE	0.156	0.007	0.001	0.308	0.466	0.869
HO	0.766	0.384	0.161	0.997	0.432	0.615
AUTONOMY	0.914	0.322	0.140	0.212	0.382	0.445
MEANINGFUL	0.001	0.079	0.361	0.227	0.164	0.018
ENJOY	0.000	0.017	0.009	0.035	0.168	0.000

Note: Relationships with p-values less than 0.05 are considered statistically significant.

Source: calculated by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

The p-values that are smaller than 0.05 were highlighted; these are the rewards (independent variables) in the rows that affect the dependent variables shown in the columns.

As can be seen in the table, some variables affect almost all engagement elements, like salary or enjoyable work, and others only affect one or two of the elements, like the fringe benefits or the stability; the possible reasons behind these are detailed in a later part of this chapter.

The exact values of the coefficients (also provided in Appendix 5) were not evaluated, as they were not needed to provide the general impact of the relevant rewards on the engagement elements; however, in one case it is important to mention that it had a negative value, meaning a reverse relationship between the two variables. According to the regression results, the work-life balance negatively correlates with the employees' dedication to their tasks, meaning a higher work-life balance results in lower dedication. One possible reason behind this can be, that those who have a better work-life balance do not want to complete all tasks at all costs, for instance, when it would affect their private life or free time.

Due to the possible modifying effects of those rewards that do not actually affect the dependent variables, the exact results were not evaluated at this stage. A new multiple regression was conducted, where the original non-relevant rewards - with p-values above 0.05 - were left out, and only the relevant ones were evaluated to provide correct R numbers.

The traveling opportunities' effect on the Employee Engagement Index is highlighted in grey in Table 5, as in the initial regression it had a value slightly below 0.05. However, upon conducting a corrected regression, the p-value increased to 0.111, suggesting acceptance of the null hypothesis. This change may be attributed to the influence of non-relevant variables on the original calculations. Subsequently, a revised regression analysis was performed for the Employee Engagement Index, examining the actual impact of the other five elements. While the p-values for other variables changed slightly after removing the non-relevant factors, they still remained below the $\alpha = 0.05$ threshold (they generally decreased further). The detailed final results of the multiple regression are also presented in Appendix 5. Table 6 summarizes the statistically correlating variables and the R results of the final regressions.

Table 6 – Summary of corrected regression results

MOTIV	p-value	DEDICATED	p-value	PSYCH	p-value
SALARY	0.002	SALARY	0.004	GOOD_REL_SV	0.000
GOOD_REL_SV	0.001	W_L_BALANCE	0.015	W_L_BALANCE	0.000
MEANINGFUL	0.000	ENJOY	0.000	ENJOY	0.000
ENJOY	0.000				
R	R Square	R	R Square	R	R Square
0.76	0.58	0.54	0.29	0.63	0.4
SATISF	p-value	STAY	p-value	EE_Index	p-value
SALARY	0.000	SALARY	0.000	SALARY	0.000
FRINGE_BEN	0.002	GOALS	0.000	GOALS	0.002
STABILITY	0.005	GOOD_REL_SV	0.000	GOOD_REL_SV	0.000
GOALS	0.000			MEANINGFUL	0.007
ENJOY	0.000			ENJOY	0.000
R	R Square	R	R Square	R	R Square
0.76	0.58	0.65	0.42	0.79	0.62

Note: Only statistically significant independent variables are presented in the final results. The corresponding R-numbers indicate the magnitude of their impact, as elaborated below.

Source: calculated by the author based on the survey results, 2024, n=226

As presented in Table 6, the general Employee Engagement Index is affected by the level of the employees' salary and bonuses, the identification with the company's goals and culture, the good relationship with the supervisors, and the tasks' meaningful and enjoyable characteristics. These were the independent variables that affected most of the independent elements of the engagement as well. An R-squared value of 0.62 indicates that approximately 62% of the variability in employee engagement is accounted for by these independent variables included in the final regression model. The R = 0.79 value shows a high strength of association.

However, some differences can be observed among the variables affecting the independent elements of engagement. Although these are the main five factors of employee engagement, they vary in the feelings and attitudes affecting them, so the correlating rewards can differ as well. Motivation is influenced by the salary, the good relationship with the supervisors, the meaningful work, and the enjoyable tasks. Based on the R-value the relationship's strength is high, and R^2 shows that 58% of the variability of motivation is based on these elements. The analysis of motivation shows the closest identification to the overall employee

engagement both in the affecting variables and the extent of the effects, supporting the literature's findings about the close relationship between motivation and engagement.

The contributors of dedication show a slightly different picture and also a less strong relationship. Dedication is impacted by the salary level, the enjoyable work, and the work-life balance. The correlation is moderate, and these rewards explain only about 29% of the variability of dedication, with the work-life balance having a reversed role here: higher work-life balance results in lower dedication. As mentioned above, one potential explanation for this phenomenon could be that individuals who achieve a more satisfactory balance between work and personal life prioritize their well-being over completing tasks at any cost, especially if it invades their private time or leisure.

The psychological state is influenced by the good relationship with the supervisors, which might be explained by the positive effects of good management models and styles, and the work-life balance and enjoyable tasks are also important contributors. Based on the p-values, the latter affects it the most. These three factors explain about 40% of the variability of the psychological state and show a strong-moderate correlation with it.

The overall sense of satisfaction shows a similarly strong connection with its contributors as the motivation did, however, the main components differ. The salary and bonuses, the various fringe benefit packages, the stable and secure workplace, the identification with the organization's goals and culture, and the enjoyable tasks are the factors that contribute to the employees feeling satisfied with their workplaces. These variables show a strong correlation with and explain about 58% of the variability of satisfaction.

The last element of engagement that was analyzed was the intention to stay at the workplace. It is affected by the salary, the fit to the organization's culture and goals, and the good relationship with the supervisors. These elements also show a strong-moderate relationship and explain about 42% of the variability of the staying intentions.

When reviewing the results for the six dependent variables, at least moderate but rather strong relationships can be observed with their respective affecting factors. However, the extent to which these influencing rewards explain the variability of the engagement elements

and the engagement itself slightly differs with R Square values ranging from 0.29 to 0.62. The 0.29 R^2 value of the dedication is relatively low but still relevant; the 0.4 and 0.42 values of the rewards in the psychological state and the staying intentions, respectively, indicate a moderate influence; and the R Square values of 0.58 for motivation, 0.58 for satisfaction, and 0.62 for overall engagement demonstrate a strong contribution of rewards to these dependent variables.

An explanation can be that dedication is often considered a general attitude of a person that only slightly can be modified by external factors. In this case, this might be the reason, too, however, some rewards still can increase it; the enjoyable tasks being the most significant one here, which can result in the feeling of being more committed to performing work. The psychological state might be affected by several personal factors, so the right working environment might improve it, nonetheless, it alone is not enough to get high scores if someone is facing other difficulties in their lives; that might be a reason why only 40% of the aforementioned rewards contribute to its variability. A possible explanation for the lower moderate effect of the rewards on the staying intentions might be the ‘job-hopping’ phenomenon described in the literature review. An engaging environment with the right incentives can make employees more engaged, but there are individuals, especially among the younger employees who would frequently change their workplaces anyway just for the sake of changes and new opportunities. The rewards demonstrate their highest explanatory effect in motivating employees, enhancing workplace satisfaction, and overall engagement, reflected in the Employee Engagement Index. The workplace satisfaction is quite understandable as it predominantly derives from external factors and the different characteristics of the work and its environment, however, personality can also have a role in shaping it. Although motivation is often considered a state deriving from a person’s internal feelings, state of mind, and attitudes, the current research shows that it still can be affected by workplace incentives, and not only intrinsic but extrinsic ones, too. The Employee Engagement Index contains factors that appeared in at least one of the preceding categories. It can be said that it behaves as a summary of the independent findings, showing the generally most important rewards affecting engagement and its elements.

The result is predominantly consistent with the previous general ranking of the rewards: nearly all of those rewards that ranked within the top 7 also showed statistical significance

in relation to engagement. However, there were incentives, that fell within the middle or lower middle range of the ranking, like the fit to the organization's culture and goals, the enjoyable tasks, and the meaningful work, so based on the conscious perception of the respondents are less important, but based on the regression analysis still strongly affect the elements of engagement. This suggests that employees may not recognize the extent to which these factors impact their assessment of the workplace. One of the most interesting observations is that there are elements like home office or a good relationship with colleagues that were at the top of the former general ranking, and based on the employees' answers are also mostly available at the workplace, however, based on the regression analysis they do not affect employee engagement and its elements. This can be explained by the suggestion – that was also supported by the in-depth interviews – that these are basic needs, which are expected at the workplace as a hygiene factor, so their presence does not increase engagement, however, their lack would negatively affect it.

4.2. In-depth interviews

The second research question has been researched by conducting interviews with IT project managers. They were asked about their personal experience of WFH arrangements and also how they perceive the behavior of their project team members. Their background information is summarized in Table 7 below.

Table 7 - Backgrounds of interviewees

Participant	Position	Type of organization	Length of employment	Size of projects	Gender	Age	Highest educational level	Location
#1	Project Manager, Project Director	IT sector, SME, software development for banks	6.5 years	0.5-1 years, 5-10 team members (agile)	Male	43	university degree	Budapest
#2	Project Manager, Team Leader	IT sector, SME, software development for financial institutions	7 years	1-3 years, 10-30 project team members	Female	29	BSc	Budapest
#3	Project Manager	IT department of a multinational company in the oil and gas industry	0.5 years	Release and Test Manager of ~100 developers	Female	24	Bsc	Budapest
#4	Project Manager	IT department of a multinational company in the telecommunication sector	10 years (independent contractor)	0.5-3 years, 9-90 project team members	Male	49	MSc	Budapest
#5	Head of PMO	IT department of a Hungarian Bank	5 years	1-2 years, ~40 project team members + 4 PMs as direct reports	Male	29	BSc	Budapest

Source: own interviews conducted by the author, 2024

The following sections provide individual summaries capturing the core content of the interviews, each corresponding to one of the five interviews, respectively.

4.2.1. Results of Interview 1 – The full-remote agile projects

The first interview was conducted with a Project Manager who has been working for a software development company for 6.5 years. In his current project, he is a Project Manager; before that, he was the Project Director of another project. He is 43 years old and works in Budapest. His projects are usually 6-12 months long, and he is responsible for 5-10 project team members. The company works in agile methodology.

Similar to many companies, the home office policies here changed too during the pandemic. Before that, WHF was not available (only for a few colleagues in specific cases, under special agreements). After the reopening, the company kept its flexible rules, which is quite unique even in the IT industry: there are no mandatory office days. Employees can go to the office if they wish to, but they are not obliged to do it. There are only a few mandatory meetings (especially in more strategic roles), and agile self-organizing teams can define days for themselves if they think they need to meet in person, but it is up to them, and in most cases, they work from home.

Among other effects, it has a huge advantage for recruitment: the company can hire great employees from the countryside, and they have more international customers as well.

He states, that at the beginning of the lockdown, the behavior of the teams was a little exaggerated: due to the anxiety caused by the situation and the fear of losing their jobs, people worked even more. They also felt pressure to prove and to demonstrate they work hard even without strict monitoring. It got into a normalized state later, but it still was very important to keep the employer's trust. One interesting example is, that even those employees who always used to be late in person were punctual in online meetings. The online team-building activities were also more frequent at the beginning, *“they were a replacement for going to a pub and drinking a beer”*. The number of self-organized team-building activities has decreased since; nevertheless, the company-organized formal events remain frequent, and they are highly valued by the employees.

He absolutely agrees that home office has become a basic need (people consider it as an “*acquired right*”), and it contributes to work-life balance. If they lose it, it causes “*frustration*”. He argues that arranging some home errands during the day does not decrease work performance. Nonetheless, it can save an hour for that person, which is an “*incredible treasure*”. He is “*grateful*” to the company for that, and that definitely improves his loyalty and engagement. However, he does not state that all people are more motivated in this new arrangement; he suggests that it strongly depends on the employee’s personality. Hardworking employees usually work hard from home as well, and they consider it as an opportunity, while lazy workers will exploit this situation – but they find ways not to work much even if they are in the office, so it is not a WHF specialty.

He states that professional work has not changed. On the contrary, in some cases, it is even more effective. However, people tend to miss social interaction; “*Teams screen cannot replace the physical contacts.*” Team spirit and team cohesion have somewhat decreased, but he thinks, it is not necessarily because of the home office, but employee turnover and the fitting of the new colleagues affect that too. One of the most important takeaway messages here was that if the colleagues had good relationships before the WFH era, then they still feel good team cohesion and do not require regular physical contact in the workplace. However, if there are new colleagues then real and meaningful relationships and team cohesion may not arise without in-person collaboration; “*new colleagues cannot find a way to connect*”. The team cohesion has slightly changed since the WFH arrangements, but in his opinion, it is not only because of the home office alone but also due to the employee turnover: as a result of the previously mentioned more difficult fitting-in of the new team members.

