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## EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN MOTIVATION AND PROCRASTINATION IN THE WORKPLACE: A CASE STUDY OF SMES IN SLOVAKIA\*

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**Abstract.** This article presents a qualitative study conducted among office workers in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Slovakia, aimed at enhancing work motivation and preventing procrastination. The study was conducted with a sample size of 253 employees, utilising the Work Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) and the Procrastination At Work Scale (PAWS) standardised questionnaires. The objective of this research was to explore the link between work motivation and procrastination tendencies among office workers in SMEs and identify effective strategies for enhancing motivation and preventing procrastination in this specific context. The qualitative methodology employed in this study allowed for in-depth exploration and understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and challenges employees face in relation to work motivation and procrastination. Based on the results, practical recommendations are provided to enhance work motivation and prevent procrastination in office settings within SMEs. This article contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into work motivation enhancement and procrastination prevention specifically tailored to the context of office workers in SMEs in Slovakia.

**Keywords:** work procrastination; self-determination theory; motivation at the workplace; small and medium enterprises, employee

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**JEL Classifications:** M10, L26, O15

### 1. Introduction

In today's fast-paced and demanding work environment, employees often find themselves grappling with the challenge of managing their tasks effectively. Heightened risk of job loss, substantial alterations in work roles and responsibilities, the need to acquire new skills, and shifts in management practices frequently result in reduced work performance sustainability (Rózsa et al., 2022a). This also happens in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are recognised as comprising approximately 90% of businesses worldwide (Azman & Abdul Majid, 2023), (Šimberová et al., 2022) and employing roughly half of the global workforce. Small businesses play a crucial role in the economy (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017), (Krajčák et al., 2023) and the social development of a country (Rózsa et al., 2022b), (Cherednichenko et al., 2023) also emphasises that these businesses serve as catalysts for community transformation and development. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) make a substantial contribution to fulfilling the critical indicators of the national economy (Ključnikov

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et al., 2022a), (Rózsa et al., 2023), (Civelek & Krajčik, 2022) and they have a positive influence on macroeconomic indicators (Vojtovič et al., 2016), (Tomášková & Kaňovská, 2022). SMEs also take a substantial role in producing value-added goods and services (Ključnikov et al., 2022b) and export volumes of countries. Although some studies (Vávrová, 2022), (Lincényi & Bulanda, 2023) mentioned that SMEs have more disadvantages than large enterprises regarding socio-economic outcomes. Appelbaum and Kamal (2000) claimed that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are more likely to survive and maintain a competitive advantage than larger firms. They propose that this can be achieved by enhancing employee satisfaction and reducing labour turnover and absenteeism while decreasing production costs (Pauhofova & Stehlikova, 2018). Satisfied employees will likely be more engaged, productive, and committed. They may be more willing to contribute innovative ideas, improve processes, and identify cost-saving measures. These factors can ultimately result in streamlined operations, decreased waste, and more efficient resource utilisation, leading to cost savings for SMEs (Appelbaum & Kamal, 2000). On the other hand, SMEs often compete with larger organisations with greater resources and economies of scale (Małkowska & Uhruska, 2022). To stay competitive, SMEs need to maximise their productivity. That's why it is crucial to maintain highly productive employees who can deliver better quality products or services, provide excellent customer service, and respond quickly to market demands, giving the business an edge over competitors.

## 2. Theoretical background

This section discusses theoretical perspectives on the relationships between SME prosperity and the strategies managers in SMEs can use to enhance employees' work motivation and eliminate their tendency to procrastinate during working hours. Numerous explanations for procrastination have emerged in the past few decades, primarily focusing on academic procrastination. Nevertheless, a lack of research exists on work procrastination and its association with work motivation. It is crucial to emphasise the importance of considering the motivational basis behind impaired goal pursuit, specifically in terms of alignment with personal values and fundamental needs (Heckova et al., 2022). While a motivational perspective on procrastination has been explored previously (Klingsieck, 2013), (Borisov & Vinogradov, 2022), our contribution is distinctive in integrating complementary theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches, and analytical levels.