As an employee, the main benefits of home office are a better work-life balance, decreased (or ceased) commuting times, and more sleeping time. The main disadvantage for him is that there is no preparation time, time for “*getting in work mood*”, the line between work and personal life is really thin, and also decreased social interactions.

As a project manager, the main advantage is that the meetings usually are also more focused. One disadvantage is that part of the informal communication has been lost, for instance, gossip heard while drinking coffee together. Prompt actions are sometimes more difficult to

execute, meetings, however, are often more effective. (There are cases though when it would be easier if everyone was in the same place, especially with brainstorming or handling more complex tasks.) He also feels, that “*asking people to do extra*” is generally easier in person. As a manager who coordinates more team members’ activities, it can be difficult that sometimes people are not instantly available during the day, and “*waiting for Teams message reply can be really annoying*”. However, constant chat messages can be distractive, too. “*If you asked me what I hate the most I’d say the sound of Teams messages’ beeping. Basically, there is something every 1.5 minutes 24/7 ... and that makes it very difficult to focus.*”

At his company, working hours are very flexible and they do not monitor when employees sit in front of their computers, “*it would kill trust*”. They use timesheets but it is self-reported and only serves for controlling reasons. However, they expect everyone to show their real status in Teams, so they know if they are available. 80% of the colleagues respect the “*If you are green, be green.*”-rule.

He states that the perception of home office and the attitude is usually based on employees’ personality, however, a slight generalization can be made: younger colleagues seem to expect more work-from-home options and despite the good working circumstances they tend to change workplaces more often.

In essence, he states that home office is a very important incentive; it even has become an important factor in job seeking. The lack of WFH opportunities would be worse than the possible effects of isolation. However, “*balance*” is key, and most possibly, the optimal future is a flexible hybrid arrangement.

4.2.2. Results of Interview 2 – The 4:1 model

The second interview was conducted with a Project Manager who has been working for an IT company for 7 years. The company develops account management software for financial institutions. She is a Project Manager and a Team Leader. She is 29 years old and works in Budapest. Her projects are usually 1-3 years long and need 10-30 project team members.

Like in the previous case, WFH opportunities have been available at the company since the pandemic. During the lockdown, it was proved to the management that WFH is effective:

the tasks are similarly executed, and employees are more satisfied with this option, so they kept most of the flexibility. The current rule is that 1 day has to be spent in the office – this is the Friday for everyone, and it mainly serves social reasons.

She also states that home office has become a basic need, and employees expect to have it. It did not decrease the working morale; on the contrary, employees seem to be more open to extra work in exchange for flexibility during working hours.

She works together with a very supportive team, she has known them for a long time, and can collaborate with them very smoothly, so working online works well for them. However, she also stated, that integrating new team members would be more difficult with the decreased amount of in-person contact.

The main advantages of WFH are that employees can avoid traffic jams, can plan their daily schedule and their personal errands better, and they can have more family time. Disadvantages can be inappropriate working conditions and psychological and social problems for those who tend to be lonely or do not have satisfying private relationships. However, those who prefer working on-site usually will choose their workplace accordingly. Working together with the team is even easier for her: *“Initiating a quick Teams meeting is way easier than trying to find everyone in an office building and make them come to a meeting room”*. Leading online meetings required a little practice, but now she finds them even more effective than the in-person ones. However, in the case of a more diverse team where colleagues tend to be less available during the day, she assumes she probably would face problems.

The perception of home office may differ among different cohorts or areas. Younger employees are more likely to consider it as a basic need. Other sectors but IT, especially in the public administration, or small companies tend to still refuse to work from home. They are more rigid and do not trust their employees would perform the same way without strict monitoring.

The sense of belonging could decrease in this new situation, but it strongly depends on the employees' personality. The company offers several possibilities for socializing, but those

who think “*this is only a workplace*” do not really use it – with or without WFH. She thinks, however, it is a good thing – especially for more lonely colleagues – that they are required to go into the office and have social interactions regularly – it is needed for a healthy psychological state.

In essence, she supports the idea that a home office presents a valuable opportunity, enhancing the morale of colleagues. She believes that the potential drawbacks of isolation are outweighed by the positive impacts of the flexibility associated with working from home. Nonetheless, she suggests that, ideally, companies should monitor these possible negative effects and adopt a hybrid working model (she is satisfied with their current 4:1 model) ensuring that in-person work is not completely eliminated.

4.2.3. Results of Interview 3 – Perception of the youngest

The third interview was conducted with a Project Manager who works for a multinational company in the oil and gas sector. She has been working there for half a year as a Release and Test Manager and is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the developing tasks of about 100 programmers. She is 24 years old and works in Budapest.

Her situation is somewhat unique as she has changed workplaces twice since the pandemic. Consequently, she cannot directly compare the situation before and after COVID-19 at the same company. However, she can compare WFH and office work in general, and – as there have been lots of assumptions about younger colleagues’ attitudes and perceptions – her young age also played a significant role in her selection as an interviewee.

The company she has been working for has just changed its WFH policies. Before the pandemic, they offered only 1 day of home office for IT professionals. After the full-time home office during the lockdown, first, they went back to 3 days of home office without specific rules. However, it has been changed lately to 3 mandatory office days and the 2 remaining WFH days have extra rules (for instance, a ‘no long weekend’-rule). There were no effectiveness problems; she suggests it is mainly a result of the old-school Hungarian management attitude and the “*jealousy*” felt by other employees of the company whose jobs do not allow working from home. She agrees that home office and flexibility have become basic needs, and increased employee turnover caused by the latest policy changes also

strongly supports this idea. (Not only is this an assumption, but quitters also voice this reason.)

Nonetheless, the other extreme is not suitable either. She left her previous job after a few months because of the full-time home office. She did not meet with anyone in person, even her onboarding process was online and generally non-interactive. In her opinion, this model can work professionally, but the lack of in-person contacts, especially in the case of a new employee, hinders the development of meaningful social relationships. In essence, she also supports hybrid working models. However, personality can be an important factor here too: she knows several age peers who wish to be “*digital nomads*” and for them, the importance of flexibility outweighs the possible social problems caused by isolation from colleagues.

She suggested that professional work can be executed with the same quality, and existing team cohesion also can be maintained in WFH arrangements as well; however, newly formed teams or new employees face difficulties as the development of the sense of belonging requires in-person connections.

In her opinion and experience, engagement and home office are not necessarily connected. Home office has become a basic need, an “*entry-level*” in job-seeking. “*It is so basic, that employees will not even choose workplaces without that option.*” Hybrid models can support the development of a sense of belonging, eliminating that engagement-decreasing factor. Nonetheless, the entire phenomenon of employee engagement has started to weaken – especially among younger colleagues and in IT with its widespread options. Younger employees can be perfectly satisfied with a workplace, even engaged for the short run, feel motivated, and have meaningful relationships, but still will leave easily to gain more experience, try different options, or simply improve the content of their CV. Their attitude is that “*I am not for the company; the company is for me.*”

4.2.4. Results of Interview 4 – Home office as a freelancer

The fourth interview was conducted with a Project Manager who has been working for a telecommunication company for 10 years. His situation is also special, as he is working there under a service agreement, as an independent contractor. He is 49 years old and works in Budapest. His projects are usually 0.5-3 years long and have 10-90 project team members.

Another specialty is that 85% of the current project team members are independent contractors like him, and the mandatory office days rule does not apply to them, so – similarly to their current customer – they work in a full-time WFH model.

His company is absolutely task-oriented, so they flexibly handle working hours. They expect team members to be transparent about their availability, nonetheless, it is not a problem if they reschedule their days to arrange personal errands as well. The deadlines have to be met; that is the main principle.

He considers himself an introvert, so he feels good in this new arrangement. However, he agrees that for those who are more extroverted and like socializing, WFH can create difficult situations. Blending work and personal life might be also an issue so he invented a special working environment to deal with that. He is physically incapable of working from his actual home. He handles this issue by using a separate office venue. With this, he engages in morning rituals such as preparation and getting dressed before entering the office, and he concludes his workday by physically leaving the office space in the afternoon. He believes this structured approach is healthier compared to spending the entire day at home, and helps to maintain self-control over working hours. Nonetheless, from the company's point of view, it is still home office. He finds this a more relaxed option.

He also agrees that specific professions, like IT developers and specific age cohorts, i.e. the younger employees expect more home office opportunities. The latter, however, need independence related to the execution of their tasks but they still might require support from their professional leaders, and providing this even in WFH arrangements is key. He also emphasized that in companies with diverse job roles, discrepancies in the availability of work-from-home options among employees could potentially lead to internal conflicts, necessitating appropriate measures to address tensions effectively.

When talking about the changes related to work and its quality he highlighted an interesting new approach. Based on his experience, the working morale and the performance of existing teams have not changed. However, due to the popularity of home office, professions where it is an available option – including IT – *“have been watered down lately”*.

He suggests that home office itself does not affect engagement. (However, the lack of it could be demotivating for some employees.) Nonetheless, some work characteristics might be more important in this new arrangement: maintaining the human aspect of work relationships, transparency within teams, and meaningful tasks are essential.

For an ideal future, he also advocates a hybrid model, where they spend 2-3 days in the office. He also believes that a project team with a higher proportion of actual employees (as opposed to independent contractors) would be more advantageous. This could lead to an improved company reputation and positively impact team cohesion. Furthermore, teams with more homogeneous expectations would also be preferable.

4.2.5. Results of Interview 5 – What the Head of PMO sees

The fifth interview was conducted with the Head of PMO of a Hungarian bank's IT department. He has been working in this position for 5 years. He is 29 years old and works in Budapest. He has 4 direct reports (other project managers) but also manages his own projects.

His company also has just changed its WFH policies lately: they rotate 'week A' and 'week B' with 2 and 3 office days respectively. Not only does it offer more flexibility for the employees but it is also cost-effective for the organization. His direct reports usually work independently, so the professional connection does not have to be that close, however, they prioritize socialization and also have regular meetings. The form of these may vary based on the topic – for instance, they prefer contract negotiations in person, but general meetings are effective online as well. (However, they eliminated the option of hybrid meetings as they were uncomfortable and ineffective.)

He is very satisfied with this arrangement and strongly agrees that home office is a basic need (*"just the idea itself of the full-time office work almost generated revolution."*), but to avoid isolation, these 2 or 3 days in the office provide a healthy solution. He thinks that this version is more effective than only 1 day in the office, as in the latter case it would be only socializing, while if they meet more often, the professional efficiency of the in-person days still can work.

The main advantages of the home office days are the eliminated commuting time, flexibility, and a comfortable and relaxing environment. Colleagues usually collect their questions and – aside from urgent ones – they discuss them on office days, which means less distraction on WFH days resulting in more focused, productive, and effective workdays. As a manager he also noticed a better state of mind of other employees; they usually appreciate the flexibility and that improves their working morale. The possible disadvantages can be the isolation, the blending of working and private life hours, the less close managerial control, and with that more time to notice if someone does not feel good. They also hear less “*grapevine gossip*”, which also can be a negative factor. He suggests that one of the key elements of team cohesion is the personal information members share (knowing about each other’s life circumstances like a “*small family*”). That was missing during the full-time home office. He emphasized the company’s role in creating a proper home office environment: only with sufficient tools and equipment can employees work effectively from home.

Based on his experience, home office and flexibility are essential factors in creating an engaging working environment, however, they are not enough. The most important factors are the interesting and meaningful tasks, the development opportunities, and also the soft factors, like meaningful relationships or proper attention from managers.

4.2.6. *Summary of main interview findings*

The following table (Table 8) presents the key thoughts of the 5 interviews in a comparable format to help the summarization and provide a thorough overview of the topic.

Table 8 - Summary of interviews

Question	Theme	KEY POINTS & EXAMPLAR THOUGHTS				
		Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
1. What are the home office policies at your company?	WFH arrangement rules after the pandemic	No mandatory office days. Employees can go to the office any time but they are not obliged to do so.	1 mandatory office day (mostly for social reasons).	3 office days + 2 HO days but with specific rules (for instance, no "long weekends")	2 strongly recommended office days - usually Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The rule does not apply to independent contractors.	Alternating weeks with 2:3 and 3:2 office and home office days.
2. Have home office opportunities changed at your company since the pandemic? If yes, how?	WFH arrangement rules before the pandemic	Absolutely. Before Covid, WFH was not an option, only in specific cases. Advantage: colleagues from all over the country, and more international customers.	Yes. Before Covid, WFH was not an option, only in specific cases.	Yes. Before Covid, 1 day of home office per week was allowed for the IT professionals.	Yes. Before Covid home office was a rare option, but the need was not there either.	Yes. Before Covid, WFH was not an option at all.
3. Specify your team's current operation and collaboration.	Working method	Predominantly online. Agile teams can decide to meet in person when it is needed, and sometimes more strategic meetings are conducted in person.	Predominantly online. In-person: management meetings with partners; training, workshops.	Big building and lots of employees with different timetables so despite working on site they usually keep contact online.	In his project, 85% of the team consists of independent contractors. They do not have to go to the office and the customer works from home, too, so they work in a full-time HO model, "always online".	His direct reports are 4 project managers who are usually independent, so they do not need close control. They usually keep contact online.
4. In your opinion and experience, is home office really a basic need?	Basic need	"treasure" he "feels gratitude"	Yes.	Yes.	IT developers, where it is a basic expectation, but there are employees who do not mind if they have to go to the office either.	Yes.
4/a. Does its lack really cause dissatisfaction?	Dissatisfaction	Yes. It causes "frustration" and even can be a reason for not working for a company. It is an "acquired right".	suburbs or to the countryside has become a tendency -> employees would not go back to full-time office work in the city.	Yes. The current restrictions resulted in high dissatisfaction and an increased number of quitting.	Yes, because they would lose convenience.	Yes. Number of home office days is one of the first job interview questions from the possible employees. It is an "acquired right".
4/b. Are employees really more motivated if they have home office opportunities?	Motivation	Depends on personality. Hard-workers consider HO as a great opportunity, and it is a plus in their general perception of the workplace.	In the beginning, it is highly appreciated. After some time, it does not motivate anymore; it needs to be a basic option.	Yes. Flexibility is a huge addition.	No. Home office itself does not result in motivation, however, its lack causes dissatisfaction.	Yes, due to the liberty it causes.
5. How do you feel in this situation as an employee?	Effects from employee perspective	"grateful" Improved loyalty and engagement.	Good and motivated. (Important factor: she has a good team.)	Hybrid model makes her feel good. She was able to create a proper routine with her home errands and also can satisfy social needs during office days.	He considers himself as an introvert with a specific working style, so he is totally okay with the full-time home office.	Good. 2-3 days in the office satisfies the social needs but the WFH days still are enough for a more flexible lifestyle.
5/a. Pros and cons of home office arrangements for yourself as an employee?	Advantages and disadvantages of WFH	Pros: better work-life balance, decreased (or ceased) commuting times, more sleeping time. Cons: no preparation time for work, a thin line between work and private life, decreased social interactions.	Pros: avoiding traffic jams, better planned days, more family time, help with arranging private matters. Cons: not suitable working conditions (like unstable wi-fi or renovating neighbors); lonely people might get in an even more difficult psychological state.	Pros: Feeling free; Flexibility; Manage home errands more easily; The option for living anywhere. Cons: Can be carried away by work and work 10-12 hours without even noticing.	Pros: no micromanagement Cons: it can be more difficult to ask for help; For specific personalities, it can result in feeling lonely, or even depressed.	Pros: No commuting time; Flexibility; Some tasks can be performed more effectively from home - without being distracted by other colleagues; Comfortable and relaxing. Cons: possible isolation, losing sense of time, issues with HO infrastructure.
6. As a Project Manager, is it more difficult to get information, coordinate the team, discuss the tasks, etc.?	Effects from manager perspective	Initiating prompt actions can be sometimes more difficult, and there can be situations (e.g. brainstorming or serious error when in-person comm. would be more effective).	On the contrary. Leading online meetings requires some practice and awareness, but besides that working is really smooth and effective.	On the contrary. For her, it would be more difficult to find colleagues in person.	It is not more difficult, just requires a different time management. In person: usually informal, ad-hoc status meetings; Online: more formal meetings, that appear in the employees calendar too.	Generally no, but there can be types of employees who are more difficult to reach via phone or who cannot easily share information online. Exchanging information between teams or departments also can be more challenging.

Question	Theme	KEY POINTS & EXAMPLAR THOUGHTS				
		Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
6/a. What are your main concerns/issues and benefits as a PM?	Issues and benefits as a manager	Pros: focused meetings, asking for extra work is easier. Cons: too many and distractive messages on several different channels, lost informal comm. channels, sometimes difficult prompt actions.	Pros: organizing and starting meetings quicker; multitasking during less relevant meetings. Cons: more diverse teams or colleagues who are not available during the day would make teamwork more difficult.	Pros: Teams meetings are super effective; teams can be created with members from all over the world. Multitasking. Convenience. Meetings can be recorded. Cons: Not seeing others' reactions during meetings; they might be distracted. She likes to get to know people in person.	Pros: people work overtime more easily. Cons: no control over others' working hours; sometimes difficulties in keeping deadlines.	Pros: employees have a better state of mind; they are usually grateful for this opportunity and do not exploit it. Cons: hybrid meetings are ineffective; lack of managerial control; missing "grapevine gossip", more time to notice if someone does not feel good.
7. What do you experience about the behavior of your team? a. Changes in communication, meetings, execution of tasks, time of response, quality of performance, etc.?	Team changes		Communication channels changed: Teams calls and Teams chat are the most frequent tools. It made collaboration less formal and often quicker. The quality of work did not change. Because of the flexibility, asking for overtime working became easier, too.	The work can be performed with the same quality; online meetings sometimes are even more effective. She usually can reach her team. The option for multitasking is also a plus. However, 1-on-1 meetings, for instance, would be preferred in person.	No negative changes among seasoned professionals. It even became better in some ways: more precise communication, less conflict, and quicker reactions due to the use of chat apps. However, HO attracts lots of career switchers and that decreases the overall quality of the profession.	There were a few cases when team members were not available during the day, but in general, the quality of work increased due to the technological background (employees can see each others' work, transparency improved). Lazy workers might disappear more easily, but they are a problem in office work arrangements as well.
7/b. Can you see any differences in the perception of HO among the different cohorts (like age, position, etc)?	Perception of WFH		Younger employees expect it more. "The world outside of IT", especially public administration or smaller companies does not really accept it.	Job: developers prefer it more; Age: Young people (being a "digital nomad" is a popular phenomenon among them lately. Older, more rigid people often think that "work that can be performed from home is not real work".	Job: developers prefer it more; Age: Young people expect it more; however they require independence within their work environment, but require support in professional questions. Recognizing this distinction is crucial!	Rigid managers still often assume that "if the employees are not in the office, they do not work for sure". Older employees tend to need more strict lines between their professional and personal lives. Younger employees integrate work more into their lives but with this they also require more flexibility from the employer as well.
7/c. Do people miss physical, in-person contact? If yes, because of social or professional reasons?	Effects, Sense of belonging, Working method	Yes, they do. Social reasons. Professional work can be done online as well, but "Teams screen cannot replace the physical contacts".	Yes, they do. Social reasons. But they try to make up for it.	Yes, they do. Social reasons. Especially for older employees.	Depends on the employees' personality. As he works with independent contractors where full-time WFH is the general arrangement, they are used to it and do not really miss the sense of belonging. However, some professional activities, like complex testing or brainstorming would be easier in person.	From professional reasons, not really. Some kind of meeting might be more effective in person, but generally everything can be arranged online. However, social conversations are more natural in person and employees really need those.
7/d. Has team spirit and sense of belonging decreased among your colleagues?	Team cohesion, Sense of belonging	In existing teams with good relations: no. However, "new colleagues cannot find a way to connect".	Depends on the employees' personality. Those who want to spend social time with their colleagues find their way. However, integrating in a new team seems to be definitely harder online.	Existing team spirit can be maintained; however, it cannot develop from zero without frequent in person contact.	Independent contractors' role is a bit special, they do not belong to the companies' teams in a sense. However, he agreed that among employees a slight drop can be seen.	During the full-time WFH it decreased.
8. How do you handle working hours and availability during the day? a. Do you focus on working hours or tasks performed?	Working method	Task-focus. "If you are green, be green."	Task-oriented approach.	Mostly task-oriented, but with the recent restrictions, office days have to be at least 6.5 hours long. However, the office offers several relaxation opportunities (beanbags, relax rooms, Xbox, etc.) so once tasks are done, time can be spent anyhow.	Task-oriented approach; flexible working hours; deadlines need to be met.	Task-focus. They have core working hours, but those are not monitored strictly.
8/b. Do you face challenges in contacting colleagues?	Issues	Not more than during office work.	No. (If someone needs to arrange something during working hours, they usually notify the PM.)	No.	No.	There were a few cases when team members were not available during the day, but in general, no.

Question	Theme	KEY POINTS & EXAMPLAR THOUGHTS				
		Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
8/c. Does your company have any specific monitoring tool? Would it be needed?	Monitoring	Employees only need to fill their timesheet, but mostly for controlling reasons. No monitoring tools, "it would kill trust".	No. (It could be played anyway.)	6.5 hours in the office is monitored based on check-in and check-out times. Nothing else.	Timesheet. Teams could monitor meeting participants but they do not use it for checking performance.	Only "symbolic" timesheet. There were some thoughts about online monitoring tools but "they would kill trust and decrease engagement".
9. How do you usually incentivize your team? (Normal tools vs. what can you do in this new HO arrangement?)	Incentives	Formal company incentives (e.g. bonuses), "private favors", training opportunities.	Motivation normally comes from the inside; from the work itself; "I want to solve this problem, I want to do this." "I worked with colleagues who did not feel comfortable with either the task or their team; it did fail." In case of problems: private conversations (Teams video chat is as good as in-person meetings)	There is no need for that - motivations comes from the common goals: "everyone knows what are they working for", what they want to reach.	1. Money, 2. Team activities (usually celebration at the end of the projects), 3. Human connections, small talks	Financial rewards. Professional aspects: assigning projects based on interest -> interesting and meaningful work is a huge drive. HO + flexibility. Development opportunities. Soft aspects.
10. What do you think about team cohesion? a. Has it changed?	Team cohesion	Those teams, which were working together before the pandemic as well, still have good relationships despite the rare in-person contact, but new colleagues usually have a hard time fitting in.	It has not. However, making employees be involved, and be part of a team in a new workplace might be more effective in person.	Office days help with it, hybrid model is suitable for maintaining team cohesion. However, recent employee turnover somewhat decreased it.	No. Transparency and trust increases cohesion, so does the project manager's example and their role in mitigating obstacles. If these are respected, team cohesion can be good even in WFH.	It decreased during the full-time home office. Personal information about each other is essential in creating good teams, and that was missing.
10/b. Do you experience less smooth communication, more conflicts, etc.?	Team issues	No.	No. (However, if colleagues were not easily available it probably would cause frustration and conflicts.)	No, not in WFH teams. However, conflicts may arise at companies where one department can have WFH opportunities while another cannot.	On the contrary. He experiences conflicts mostly when many colleagues had to work together in the same place; no with WFH this disappeared.	No.
10/c. How does this new arrangement affect employee engagement?	Engagement	The lack of HO would cause a higher dissatisfaction than the possible negative effects caused by the isolation.	Not HO is the main factor in engagement. Enjoyable tasks and good community are more important.	"I am not for the company; the company is for me."	Engagement will not increase or decrease because of WFH. The key is the proper collaboration and the meaningful work.	It can contribute to engagement, however, only in hybrid arrangements, where isolation does not arise.
10/d. What tools do you have to improve cohesion? Do you have formal/informal team-building opportunities? Are they needed?	Team cohesion	Team-buildings, café meetings.	Both formal and informal, organized both top-down and bottom-up. Besides the formal company events: monthly boarding game nights, beer or wine tastings, hiking together with the team.	Yes, both. Usually on the corporate teams' level. People tend to like it, but only if there is a previous connection. (At her previous company with the full-time HO, it was uncomfortable to team-build with total strangers.)	It depends on the attitude of the Project Manager. He does not use this tool; with independent contractors it is a bit special, they usually just celebrate the end of the project. However, he also agrees that for teams with different attitudes it can be essential.	They have more and more team-buildings. The number of them increased during the lockdown (with online events), and they managed to keep them - now in person. -> A good consequence of COVID-19.
11. Do you have / would you need external help (business coach, industrial psychologist) at your company?	External help	Special method in agile: "Team Health Check".	They do not have it, but it would be needed. It would provide a new approach what the "inner circle managers" are not even aware of.	They have a company psychologist, but she did not know its usage rate. For open-minded people, it might be a nice benefit.	He does not know the actual needs of this at the company. However, in his opinion, it can be more needed for younger employees.	They do not have it, but there would be a need (not only because of HO).
12. Possible ideas, and recommendations for the future? What would be the ideal work arrangement?	Future	"Balance". "Hybrid method". Examining efficiency among groups with different WFH policies could be useful.	Hybrid. Current 4:1 is sufficient. Issues that need to be worked out: onboarding in the online era and detecting problems of less talkative colleagues.	"Balance". "Hybrid method". Managers should work on their "trust-issues"; lazy people can find ways not to work in the office, too. Extra facilities in the office (gym, canteen, game room, sofa, etc.) to make people like office days.	Hybrid method + similar expectations from everyone in the team.	Hybrid 2:3 or 3:2 is the ideal. Technological developments, where it is not given (availability status, seeing others' meeting schedule. Uniformed rules within the company to avoid internal tension. Providing the best possible home environment.