Additionally, we explicitly address key motivational concepts relevant to procrastination in their inherent energetic implications rather than treating them solely as sub-processes of self-regulation (Wolters, 2003). Motivation poses a common challenge for all organisations, whether in the public or private sector. It is characterised as the readiness to invest significant effort in pursuit of organisational objectives, influenced by the potential of fulfilling individual needs through that effort (Saraswathi, 2011). According to Armstrong (2007), a motive is an incentive to do something, and consequently, motivation is a set of external and internal factors that influence human behaviour. Motivation can be defined as behaviour that wants to reach a goal. In the context of work motivation, he further advises that it is best if the employee is internally motivated to perform the given work at a high quality and put a lot of effort into it (Armstrong, 2007). This state, although most desirable, is rather exceptional. To effectively motivate their employees, employers need to have a comprehensive understanding of their unsatisfied needs. The level of motivation significantly impacts all aspects of the organisation's overall performance. One prevalent and counterproductive behaviour that frequently emerges in workplaces is procrastination—postponing or delaying tasks despite potential negative consequences. Ferrari and Díaz-Morales (2014) identified procrastination as a behavioural pattern with several negative consequences. These include ineffective time management (Straková et al., 2021), decreased performance levels, delayed study behaviours, reduced frustration tolerance, tendency to avoid tasks, ego depletion, trade-offs between speed and accuracy, and difficulty in regulating negative emotions (Ferrari & Francisco Diaz-Morales, 2014). This assumption is also confirmed by Prem et al. (2018), who claimed that procrastination refers to an employee's intentional postponement of tasks, and it represents a failure in self-regulation, where tasks are irrationally delayed despite the possibility of negative outcomes (Prem et al., 2018).

Procrastination in the workplace is characterised by two dimensions, namely soldiering and cyberslacking. Soldiering is a type of workplace procrastination that inhibits work-related activities by prioritising mainly non-work tasks without malicious intent.

Cyberslacking is using the Internet or mobile devices for personal purposes during working hours. Although the Internet often allows employees to perform their work tasks faster and more safely than before, it also makes it easier for them to use it for personal purposes, resulting in high financial costs associated with less time spent at work (Vitak et al., 2011).

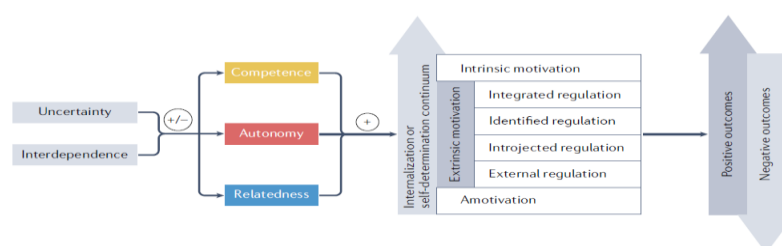
However, procrastination at work in general not only hampers individual productivity but can also harm overall organisational performance. To address this issue, researchers and practitioners have turned to psychological theories, such as Self-Determination Theory (SDT), to gain insights into the underlying motivational factors that contribute to procrastination behaviour at the workplace. According to Ryan, Sheldon, Kasser, and Deci (1996), Self-Determination Theory (SDT) defines needs as universal necessities that are vital for optimal human development and integrity (Smerek, 2022), (Ližbetinová et al., 2020). In this context, needs are essential nutrients for promoting psychological health. SDT posits that something is regarded as a need only when its satisfaction contributes to psychological well-being.

In contrast, the deprivation or thwarting of that need can negatively impact psychological health (Ryan et al., 1996). According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the satisfaction of three psychological needs - competence, autonomy, and relatedness - significantly impacts work motivation, which, in turn, affects outcomes. SDT represented in Figure 1 suggests that motivations that are more intrinsic and internalised lead to more favourable outcomes than extrinsic and less internalised motivations. In the future of work, where increased uncertainty and interdependence are prevalent, these psychological needs and motivations may be influenced. The changing nature of work might impact individuals' sense of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which, in turn, can shape their motivation levels and subsequent outcomes in the workplace (Gagné et al., 2022).

On the other hand, when employees feel a lack of autonomy, competence or relatedness over their work, negative effects such as procrastination may arise. Nguyen et al. (2013), (Grmanova & Bartek, 2022) discovered that employees who had jobs that offered less intrinsic value, such as recognition, and had more limitations were prone to higher levels of procrastination compared to employees whose jobs required greater levels of intrinsic motivation skills (Nguyen et al., 2013). These dependencies became important and have been considered in measures aimed at successful employer value proposition design (Samoliuk et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Internet has recently become an essential component of daily life and is extensively utilised in both work and educational settings (Zaidi et al., 2022). It helps in resolving employment-related tasks (Balcerak & Woźniak, 2021). However, it has many disadvantages, like technostress (Bencsik & Juhasz, 2023). Online activities that serve as constant distractions from planned tasks can contribute to procrastination and may even be regarded as a significant aspect of problematic internet use. This phenomenon primarily impacts the younger generation (Beutel et al., 2011), (Mura, 2020).

The results of several studies create the prospect of providing actionable guidance to organisations aiming to strengthen their approaches for enhancing employee well-being across dimensions such as life well-being, workplace well-being and psychological well-being (Jaškevičiūtė et al., 2024).