Source: own interviews conducted by the author, 2024

The main take-away messages of comparing the content of the interviews are summarized in the following paragraphs.

All of the interviewees' workplaces changed their home office policies since COVID-19. Everyone stated that before the pandemic, office work was mandatory at their company, and only employees with special circumstances had been allowed to work from home – often only occasionally. After the lockdown, most companies kept the option of working from home, but in many cases, the rules became stricter (for instance mandatory number of office days, or rules for specific days when employees are required to go into the office). After the lockdown's extreme characteristics (both in the sense of the full-time home office and the exaggerated behavior of the employees), companies have just started their consolidation period with 'golden mean' home office policies based on the past few years' experience, and employees also have found their optimal working routine in these new arrangements.

Everyone agreed that working from home has become a basic need at companies where the infrastructure is given. They also agreed that it alone does not improve engagement, but without it, engagement possibly will not arise at all; it even became one of the applicants' number one questions in job interviews to what extent the company supports home office. Employees perceive it as an "*acquired right*" and wish not to lose it. At companies where the rules had been changed the employee turnover increased, and the quitters even specified the withdrawal of the flexibility as a reason for leaving.

The approach is task-oriented everywhere; they generally have core working hours but respect employees' private errands as well, they just expect them to share their availability and meet task deadlines. Timesheets or showing available status are frequently used tools but the companies do not really check them, and apart from these, none of them use job monitoring tools. Everyone agreed that basic ones can be easily played, while more serious ones, for instance, those that make screenshots every few minutes of the workers' monitors would kill employees' motivation and commitment. Besides, IT is a creative work, it cannot always be measured easily. Two key thoughts almost everyone mentioned here were trust and transparency.

Hard workers appreciate the flexibility but also take care of their responsibilities and do extra if needed even without asking. Those whose work morale is lower can find ways to work less but they usually find their ways when they work from the office as well.

All five project managers' companies use Teams software as the main communication platform and they are generally satisfied with its functions, they find meetings and keeping contact with others quite effective and smooth. It can be sometimes annoying if they do not get prompt replies, however, it can happen in the office too when people are busy with other tasks or other meetings. In the beginning, it was weird for most employees to get used to using chat instead of emails, but in many cases, it is an easier way of communication, and especially younger colleagues really like these new forms. However, the usage of multiple communication channels and the continuous beeping of the new messages can be distracting for some, too.

Teams app also has great functions for professional collaboration, so in most cases when people miss in-person cooperation it is due to social reasons. Only a few cases have been mentioned when it could be more effective to be in the same place physically, for instance, complex testing, brainstorming, or contract negotiations, but these can be performed online as well. However, the need for socializing was mentioned more frequently, and that is the main reason why a hybrid arrangement seems to be the ideal option in the future. Strict rules or specific mandatory days might lead to dissatisfaction, so in most cases, the flexible hybrid is preferred.

A key insight from most of the interviews highlighted that maintaining positive team dynamics and not needing frequent in-person interactions in the workplace is possible for colleagues who had strong relationships prior to the WFH era. Conversely, for new colleagues, genuine connections and effective team cohesion may be challenging to establish without face-to-face collaboration. Entirely online onboarding programs are generally not preferred for similar reasons.

Views on home office can vary significantly across different demographic groups or geographical regions. Younger employees typically view it as an essential requirement, while sectors outside of IT, particularly within public administration or smaller companies,

tend to resist work-from-home arrangements. These sectors often exhibit a more rigid mindset and lack trust in their employees' ability to maintain productivity without constant supervision.

Nonetheless, the complete generalization would not be correct, as in most cases personality is a key and results in exceptions from the aforementioned frequently experienced perceptions. For instance, despite thinking her age peers prefer being 'digital nomads' with full-time home office opportunities, the extrovert and sociable 24-year-old project manager quickly quit a workplace with full-time home office as she felt alone, while the introverted project manager loves this option.

The most frequently highlighted advantages of the WFH arrangements were the improved work-life balance, the mitigation or elimination of commuting time, the option of living anywhere, the comfort of home, and the focused and effective online meetings. When it is about informal incentivization, it usually is easier to ask the project team members in person. However, in exchange for the flexibility employees usually are less difficult to convince about extra tasks or overtime work.

The most often voiced disadvantages include the possible arising isolation, feeling lonely, and a decreased sense of belonging especially for newly hired employees; the thin line between work and private life (most interviewees have already experienced these two blending); and the accidental overtime working due to often losing track of time. These require strong awareness and conscious steps to avoid, for instance previously set and respected schedules or physical separation of home and the working environment. The multiple channels of constant incoming information were also mentioned but with practice and consciousness, that also can be handled. From a managerial point of view, the missing '*grapevine gossip*' or personal information about team members, and the less close control were also mentioned as possible disadvantages in specific cases.

Almost everyone emphasized the importance of a sufficient working environment. Most companies try to help with tools and equipment, but the employee may face other difficulties too, for instance, small children or renovating neighbors. In these cases, it is important to

provide the possibility of office work, even if it is not mandatory, otherwise, these factors can be significant disadvantages as well.

Related to the aforementioned incentivization, besides the formal rewards provided by the company itself (i.e. the financial rewards) most project managers emphasized the human side of their relationships with the team members. Trust and transparency are essential characteristics of a well-operating team, and the project manager's involvement and the way they show example is also key in the team's attitude.

In addition to the topic of motivation, almost every interviewee emphasized another important factor of it: they think that extrinsic benefits generally cannot outweigh the role of internal motivation. Naturally, salary is still very important, however, besides the financial rewards the most important factors are usually the good team and the work itself; the latter has to be meaningful and enjoyable to make employees dedicated and engaged. Nonetheless, it also has to be mentioned that engagement has started to mean a different concept, especially for younger colleagues. They might enjoy their job and like their company, still will not necessarily serve long years for the very same company.

In essence, in the Information Technology sector where the infrastructure is given and the characteristics of the work let employees work separated from each other, it really has become a basic expectation. It is considered rather a hygiene factor than a motivating one. It can have disadvantages, the possible isolation being the most frequently mentioned one, however, the provided flexibility and other benefits outweigh the negative effects, especially in hybrid arrangements. However, in order to create and maintain an engaging environment, several other factors have to be met besides flexibility - satisfying relationships and meaningful work being some of the most important ones.

4.3. Importance of the results and possible future research ideas

The research findings enrich the academic literature on the subject matter. Not only do they offer novel insights and complement existing studies, but they also furnish valuable, sector-specific data about the Hungarian IT industry. Beyond their theoretical significance, the practical observations and perspectives gained from over 200 IT professionals serve as a foundation for HR professionals to refine or tailor their tools and organizational practices.

By considering these conclusions, HR experts and managers or leaders within IT firms have the potential to cultivate more engaging work environments that foster employee satisfaction and productivity.

In light of the current research findings and ongoing changes, several areas for further investigation or new research endeavors emerge. One of the interviewees suggested a laboratory experiment, where the same task could be performed by different teams working under different work arrangements (full-time office, full-time WFH, and hybrid arrangements). Based on the observations, the effects of the varying work setups on engagement, effectiveness, and satisfaction could be analyzed in a measurable and comparable way. With the inevitable march of artificial intelligence (AI), its effects could provide another important research avenue. Exploring the integration of AI in measuring employee engagement and assessing its effectiveness compared to traditional methods or examining the effects of AI adoption in job roles on employee engagement levels and job satisfaction could be potential research topics. The current research highlighted three newly emerging and lately spreading phenomena that would be worth further investigation within the frames of employee engagement as well, namely the job-hopping, the digital nomads (or simply working with teams in different countries), and the independent contractor team members. Both working as independent contractors and being digital nomads are popular work setups nowadays, and the two often go together. Examining the dynamics of team cohesion and collaboration in environments where part of the team works as freelancers or digital nomads, so are not part of the team in the traditional way - and due to the distance hybrid arrangements cannot work either - is important to effectively manage these situations, and to maintain good relationships, sense of belonging, but also productivity, and engagement. Given that younger employees may have shorter-term engagement expectations, it is also crucial to explore innovative approaches to streamline onboarding processes. This could help reduce their learning period and enhance their effective tenure within the organization.

5. CONCLUSION

Employee engagement is a significant question in a company's life so managers and different HR professionals have been continuously working out new methods and improving the existing practices to increase it. Last years' changes significantly affected this field, and the IT sector was one of the most affected areas, predominantly due to its altered work arrangements. This thesis aimed to study two main research questions: 1) the perception and impact of the different extrinsic and intrinsic rewards on employee engagement at Hungarian IT companies; and 2) the effects of increased home office opportunities on team cohesion and the employee's sense of belonging, and with these, their overall engagement. The research design was conducting secondary research first, based on both traditional theoretical approaches and novel articles on the topic. Reviewing and further evolving these, employee engagement is defined by the author as a positive psychological state when employees are emotionally present, are committed and dedicated to their meaningful tasks and goals, and are generally satisfied with their workplace, typically with a decreased intent to leave the company. The literature findings uncovered significant discrepancies in two key areas: the extent and primary impact of intrinsic versus extrinsic factors on employee engagement, and the conflicting effect regarding the impact of isolation resulting from WFH arrangements on employee engagement, despite the generally positive perception of home office. Then, after refining the research questions based on the literature's findings and contradictions, two types of primary research were conducted: 1) a questionnaire to gain a grasp of the current general state of the IT workplaces, to understand the overall perception of the different extrinsic and intrinsic incentives used by the different companies, and to understand the actual role of the rewards in employee engagement; and 2) in-depth interviews with five IT project managers to explore the current home office practices of IT companies and to gain insight to how these various practices affect teamwork, team spirit, productivity, motivation, and engagement.

The quantitative analysis of the survey results consisted of using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and multiple regression analysis on the 226 responses. The author of this paper used her own definition of employee engagement which provided a basis not only for measuring the current overall level of the respondents' engagement but also for understanding the current perception of its influencing factors. The results show a rather positive but not outstanding picture of the opinions and mindset of the employees: they

generally provided moderately high scores for the engagement elements, however, the majority of them also were thinking about quitting in the preceding 3 months. When they were asked about their preferences, respondents unanimously ranked salary as the most significant reward, and other non-financial but extrinsic factors secured top rankings, like a stable and secure workplace, good relationships with colleagues and supervisors, work-life balance, various fringe benefit packages, and home office opportunities. In contrast to some findings reported in the literature review, respondents in this study consistently prioritized extrinsic rewards over intrinsic ones, ranking the latter in the middle and lower parts of the list. The study also investigated whether perception varied among different cohorts. Cross-tabulation analyses, aided by Chi-square tests, were conducted to explore the relationship between perception and various demographic factors, including age, salary range, workplace tenure, and gender. The results confirmed a statistically significant relationship between perception and age, salary range, and workplace tenure. However, the analysis did not find a significant correlation between perception and gender. The research further investigated whether the actual availability of rewards influenced the level of engagement and its components. To explore this, multiple regression analysis was employed. The statistically significant relationship was confirmed in several cases: the salary and bonuses, the good relationship with supervisors, the meaningful work, the enjoyable tasks, the work-life balance, the various fringe benefit package, the stable and secure workplace, and the fit to the organization's goals and culture were the rewards that showed correlation with at least one of the engagement components. There were some surprising findings after the literature's or the interviews' predictions, and also compared to the previous rankings. The result was predominantly consistent with the general ranking of the rewards, however, some factors from the middle or the bottom of the list still showed a correlation with the actual engagement level. This suggests that employees may not recognize the extent to which these factors impact their assessment of the workplace. Interestingly, certain factors like home office and good relationships with colleagues, while highly ranked in the general ranking, did not significantly impact engagement in regression analysis, suggesting they may be considered basic workplace needs rather than engagement drivers.

The current home office practices and their impact were explored by a qualitative research design; in-depth interviews with five IT project managers with different professional and demographical backgrounds, from different companies were conducted. The interview

findings confirmed that the pandemic has led to significant changes in workplace dynamics, particularly in the IT sector, where work-from-home arrangements have become a fundamental aspect, an acquired right. While home office is considered a hygiene factor rather than a motivating one – supporting the survey findings, it has advantages such as improved work-life balance, reduced commuting time, and freedom and flexibility that outweigh the possible disadvantages. However, challenges such as isolation and blurred boundaries between work and personal life are also prevalent and have to be targeted. In these setups, trust, transparency, and meaningful work are crucial for maintaining employee engagement. Every interviewee agreed that the ideal future is the hybrid method, where flexibility is provided, however, personal interactions also regularly happen in order to maintain the social relationships among colleagues as well. It also could help with the phenomenon mentioned by almost everyone: the integration of new colleagues in WFH arrangements is more challenging as real team cohesion cannot be established online. The perception of home office may differ across different cohorts, for instance, younger employees expect it more, however, it cannot be entirely generalized as personality is key as well. Additionally, younger employees may have different expectations regarding long-term commitment to a single company, and other novel factors also have to be considered in the labor market such as freelancers or the future role of AI; highlighting the evolving nature of engagement in the modern workforce, and opening new areas to explore in this field.

Both the responses and the feedback during the research showed a high interest in the topic from various managers and professionals from IT, HR, and the academic field. This also confirms the significance of the topic and the room for further research and investigations. The overall significance of employee engagement is expected to remain a key focus in the future as well. As Richard Branson, founder of Virgin Group says: *“Your employees are your company’s real competitive advantage. They’re the ones making the magic happen - so long as their needs are being met.”*

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Survey questions (English version)

Employee engagement in the IT sector

Dear Participants,

My name is Beata Pajor, and I am currently pursuing my Master's degree in Management and Leadership at Budapest Metropolitan University. I would be pleased if you could contribute to my research that delves into the dynamics of employee engagement.

Your participation is solely voluntary. The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

The focus of this questionnaire is to explore the impact of both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards on motivation and employee engagement within the context of IT organizations.

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, **all data is collected anonymously**. (Neither will I know who were the respondents.)

Please answer each question thoughtfully and honestly. Your feedback is crucial to shaping our understanding of employee engagement in the IT sector.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Best regards,

Beata Pajor

1) What is the first word that comes to your mind when you hear the expression 'employee engagement'?

(open-ended question)

2) Were you thinking about changing your workplace in the last 3 months?

(yes / no)

3) How satisfied are you with your current workplace and position?
(1: absolutely not satisfied; 10: very satisfied)

(Likert scale 1-10)

4) Rank all the aspects below in order of importance to indicate how important they are (/would be) in maintaining your job motivation and your engagement towards a workplace (in general).

1. Salary (with bonuses)
2. Diverse fringe benefit package (cafeteria benefits, phone, notebook, company car, etc.)
3. Secure and stable workplace
4. Working conditions (office's physical appearance, tools and equipment, technology)
5. Extra office equipment (foosball or other games, silent boxes, bean-bags, bar area, etc.)
6. Health and wellbeing-related benefits (sports activities, complimentary food and snack, company coach, etc.)
7. Fit to organizational culture and company's goals
8. Traveling opportunities
9. International environment, the opportunity for using languages
10. Learning & development opportunities
11. Performance feedback
12. Good relationship with colleagues
13. Good relationship with superiors
14. Informal recognition (felt from colleagues)
15. Formal recognition (promotions, gaining credentials, getting awards, opportunities to 'show-off' (presenting at workshops, social media presence, etc.))
16. Work-life balance
17. Home-office opportunities
18. Autonomy in performing tasks
19. Meaningful work
20. Enjoyable work, job passion

5) In this part, please rate the same factors based on their availability at your current workplace. Use a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means the benefit is not available, and 10 indicates that your company absolutely provides you with that benefit, reward, opportunity, etc.

(Likert scale 1-10)

1. Salary (with bonuses)
1 = low; I am not satisfied with it;
10 = outstanding
2. Diverse fringe benefit package (cafeteria benefits, phone, notebook, company car, etc.)
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
3. Secure and stable workplace
1 = my current workplace is not like this at all;
10 = outstandingly true for my current workplace
4. Working conditions (office's physical appearance, tools and equipment, technology)
1 = not satisfying at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
5. Extra office equipment (foosball or other games, silent boxes, bean-bags, bar area, etc.)
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
6. Health and wellbeing-related benefits (sports activities, complimentary food and snack, company coach, etc.)
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding

7. Fit to organizational culture and company's goals
1 = not satisfying at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
8. Traveling opportunities
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
9. International environment, the opportunity for using languages
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
10. Learning & development opportunities
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
11. Performance feedback
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
12. Good relationship with colleagues
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
13. Good relationship with superiors
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
14. Informal recognition (felt from colleagues)
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding

15. Formal recognition (promotions, gaining credentials, getting awards, opportunities to ‘show-off’ (presenting at workshops, social media presence, etc.))
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
16. Work-life balance
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
17. Home-office opportunities
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
18. Autonomy in performing tasks
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
19. Meaningful work
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding
20. Enjoyable work, job passion
1 = not available at my current workplace;
10 = outstanding

6) Please, provide your current **gross** monthly salary.

(drop-down list)

- < 600 000 HUF
- 600 000 HUF – 900 000 HUF
- 900 001 HUF – 1 200 000 HUF
- 1 200 001 HUF – 1 500 000 HUF
- 1 500 001 HUF – 1 800 000 HUF
- 1 800 001 HUF – 2 100 000 HUF
- 2 100 000 HUF <

7) On a scale 1-10 where is your average daily motivation at your workplace?

(1 = I am not motivated at all; 10 = I am very motivated)

(Likert scale 1-10)

8) How dedicated are you in performing your tasks?

(1 = I am not dedicated at all; 10 = I am very dedicated)

(Likert scale 1-10)

9) On a scale 1-10 where is your psychological state in work?

(1 = really unhappy, feeling unwell, 10 = really happy, feeling well)

(Likert scale 1-10)

10) How satisfied are you overall with your current workplace?

(1 = not satisfied at all; 10 = extremely satisfied)

(Likert scale 1-10)

11) On a scale 1-10 how much would you like to stay at your current employer?

(1 – planning to leave, 10 – want to stay here for a longer period of time)

(Likert scale 1-10)

12) In the last part of the survey please provide information about your demographical and professional background.

Age

(numeric cell)

Gender

(drop-down list)

- Male

- Female
- Rother not tell
- Other (please specify)

Highest educational level

(drop-down list)

- Secondary Education
- College or Bachelor's Degree
- University or Master's Degree
- PhD or equivalent
- Other (please specify)

Current position – if you work in more than one position, please provide here the most significant one. As the field is internationally oriented, job titles are presented in English. If your job title differs, please select the closest match based on the nature of your responsibilities.

(drop-down list)

- Business Analyst
- Data Scientist
- Developer
- Project Manager
- Security / Compliance Specialist / Auditor
- Support Specialist / Customer Service
- Systems / Network / Database Administrator
- Systems Architect
- Tester
- Test Manager
- Team Leader
- Department Manager or equivalent
- Top Manager
- Other (please specify)

Number of years in your current position

(numeric cell)

Number of years at your current company

(numeric cell)

Sector

(drop-down list)

- Telecommunications
- Banking and Insurance services
- Finance
- Legal
- Agriculture
- Construction
- Other (please specify)

Location

(drop-down list)

- Budapest
- Pest vármegye
- Bács-Kiskun
- Baranya
- Békés
- Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén
- Csongrád-Csanád
- Fejér
- Győr-Moson-Sopron
- Hajdú-Bihar
- Heves
- Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok
- Komárom-Esztergom
- Nógrád
- Somogy
- Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
- Tolna
- Vas
- Veszprém
- Zala

Appendix 2 – Survey questions (original Hungarian version)

Munkavállalói elkötelezettség tényezői az IT szektorban

Kedves Kitöltő!

Pajor Beáta vagyok, jelenleg a Budapesti Metropolitan Egyetem Vezetés és szervezés mesterképzésének hallgatója. Nagyon hálás lennék, ha a kérdőív kitöltésével segítené kutatásomat, melynek témája a munkavállalói elkötelezettség.

A kitöltés önkéntes és nagyjából 5-10 percet vesz igénybe.

A kérdőív célja annak vizsgálata, hogy a különböző külső és belső ösztönzők az IT cégeknél hogyan hatnak a motivációra és a munkavállalói elköteleződésre.

A téma érzékenysége miatt **a kitöltés teljesen anonim** (én magam sem látom, kik a kitöltők).

Kérem, átgondoltan és őszintén válaszoljon a kérdésekre; a visszajelzések nagyon fontosak a téma alaposabb megismeréséhez.

Köszönöm előre is, hogy időt szánt a kitöltésre.

Üdvözlettel,

Pajor Beáta

1) Mi az első szó, ami eszébe jut a 'munkavállalói elkötelezettség' kifejezésről?

2) Gondolkodott munkahelyváltáson az elmúlt 3 hónapban?

(igen / nem)

3) Mennyire elégedett a jelenlegi munkahelyével és pozíciójával

(1 = egyáltalán nem; 10 = nagyon elégedett)

4) Kérem, állítsa fontossági sorrendbe a lenti tényezőket aszerint, hogy általában mennyire (lennének) fontosak az Ön számára a munkahelyi motiváció és a munkahely iránti elköteleződés szempontjából.

1. Fizetés (és bónuszok)
2. Változatos összetételű juttatási csomag (cafeteria, céges telefon, laptop, céges autó stb.)
3. Biztos és stabil munkahely
4. Munkafeltételek (iroda fizikai jellemzői, eszközök és berendezések, technológiai feltételek)
5. Irodai extrák (csocsóasztal vagy más játékok, zajszigetelt boxok/fülkék, babzsákok, bár stb.)
6. Egészséggel és jólléttel kapcsolatos juttatások (sportolás támogatása, ingyenes ételek, céges coach stb.)
7. A személyes értékek és célok egyezősége a munkahely kultúrájával és céljaival
8. Utazási lehetőségek
9. Nemzetközi környezet, idegennyelv-használat
10. Képzési és fejlődési lehetőségek
11. Visszajelzés a teljesítményről
12. Jó kapcsolat a kollégákkal
13. Jó kapcsolat a felettesekkel
14. Informális elismerés (kollégák által)
15. Formális elismerés (kinevezések, különböző minősítések/címek, díjak, szereplési lehetőségek (előadás különböző eseményeken, workshopokon, social media megjelenés stb.))
16. Munka-magánélet egyensúly
17. Home-office lehetőségek
18. Autonómia a feladatok végrehajtásában
19. Jelentősegteljes munka
20. Élvezetes feladatok, szenvedély a munka iránt

5) A következő részben, kérem, értékelje az előzőekben rangsorolt tényezőket 1-től 10-ig aszerint, hogy mennyire elérhetők a jelenlegi munkahelyén (1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen; 10 = a munkahelyem kiemelkedő mértékben biztosítja az adott juttatást, ösztönzőt, lehetőséget).

1. Fizetés (és bónuszok)

1 = alacsony, nem vagyok vele elégedett;

10 = kiemelkedően magas

2. Változatos összetételű juttatási csomag (cafeteria, céges telefon, laptop, céges autó stb.)

1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;

10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll

3. Biztos és stabil munkahely

1 = a jelenlegi munkahelyem egyáltalán nem ilyen;

10 = a jelenlegi munkahelyem kiemelkedő mértékben ilyen

4. Munkafeltételek (iroda fizikai jellemzői, eszközök és berendezések, technológiai feltételek)

1 = nem kielégítő a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;

10 = a jelenlegi munkahelyemen kiemelkedők ezek

5. Irodai extrák (csocsóasztal vagy más játékok, zajszigetelt boxok/fülkék, babzsákok, bár stb.)

1 = nem állnak rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;

10 = a jelenlegi munkahelyemen kiemelkedő ezek rendelkezésre állása

6. Egészséggel és jólléttel kapcsolatos juttatások (sportolás támogatása, ingyenes ételek, céges coach stb.)

1 = nem állnak rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;

10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre állnak

7. A személyes értékek és célok egyezősége a munkahely kultúrájával és céljaival
1 = nem kielégítő a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő a jelenlegi munkahelyemen
8. Utazási lehetőségek
1 = nem állnak rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre állnak
9. Nemzetközi környezet, idegennyelv-használat
1 = nem állnak rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre állnak
10. Képzési és fejlődési lehetőségek
1 = nem állnak rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre állnak
11. Visszajelzés a teljesítményről
1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
12. Jó kapcsolat a kollégákkal
1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
13. Jó kapcsolat a felettesekkel
1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
14. Informális elismerés (kollégák által)
1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll

15. Formális elismerés (kinevezések, különböző minősítések/címek, díjak, szereplési lehetőségek (előadás különböző eseményeken, workshopokon, social media megjelenés stb.))
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
16. Munka-magánélet egyensúly
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
17. Home office lehetőségek
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
18. Autonómia a feladatok végrehajtásában
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
19. Jelentősegteljes munka
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll
20. Élvezetes feladatok, szenvedély a munka iránt
- 1 = nem áll rendelkezésre a jelenlegi munkahelyemen;
10 = kiemelkedő mértékben rendelkezésre áll

6) Kérem, adja meg a jelenlegi havi **bruttó** fizetésének összegét.

- < 600 000 Ft
- 600 000 Ft – 900 000 Ft
- 900 001 Ft – 1 200 000 Ft
- 1 200 001 Ft – 1 500 000 Ft
- 1 500 001 Ft – 1 800 000 Ft
- 1 800 001 Ft – 2 100 000 Ft
- 2 100 000 Ft <

7) Milyen értékkel jellemezné az általános napi motiváltságát a munkahelyén?

(1 = Egyáltalán nem vagyok motivált; 10 = Nagyon motiváltnak érzem magam)

8) Mennyire elkötelezett a feladatai végrehajtását illetően?

(1 = Egyáltalán nem vagyok;

10 = Nagyon elkötelezett vagyok a feladataim teljesítésében)

9) Milyennek ítéli a pszichológiai állapotát a munkahelyén??

(1 = nagyon boldogtalan vagyok, rosszul érzem magam;

10 = jól érzem magam, boldog vagyok a munkahelyemen)

10) Összességében mennyire elégedett a jelenlegi munkahelyével?

(1 = egyáltalán nem; 10 = kiemelkedően elégedett)

11) Mennyire érzi azt, hogy szeretne a jelenlegi munkahelyén maradni?

(1 = tervezek mielőbb váltani; 10 = hosszabb távon itt tervezek maradni)

12) A kérdőív utolsó részében, kérem, válaszoljon néhány, a demográfiai és szakmai hátterével kapcsolatos kérdésre.

Az Ön életkora

Az Ön neme

- Férfi
- Nő
- Nem kívánom megadni
- Nem szerepel a listán (Kérem, részletezze)

Legmagasabb iskolai végzettség

- Középiskola (érettségi)
- Főiskola vagy BsC/BA
- Egyetem vagy MsC/MA
- Doktori iskola / PhD vagy azzal egyenértékű
- Egyéb (Kérem, részletezze)

Jelenlegi pozíció – amennyiben több munkakörben is dolgozik, kérem, a legjellemzőbbet adja meg. A munkakörök az iparág nemzetközi jellege miatt angolul kerültek felsorolásra. Amennyiben a pozíciójának a neve más, akkor a munkakör tartalma szerinti legközelebbit jelölje meg, kérem.

- Business Analyst
- Data Scientist
- Developer
- Project Manager
- Security / Compliance Specialist / Auditor
- Support Specialist / Customer Service
- Systems / Network / Database Administrator
- Systems Architect
- Tester
- Test Manager
- Team Leader
- Department Manager or equivalent
- Top Manager
- Egyéb (Kérem, részletezze)

Hány éve dolgozik a jelenlegi pozíciójában?

Hány éve dolgozik a jelenlegi munkahelyén?

Iparág, amelyben dolgozik:

- Telekommunikáció
- Bank és Biztosítás
- Pénzügy
- Jog
- Mezőgazdaság
- Építőipar
- Egyéb (Kérem, részletezze)

Munkáltató központja:

- Budapest
- Pest vármegye
- Bács-Kiskun
- Baranya
- Békés
- Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén
- Csongrád-Csanád
- Fejér
- Győr-Moson-Sopron
- Hajdú-Bihar
- Heves
- Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok
- Komárom-Esztergom
- Nógrád
- Somogy
- Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg
- Tolna
- Vas
- Veszprém
- Zala

Appendix 3 – Interview guide (English version)

Introduction:

- Small talk,
- Thanking participants for their involvement,
- Summary of research topic and research question,
- Voluntary participation without offerings in exchange,
- Explain confidentiality + Non-disclosure agreement
 - Data collected will be used for research purposes only,
 - Recording and transcript – just for the author, will be erased later,
- Clarification of the questions is always an option if needed.

Background of the interviewee:

- Current position:
 - type of company, sector,
 - length of employment,
 - size of projects (in length of time and in number of team members),
- Gender,
- Age,
- Highest Educational Level,
- Location.

Questions:

1. What are the home office policies at your company?
 - a. mandatory and voluntary office work & WFH days
2. Have home office opportunities changed at your company since the pandemic? If yes, how?
 - a. Previous and current company rules?
3. Specify your team's current operation and collaboration.

4. In your opinion and experience, is home office really a basic need?
 - a. Does its lack really cause dissatisfaction?
 - b. Are employees really more motivated if they have home office opportunities?
 - c. What can be the reasons behind this?
5. How do **you** feel in this situation as an employee?
 - a. Your own motivation and engagement level, sense of belonging, workplace relationships, psychological state?
 - b. Pros and cons of home office arrangements for yourself as an employee?
6. As a Project Manager, Is it more difficult to get information, coordinate the team, discuss the tasks, etc.?
 - a. Do you have to make extra effort because of the remote team?
 - b. What are your main concerns/issues and benefits as a PM?
7. What do you experience about the behavior of your team?
 - a. Changes in communication, meetings, execution of tasks, time of response, quality of performance, etc.
 - b. Can you see any differences in the perception of HO among the different cohorts (like age, position, etc)?
 - c. Do people miss physical, in-person contact? If yes, because of social or professional reasons?
 - d. Has team spirit and sense of belonging decreased among your colleagues?
8. How do you handle working hours and availability during the day?
 - a. Do you focus on working hours or tasks performed?
 - b. Do you face challenges in contacting colleagues?
 - c. Does your company have any specific monitoring tool? Would it be needed?
9. How do you usually incentivize your team?
 - a. Normal tools vs. what can you do in this new HO arrangement?
10. What do you think about team cohesion?
 - a. Has it changed?
 - b. Do you experience less smooth communication, more conflicts, etc.?
 - c. How does this affect employee engagement?
 - d. What tools do you have to improve cohesion? Do you have formal/informal team-building opportunities? Are they needed?

11. Do you have / would you need external help (business coach, industrial psychologist) at your company?
12. Possible ideas, and recommendations for the future?

Closure:

- Asking about any additional points to include,
- Asking if there are any remaining questions,
- Confirmation of confidentiality measures,
- Promise to provide research results at a later date,
- Thanking participants for their time and participation.

Appendix 4 – Original Hungarian version of interview questions

1. Hogyan működik a jelenlegi cégednél a home office, mik az irányelvek?
 - a. Kötelező és opcionális irodai munka, illetve otthoni munkavégzéses napok?
2. Történt változás a home office lehetőségekben a pandémia óta? Ha igen, mi változott?
 - a. Korábbi és jelenlegi szabályok?
3. Kérlek, részletezd, hogyan dolgozik jelenleg a projektcsapatod, milyen a közös munka?
4. Véleményed és tapasztalataid szerint, valóban alapvető szükségletté vált a home office?
 - a. Valóban elégedetlenséget okoz a hiánya?
 - b. Valóban motiváltabbak a munkavállalók, ha van lehetőségük otthonról dolgozni?
 - c. Mi lehet ennek az oka?
5. **Te** mint munkavállaló, hogy érzed magad ebben a helyzetben?
 - a. Saját motivációd, elkötelezettséged, valahová tartozás érzése, munkahelyi kapcsolatok, pszichológiai állapot?
 - b. Az otthoni munkavégzés előnyei és hátrányai számodra mint munkavállaló számára?
6. Project Managerként nehezebb információt szerezni, koordinálni a csapatodat, egyeztetni a feladatokat stb.?
 - a. Kell extra erőfeszítést befektetned amiatt, hogy távolról dolgozik a csapat?
 - b. PM-ként mik a legnagyobb problémáid, aggodalmaid, illetve mik a pozitív hozadékok?
7. Mit tapasztalsz a csapatod viselkedésével kapcsolatban?
 - a. Történtek változások a kommunikációban, megbeszélések kapcsán, a feladatok végrehajtásában, válaszidőkben, a munka minőségében stb.?
 - b. Látsz különbséget a home office megítélésében a különböző típusú csoportok kapcsán (pl. kor, munkakör stb.)?
 - c. Hiányzik az embereknek a fizikai, személyes kontakt? Ha igen, akkor inkább szociális vagy szakmai okokból?
 - d. Csökkent a csapatszellem és a valahová tartozás érzése a kollégákban?
8. Hogy kezelitek a munkaidőt és a napközbeni elérhetőséget?
 - a. A munkaidő kitöltésén vagy a feladatok elvégzésén van a hangsúly?

- b. Előfordulnak nehézségek a kollégák elérése kapcsán??
 - c. Használ a cég valamilyen ellenőrző eszközt a munka(idő) ellenőrzésére?
Van/lenne rá szükség?
9. Általában hogyan ösztönözöd a csapatodat?
- a. Normál eszközök vs. milyen lehetőségeid vannak az otthoni munkát végzők esetében?
10. Mit gondolsz a csapatkohézióról?
- a. Változott?
 - b. Tapasztalsz kevésbé gördülékeny kommunikációt, több konfliktust stb.?
 - c. Hogyan hat ez a munkavállalói elkötelezettségre?
 - d. Milyen eszközeid vannak a csapatkohézió növelésére? Vannak formális / informális csapatépítő lehetőségek? Van/lenne rájuk szükség?
11. Van / lenne szükség külső segítségre (pl. business coach, szervezetpszichológus) a cégednél?
12. Lehetséges ötletek, javaslatok a jövőre nézve?

Chi-square test contingency tables for salary ranking

Source: created by the author in Microsoft Excel, 2024, n=226

ACTUAL - without "rather not provide" answers																					
Row Labels	Sum of X - SALARY	Sum of X - FRINGE BEN	Sum of X - STABILITY	Sum of X - JOB COND	Sum of X - EXTRA	Sum of X - WELLBEING	Sum of X - GOALS	Sum of X - TRAVEL	Sum of X - INTER-NATIONAL	Sum of X - L&D	Sum of X - FEEDBACK	Sum of X - GOOD REL - COLL	Sum of X - GOOD REL - SV	Sum of X - INF RECOGN	Sum of X - FORM RECOGN	Sum of X - W-Sum of X - L BALANCE	Sum of X - HO	Sum of X - AUTONOMY	Sum of X - MEANING-FUL	Sum of X - ENJOY	Grand total
Male	2831	1939	2513	1717	868	1349	1685	882	1158	1716	1450	1978	1705	1133	753	1949	1948	1315	1205	1616	31710
Female	1286	825	1139	792	411	656	814	391	468	796	665	893	825	504	386	932	825	574	521	787	14490
Grand Total	4117	2764	3652	2509	1279	2005	2499	1273	1626	2512	2115	2871	2530	1637	1139	2881	2773	1889	1726	2403	46200
EXPECTED - without "rather not provide" answers																					
Row Labels	Sum of X - SALARY	Sum of X - FRINGE BEN	Sum of X - STABILITY	Sum of X - JOB COND	Sum of X - EXTRA	Sum of X - WELLBEING	Sum of X - GOALS	Sum of X - TRAVEL	Sum of X - INTER-NATIONAL	Sum of X - L&D	Sum of X - FEEDBACK	Sum of X - GOOD REL - COLL	Sum of X - GOOD REL - SV	Sum of X - INF RECOGN	Sum of X - FORM RECOGN	Sum of X - W-Sum of X - L BALANCE	Sum of X - HO	Sum of X - AUTONOMY	Sum of X - MEANING-FUL	Sum of X - ENJOY	Grand total
Male	2825.759	1897.109	2506.600	1722.086	877.859	1376.159	1715.223	873.741	1116.027	1724.145	1451.659	1970.550	1736.500	1123.577	781.768	1977.414	1903.286	1296.541	1184.664	1649.332	31710
Female	1291.241	866.891	1145.400	786.914	401.141	628.841	783.777	399.259	509.973	787.855	663.341	900.450	793.500	513.423	357.232	903.586	869.714	592.459	541.336	753.668	14490
Grand Total	4117	2764	3652	2509	1279	2005	2499	1273	1626	2512	2115	2871	2530	1637	1139	2881	2773	1889	1726	2403	46200

Source: created by the author in Microsoft Excel, 2024, n=226

Chi-square test contingency tables for age

ACTUAL values																								
		Sum of X -								Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -						
		Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -			
Row Labels	▼	SALARY	FRINGE BEN	STABILITY	JOB COND	EXTRA	WELLBEING	GOALS	TRAVEL	INTER- NATIONAL	L&D	FEEDBACK	COLL	SV	INF RECOGN	RECOGN	FORM	W-L	BALANCE	HO	AUTONOMY	MEANING- FUL	ENJOY	Grand total
below 30		546	408	486	355	217	266	291	156	198	336	249	399	336	185	113	395	393	212	224	325		6090	
30-34		941	601	804	551	263	444	521	256	363	627	476	614	554	341	276	684	700	395	375	504		10290	
35-39		833	558	707	504	260	405	463	262	375	497	422	521	451	305	246	584	550	353	311	423		9030	
40-44		816	544	733	502	230	421	540	257	347	488	453	589	528	387	239	594	508	383	364	527		9450	
45-49		646	402	591	381	198	285	424	203	227	382	320	496	479	267	180	429	437	340	271	392		7350	
50 and above		448	335	435	288	152	243	315	163	140	268	253	344	259	202	106	281	249	264	226	279		5250	
Grand Total		4230	2848	3756	2581	1320	2064	2554	1297	1650	2598	2173	2963	2607	1687	1160	2967	2837	1947	1771	2450		47460	
EXPECTED values																								
		Sum of X -								Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -		Sum of X -						
Row Labels		Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -		
below 30		542.788	365.451	481.965	331.190	169.381	264.850	327.726	166.429	211.726	333.372	278.836	380.208	334.527	216.473	148.850	380.721	364.040	249.836	227.252	314.381		6090	
30-34		917.124	617.487	814.354	559.597	286.195	447.504	553.743	281.208	357.743	563.283	471.137	642.420	565.235	365.765	251.504	643.288	615.102	422.137	383.978	531.195		10290	
35-39		804.823	541.876	714.637	491.075	251.150	392.708	485.938	246.774	313.938	494.310	413.447	563.757	496.022	320.978	220.708	564.518	539.783	370.447	336.960	466.150		9030	
40-44		842.257	567.080	747.876	513.916	262.832	410.973	508.540	258.252	328.540	517.301	432.677	589.978	519.093	335.907	230.973	590.774	564.889	387.677	352.633	487.832		9450	
45-49		655.088	441.062	581.681	399.712	204.425	319.646	395.531	200.863	255.531	402.345	336.527	458.872	403.739	261.261	179.646	459.491	439.358	301.527	274.270	379.425		7350	
50 and above		467.920	315.044	415.487	285.509	146.018	228.319	282.522	143.473	182.522	287.389	240.376	327.765	288.385	186.615	128.319	328.208	313.827	215.376	195.907	271.018		5250	
Grand Total		4230	2848	3756	2581	1320	2064	2554	1297	1650	2598	2173	2963	2607	1687	1160	2967	2837	1947	1771	2450		47460	

Source: created by the author in Microsoft Excel, 2024, n=226

Chi-square test contingency tables for workplace tenure

ACTUAL values												Sum of X -		Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Grand total
Row Labels	Sum of X - SALARY	Sum of X - FRINGE BEN	Sum of X - STABILITY	Sum of X - JOB COND	Sum of X - EXTRA	Sum of X - WELLBEING	Sum of X - GOALS	Sum of X - TRAVEL	INTER- NATIONAL	Sum of X - L&D	Sum of X - FEEDBACK	GOOD REL - COLL	GOOD REL - SV	Sum of X - INF RECOGN	FORM RECOGN	Sum of X - W-L BALANCE	Sum of X - HO	Sum of X - AUTONOMY	MEANING- FUL	Sum of X - ENJOY			
< 2 years	1223	835	1039	809	429	644	764	352	514	747	622	861	721	444	277	888	798	545	509	629	13650		
13 ≤ years	588	450	562	357	163	304	369	164	177	351	297	453	334	289	182	375	349	325	247	384	6720		
2-5 years	1577	1059	1423	913	507	734	913	505	605	947	804	1059	1049	643	424	1125	1141	691	659	862	17640		
6-12 years	842	504	732	502	221	382	508	276	354	553	450	590	503	311	277	579	549	386	356	575	9450		
Grand Total	4230	2848	3756	2581	1320	2064	2554	1297	1650	2598	2173	2963	2607	1687	1160	2967	2837	1947	1771	2450	47460		
EXPECTED values												Sum of X -		Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Sum of X -	Grand total
Row Labels	Sum of X - SALARY	Sum of X - FRINGE BEN	Sum of X - STABILITY	Sum of X - JOB COND	Sum of X - EXTRA	Sum of X - WELLBEING	Sum of X - GOALS	Sum of X - TRAVEL	INTER- NATIONAL	Sum of X - L&D	Sum of X - FEEDBACK	GOOD REL - COLL	GOOD REL - SV	Sum of X - INF RECOGN	FORM RECOGN	Sum of X - W-L BALANCE	Sum of X - HO	Sum of X - AUTONOMY	MEANING- FUL	Sum of X - ENJOY			
< 2 years	1216.593	819.115	1080.265	742.323	379.646	593.628	734.558	373.031	474.558	747.212	624.978	852.190	749.801	485.199	333.628	853.341	815.951	559.978	509.358	704.646	13650		
13 ≤ years	598.938	403.257	531.823	365.451	186.903	292.248	361.628	183.646	233.628	367.858	307.681	419.540	369.133	238.867	164.248	420.106	401.699	275.681	250.761	346.903	6720		
2-5 years	1572.212	1058.549	1396.035	959.310	490.619	767.150	949.274	482.071	613.274	965.628	807.664	1101.292	968.973	627.027	431.150	1102.779	1054.460	723.664	658.248	910.619	17640		
6-12 years	842.257	567.080	747.876	513.916	262.832	410.973	508.540	258.252	328.540	517.301	432.677	589.978	519.093	335.907	230.973	590.774	564.889	387.677	352.633	487.832	9450		
Grand Total	4230	2848	3756	2581	1320	2064	2554	1297	1650	2598	2173	2963	2607	1687	1160	2967	2837	1947	1771	2450	47460		

Source: created by the author in Microsoft Excel, 2024, n=226

Multiple regression – original regressions raw data

Source: created by the author based on the survey results in PSPP software, 2024, n=226

Model Summary (MOTIV)

		Adjusted	Std.
R	R Square	R Square	Error of the Estimate
.78	.61	.57	1.28

ANOVA (MOTIV)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	521.83	20	26.09	15.86	.000
Residual	337.25	205	1.65		
Total	859.08	225			

Coefficients (MOTIV)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.10	.57	.00	1.94	.054
SALARY	.12	.05	.12	2.33	.021
FRINGE_BEN	.01	.04	.02	.25	.799
STABILITY	-.05	.05	-.05	-.92	.357
JOB_COND	.03	.05	.03	.60	.549
EXTRA	-.06	.04	-.09	-1.34	.181
WELLBEING	.03	.04	.05	.71	.480
GOALS	.06	.05	.07	1.15	.251
TRAVEL	.04	.05	.04	.75	.457
INTERNATIONAL	.01	.04	.02	.38	.703
L_D	-.04	.05	-.06	-.86	.391
FEEDBACK	-.02	.05	-.02	-.30	.767
GOOD_REL_COLL	-.12	.07	-.12	-1.85	.066
GOOD_REL_SV	.22	.07	.25	3.39	.001
INF_RECOGN	.08	.05	.09	1.58	.116
FORM_RECOGN	.05	.04	.07	1.29	.198
W_L_BALANCE	-.07	.05	-.08	-1.43	.156
HO	.01	.04	.02	.30	.766
AUTONOMY	-.01	.06	-.01	-.11	.914
MEANINGFUL	.22	.06	.25	3.42	.001
ENJOY	.29	.06	.35	4.69	.000

Model Summary (DEDICATED)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.61	.37	.31	1.66

ANOVA (DEDICATED)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	335.33	20	16.77	6.08	.000
Residual	565.45	205	2.76		
Total	900.78	225			

Coefficients (DEDICATED)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.73	.73	.00	5.09	.000
SALARY	.15	.06	.16	2.38	.018
FRINGE_BEN	-.04	.06	-.06	-.76	.449
STABILITY	.02	.06	.03	.39	.697
JOB_COND	.11	.06	.12	1.80	.074
EXTRA	-.05	.06	-.07	-.86	.392
WELLBEING	-.07	.06	-.10	-1.28	.200
GOALS	.07	.07	.08	1.02	.310
TRAVEL	.09	.06	.12	1.53	.127
INTERNATIONAL	-.07	.05	-.12	-1.51	.133
L_D	.06	.06	.08	.99	.323
FEEDBACK	-.07	.07	-.09	-1.03	.305
GOOD_REL_COLL	.00	.09	.00	-.02	.980
GOOD_REL_SV	.14	.09	.15	1.59	.114
INF_RECOGN	-.02	.06	-.02	-.26	.796
FORM_RECOGN	.01	.05	.02	.28	.781
W_L_BALANCE	-.17	.06	-.20	-2.74	.007
HO	-.04	.05	-.06	-.87	.384
AUTONOMY	.08	.08	.07	.99	.322
MEANINGFUL	.14	.08	.16	1.76	.079
ENJOY	.19	.08	.23	2.40	.017

Model Summary (PSYCH)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.69	.47	.42	1.66

ANOVA (PSYCH)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	509.75	20	25.49	9.20	.000
Residual	568.13	205	2.77		
Total	1077.88	225			

Coefficients (PSYCH)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.55	.73	.00	.76	.451
SALARY	.11	.06	.10	1.65	.100
FRINGE_BEN	.04	.06	.05	.70	.482
STABILITY	-.02	.06	-.02	-.35	.724
JOB_COND	.02	.06	.02	.32	.751
EXTRA	.02	.06	.03	.39	.694
WELLBEING	-.08	.06	-.11	-1.44	.151
GOALS	.13	.07	.13	1.91	.058
TRAVEL	.11	.06	.13	1.85	.066
INTERNATIONAL	-.05	.05	-.08	-1.13	.262
L_D	-.06	.06	-.08	-1.01	.315
FEEDBACK	-.06	.07	-.07	-.95	.341
GOOD_REL_COLL	.05	.09	.04	.53	.599
GOOD_REL_SV	.22	.09	.22	2.53	.012
INF_RECOGN	-.02	.06	-.02	-.33	.738
FORM_RECOGN	.10	.05	.12	1.85	.065
W_L_BALANCE	.20	.06	.22	3.33	.001
HO	.07	.05	.08	1.41	.161
AUTONOMY	-.11	.08	-.10	-1.48	.140
MEANINGFUL	.08	.08	.08	.92	.361
ENJOY	.21	.08	.23	2.62	.009

Model Summary (SATISF)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.79	.62	.59	1.26

ANOVA (SATISF)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	537.62	20	26.88	16.88	.000
Residual	326.53	205	1.59		
Total	864.16	225			

Coefficients (SATISF)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.39	.56	.00	-.70	.483
SALARY	.31	.05	.32	6.32	.000
FRINGE_BEN	.11	.04	.15	2.48	.014
STABILITY	.10	.05	.11	2.10	.037
JOB_COND	.04	.05	.05	.91	.362
EXTRA	.02	.04	.04	.56	.579
WELLBEING	-.02	.04	-.02	-.37	.710
GOALS	.10	.05	.12	2.04	.043
TRAVEL	.05	.05	.07	1.13	.258
INTERNATIONAL	-.07	.04	-.11	-1.87	.063
L_D	-.01	.05	-.02	-.27	.786
FEEDBACK	.02	.05	.02	.35	.724
GOOD_REL_COLL	.05	.07	.05	.74	.459
GOOD_REL_SV	.13	.07	.14	1.94	.053
INF_RECOGN	-.01	.05	-.01	-.15	.879
FORM_RECOGN	.05	.04	.06	1.20	.231
W_L_BALANCE	.05	.05	.06	1.02	.308
HO	.00	.04	.00	.00	.997
AUTONOMY	-.07	.06	-.07	-1.25	.212
MEANINGFUL	.08	.06	.09	1.21	.227
ENJOY	.13	.06	.16	2.12	.035

Model Summary (STAY)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.70	.49	.44	1.85

ANOVA (STAY)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	676.21	20	33.81	9.92	.000
Residual	698.78	205	3.41		
Total	1374.99	225			

Coefficients (STAY)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.46	.81	.00	-.57	.570
SALARY	.32	.07	.26	4.39	.000
FRINGE_BEN	.07	.06	.08	1.10	.272
STABILITY	.10	.07	.09	1.47	.144
JOB_COND	.01	.07	.01	.21	.836
EXTRA	-.08	.06	-.10	-1.33	.186
WELLBEING	-.05	.06	-.06	-.83	.407
GOALS	.19	.08	.18	2.57	.011
TRAVEL	.11	.07	.11	1.64	.103
INTERNATIONAL	-.03	.05	-.04	-.60	.547
L_D	.01	.07	.01	.14	.885
FEEDBACK	-.05	.07	-.05	-.68	.497
GOOD_REL_COLL	.03	.10	.02	.28	.780
GOOD_REL_SV	.29	.10	.26	3.06	.002
INF_RECOGN	-.07	.07	-.07	-1.05	.296
FORM_RECOGN	.03	.06	.03	.45	.651
W_L_BALANCE	-.05	.07	-.05	-.73	.466
HO	.04	.06	.05	.79	.432
AUTONOMY	-.07	.09	-.06	-.88	.382
MEANINGFUL	.13	.09	.11	1.40	.164
ENJOY	.12	.09	.12	1.38	.168

Model Summary (EE_Index)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.81	.65	.62	1.09

ANOVA (EE_Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	448.53	20	22.43	19.05	.000
Residual	241.39	205	1.18		
Total	689.92	225			

Coefficients (EE_Index)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.91	.48	.00	1.89	.060
SALARY	.20	.04	.23	4.75	.000
FRINGE_BEN	.04	.04	.06	.99	.321
STABILITY	.03	.04	.04	.78	.437
JOB_COND	.04	.04	.06	1.07	.285
EXTRA	-.03	.04	-.05	-.78	.436
WELLBEING	-.04	.04	-.06	-1.04	.301
GOALS	.11	.04	.14	2.52	.013
TRAVEL	.08	.04	.12	2.03	.043
INTERNATIONAL	-.04	.03	-.08	-1.36	.177
L_D	-.01	.04	-.01	-.22	.824
FEEDBACK	-.04	.04	-.05	-.83	.409
GOOD_REL_COLL	.00	.06	.00	-.01	.988
GOOD_REL_SV	.20	.06	.25	3.56	.000
INF_RECOGN	-.01	.04	-.01	-.20	.841
FORM_RECOGN	.05	.03	.07	1.39	.165
W_L_BALANCE	-.01	.04	-.01	-.17	.869
HO	.02	.03	.02	.50	.615
AUTONOMY	-.04	.05	-.04	-.77	.445
MEANINGFUL	.13	.05	.16	2.39	.018
ENJOY	.19	.05	.26	3.61	.000

Multiple regression – narrowed-down regressions raw data

Source: created by the author based on the survey results in PSPP software, 2024, n=226

Model Summary (MOTIV)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.76	.58	.57	1.28

ANOVA (MOTIV)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	497.83	4	124.46	76.14	.000
Residual	361.25	221	1.63		
Total	859.08	225			

Coefficients (MOTIV)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.54	.40	.00	1.34	.181
SALARY	.14	.04	.14	3.17	.002
GOOD_REL_SV	.16	.05	.18	3.41	.001
MEANINGFUL	.22	.06	.24	3.74	.000
ENJOY	.33	.06	.39	5.42	.000

Model Summary (DEDICATED)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.54	.29	.28	1.70

ANOVA (DEDICATED)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	259.45	3	86.48	29.94	.000
Residual	641.33	222	2.89		
Total	900.78	225			

Coefficients (DEDICATED)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.61	.51	.00	9.10	.000
SALARY	.17	.06	.17	2.88	.004
W_L_BALANCE	-.12	.05	-.15	-2.44	.015
ENJOY	.42	.05	.50	8.37	.000

Model Summary (PSYCH)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.63	.40	.39	1.71

ANOVA (PSYCH)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	428.48	3	142.83	48.83	.000
Residual	649.39	222	2.93		
Total	1077.88	225			

Coefficients (PSYCH)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.36	.47	.00	2.92	.004
GOOD_REL_SV	.26	.07	.26	3.88	.000
W_L_BALANCE	.20	.05	.21	3.63	.000
ENJOY	.30	.06	.33	5.15	.000

Model Summary (SATISF)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.76	.58	.57	1.29

ANOVA (SATISF)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	499.44	5	99.89	60.25	.000
Residual	364.72	220	1.66		
Total	864.16	225			

Coefficients (SATISF)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.09	.41	.00	.21	.834
SALARY	.34	.05	.35	7.15	.000
FRINGE_BEN	.12	.04	.16	3.13	.002
STABILITY	.13	.05	.14	2.83	.005
GOALS	.18	.05	.21	3.98	.000
ENJOY	.22	.04	.26	5.17	.000

Model Summary (STAY)

		Adjusted	Std. Error of the Estimate
R	R Square	R Square	
.65	.42	.41	1.90

ANOVA (STAY)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	576.42	3	192.14	53.41	.000
Residual	798.57	222	3.60		
Total	1374.99	225			

Coefficients (STAY)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.19	.56	.00	-.34	.733
SALARY	.38	.06	.32	5.95	.000
GOALS	.27	.06	.25	4.19	.000
GOOD_REL_SV	.36	.07	.32	5.26	.000

Model Summary (EE_Index)

		Adjusted	Std. Error of the Estimate
R	R Square	R Square	
.79	.63	.62	1.08

ANOVA (EE_Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	433.02	6	72.17	61.52	.000
Residual	256.90	219	1.17		
Total	689.92	225			

Coefficients (EE_Index)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.86	.35	.00	2.49	.013
SALARY	.22	.04	.26	5.90	.000
GOALS	.11	.04	.14	2.73	.007
TRAVEL	.05	.03	.07	1.60	.111
GOOD_REL_SV	.19	.04	.24	4.47	.000
MEANINGFUL	.13	.05	.16	2.60	.010
ENJOY	.20	.05	.26	3.85	.000

Model Summary (EE_Index)

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
.79	.62	.61	1.09

ANOVA (EE_Index)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	430.02	5	86.00	72.80	.000
Residual	259.90	220	1.18		
Total	689.92	225			

Coefficients (EE_Index)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients-	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.81	.35	.00	2.36	.019
SALARY	.24	.04	.28	6.44	.000
GOALS	.12	.04	.15	3.09	.002
GOOD_REL_SV	.19	.04	.24	4.43	.000
MEANINGFUL	.13	.05	.17	2.70	.007
ENJOY	.20	.05	.26	3.82	.000

Appendix 6 – Coding table for survey labels

Sorszám	ID	#
Mi az első szó vagy kifejezés, ami eszébe jut a munkavállalói elkötelezettség kapcsán?	What is the first word that comes to your mind when you hear the expression “employee engagement”?	ASSOC
Gondolkodott munkahelyváltáson az elmúlt 3 hónapban?	Were you thinking about changing your workplace in the last 3 months?	CHANGE?
Mennyire elégedett a jelenlegi munkahelyével és pozíciójával? (10)	How satisfied are you with your current workplace and position? (10)	SATISF
x Fizetés (és bónuszok)	x Salary (with bonuses)	X - SALARY
x Változatos összetételű juttatási csomag (cafeteria, céges telefon, laptop, céges autó stb.)	x Diverse fringe benefit package (cafeteria benefits, phone, notebook, company car, etc.)	X - FRINGE BEN
x Biztos és stabil munkahely	x Secure and stable workplace	X - STABILITY
x Munkafeltételek (iroda fizikai jellemzői, eszközök és berendezések, technológiai feltételek)	x Working conditions (office’s physical appearance, tools and equipment, technology)	X - JOB COND
x Irodai extrák (csocsóasztal vagy más játékok, zajszigetelt boxok/fülkék, babzsákok, bár stb.)	x Extra office equipment (foosball or other games, silent boxes, bean-bags, bar area, etc.)	X - EXTRA
x Egészséggel és jólléttel kapcsolatos juttatások (sportolás támogatása, ingyenes ételek, céges coach stb.)	x Health and wellbeing related benefits (sport activities, complementary food and snack, company coach, etc.)	X - WELLBEING
x A személyes értékek és célok egyezősége a munkahely kultúrájával és céljaival	x Fit to organizational culture and company’s goals	X - GOALS
x Utazási lehetőségek	x Traveling opportunities	X - TRAVEL
x Nemzetközi környezet, idegennyelv-használat	x International environment, the opportunity for using languages	X - INTERNATIONAL
x Képzési és fejlődési lehetőségek	x Learning & development opportunities	X - L&D
x Visszajelzés a teljesítményről	x Performance feedback	X - FEEDBACK
x Jó kapcsolat a kollégákkal	x Good relationship with colleagues	X - GOOD REL - COLL
x Jó kapcsolat a felettesekkel	x Good relationship with superiors	X - GOOD REL - SV
x Informális elismerés (kollégák által)	x Informal recognition (felt from colleagues)	X - INF RECOGN
x Formális elismerés (kinevezések, különböző minősítések/címek, díjak, szereplési lehetőségek (előadás különböző eseményeken, workshopokon, social media megjelenés stb.))	x Formal recognition (promotions, gaining credentials, getting awards, opportunities to “show-off” (presenting at workshops, social media presence, etc.))	X - FORM RECOGN
x Munka-magánélet egyensúly	x Work-life balance	X - W-L BALANCE
x Home-office lehetőségek	x Home-office opportunities	X - HO
x Autonómia a feladatok végrehajtásában	x Autonomy in performing tasks	X - AUTONOMY
x Jelentősegteljes munka	x Meaningful work	X - MEANINGFUL
x Élvezetes feladatok, szenvedély a munka iránt	x Enjoyable work, job passion	X - ENJOY
Fizetés (és bónuszok) (10)	Salary (with bonuses) (10)	SALARY
Változatos összetételű juttatási csomag (cafeteria, céges telefon, laptop, céges autó stb.) (10)	Diverse fringe benefit package (cafeteria benefits, phone, notebook, company car, etc.) (10)	FRINGE BEN
Biztos és stabil munkahely (10)	Secure and stable workplace (10)	STABILITY
Munkafeltételek (iroda fizikai jellemzői, eszközök és berendezések, technológiai feltételek) (10)	Working conditions (office’s physical appearance, tools and equipment, technology) (10)	JOB COND
Irodai extrák (csocsóasztal vagy más játékok, zajszigetelt boxok/fülkék, babzsákok, bár stb.) (10)	Extra office equipment (foosball or other games, silent boxes, bean-bags, bar area, etc.) (10)	EXTRA
Egészséggel és jólléttel kapcsolatos juttatások (sportolás támogatása, ingyenes ételek, céges coach stb.) (10)	Health and wellbeing related benefits (sport activities, complementary food and snack, company coach, etc.) (10)	WELLBEING
A személyes értékek és célok egyezősége a munkahely kultúrájával és céljaival (10)	Fit to organizational culture and company’s goals (10)	GOALS
Utazási lehetőségek (10)	Traveling opportunities (10)	TRAVEL
Nemzetközi környezet, idegennyelv-használat (10)	International environment, the opportunity for using languages (10)	INTERNATIONAL
Képzési és fejlődési lehetőségek (10)	Learning & development opportunities (10)	L&D
Visszajelzés a teljesítményről (10)	Performance feedback (10)	FEEDBACK
Jó kapcsolat a kollégákkal (10)	Good relationship with colleagues (10)	GOOD REL - COLL
Jó kapcsolat a felettesekkel (10)	Good relationship with superiors (10)	GOOD REL - SV
Informális elismerés (kollégák által) (10)	Informal recognition (felt from colleagues) (10)	INF RECOGN
Formális elismerés (kinevezések, különböző minősítések/címek, díjak, szereplési lehetőségek (előadás különböző eseményeken, workshopokon, social media megjelenés stb.)) (10)	Formal recognition (promotions, gaining credentials, getting awards, opportunities to “show-off” (presenting at workshops, social media presence, etc.)) (10)	FORM RECOGN
Munka-magánélet egyensúly (10)	Work-life balance (10)	W-L BALANCE
Home-office lehetőségek (10)	Home-office opportunities (10)	HO
Autonómia a feladatok végrehajtásában (10)	Autonomy in performing tasks (10)	AUTONOMY
Jelentősegteljes munka (10)	Meaningful work (10)	MEANINGFUL
Élvezetes feladatok, szenvedély a munka iránt (10)	Enjoyable work, job passion (10)	ENJOY

Kérem, adja meg a jelenlegi havi bruttó fizetésének összegét.	Please, provide your current gross monthly salary.	SALARY
Milyen értékkel jellemezné az általános napi motiváltságát a munkahelyén? (10)	On a scale 1-10 where is your average daily motivation at your workplace? (10)	MOTIV
Mennyire elkötelezett a feladatai végrehajtását illetően? (10)	How dedicated are you in performing your tasks? (10)	DEDICATED
Milyennek ítéli a pszichológiai állapotát a munkahelyén? (10)	On a scale 1-10 where is your psychological state in work? (10)	PSYCH
Összességében mennyire elégedett a jelenlegi munkahelyével - a korábban felsorolt juttatások, lehetőségek rendelkezésére állásának szempontjából? (10)	How satisfied are you overall with your current workplace? (10)	SATISF
Mennyire érzi azt, hogy szeretne a jelenlegi munkahelyén maradni? (10)	On a scale 1-10 how much would you like to stay at your current employer? (10)	STAY
Az Ön életkora:	Age	AGE
Az Ön neve:	Gender	GENDER
Az Ön legmagasabb iskolai végzettsége	Highest educational level	EDU
Az Ön jelenlegi pozíciója:	Current position	JOB
Hány éve dolgozik a jelenlegi pozíciójában?	Number of years in your current position	JOB YRS
Hány éve dolgozik a jelenlegi munkahelyén?	Number of years at your current company	WP YRS
Iparág, amelyben a cége szolgáltat:	Sector	SECTOR
Munkáltató központja	Location	LOCATION

Source: created by the author, 2024