In our subsequent analysis, we will concentrate on examining the connection between procrastination and work procrastination among adolescents, specifically office workers employed (Mura et al., 2023) in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Slovakia. Additionally, we will explore potential associations between work procrastination, gender, age, and level of education.



**Figure 1.** Self-determination theory  
Source: Gagné et al. (2022)

### 3. Research objective and methodology

To solve the research problem and fulfil the goal, data were obtained through quantitative research conducted online using the CAWI questionnaire data collection method - computer-assisted web interviewing among 253 employees of small and medium-sized enterprises. The questionnaire focused on the research of statistically significant differences when comparing the relationship of motivation to procrastination and the demographic specifics of employees of small and medium-sized enterprises.

To measure intrinsic and extrinsic work motivation, we used the Czech version of the WEIMS scale - Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale presented by Šmahaj and Cakirpaloglu (Šmahaj and Cakirpaloglu, 2015; Hitka et al., 2023). The scale is originally from the authors Tremblay et al. (2009). It consists of 18 items divided into six subscales: intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, introjected regulation, external regulation and amotivation (Tremblay et al., 2009). This scale is based on the theoretical foundations of the theory of self-determination, which has three parts: internal motivation, external motivation and amotivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 - "does not match at all" to 7 - "exactly matches", where respondents determine the reason for staying in their current job.

Examples of items of individual WEIMS subscales:

- Intrinsic motivation (IM): "I am very happy to learn new things."
- Integrated regulation (IntegR): "I chose this type of work in order to achieve a certain lifestyle."
- Identified regulation (IdenR): "Because I want to succeed in this job, otherwise I would be very ashamed of myself."
- Introjected regulation (IntrjR): "Because I want to be successful in this job. I would be very ashamed if it wasn't so."
- External regulation (ExtR): "Because thanks to it I earn money."
- Amotivation (Amo): "I ask myself this question too. I do not think I am capable of handling the important tasks related to this job."

Respondents' procrastination behaviour in the work environment was measured using the 12-item Work Procrastination Scale (Metin et al., 2018). The Work Procrastination Scale (PAWS) consists of two dimensions, namely soldiering (intentionally slowing down the pace of work so that the employee avoids a full day's work, e.g., by taking longer coffee breaks) and cyberslacking (using the Internet or mobile devices for personal purposes during working hours). The soldiering dimension is assessed in the work procrastination scale with 8 items such as "I take a long coffee break at work". The dimension of cyberslacking is measured by 4 items such as "I do online shopping during working hours". The items are scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 – "never" to 7 – "always or daily".

In addition to the application of general-logic methods, the above secondary input data needed to be processed through appropriate statistical methods. The choice of the optimal method depended on the nature of the problem to be solved, the nature of the available data as well as the experience with the application of the chosen method in previous empirical studies. We used both descriptive statistics methods (descriptive characteristics) and inductive statistics methods. We used the methods of correlation and regression analysis. We based the following general form of the regression model:

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \dots + \beta_k x_k + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

where

- $y_t$  is the explanatory (dependent) variable represented by the individual performance indicators,
- $\beta_0 - \beta_k$  are the model parameters (regression coefficients),
- $x_1 - x_k$  represent the explanatory (independent) variables - i.e., the individual potential determinants of performance,
- $\varepsilon_t$  is the random component.

We constructed the individual models in such a way that the assumptions of using regression analysis were met, which we subsequently verified (Kalirajan, 1993). We used the Arellano-Bond estimator to correct for the presence of potential heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation in the individual models. Regression methods for panel data analysis are frequently used, particularly in more recent work of a similar type (Asimakopoulos et al., 2009).

#### 4. Results and discussion

In selecting the research instrument, we also focused on assessing the reliability of the questionnaires. A reliable questionnaire minimises unreliability and enables us to obtain correct information and effectively measure and examine the relationships between different variables. This reduces our risk of misleading results and increases measurement accuracy (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Reliability of the questionnaire WEIMS - Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation scale.

<b>WEIMS Item reliability for all sub-constructs</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
<b>Intrinsic motivation</b>	0,896
<b>Integrated regulation</b>	0,850
<b>Identified regulation</b>	0,905
<b>Introjected regulation</b>	0,877
<b>External regulation</b>	0,887
<b>Amotivation</b>	0,956
<b>Motivation (total score)</b>	0,734

*Source:* own processing

Respondents' procrastination behaviour in the work environment will be measured using the 12-item PAWS Work Procrastination Scale (Metin et al., 2018). The Procrastination at Work Scale (PAWS) consists of two dimensions, namely soldiering (deliberately slowing down the pace of work to avoid working all day, e.g., by taking longer coffee breaks) and cyberslacking (using the Internet or mobile devices for personal purposes during working hours) (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Reliability of the questionnaire PAWS Procrastination at work scale.

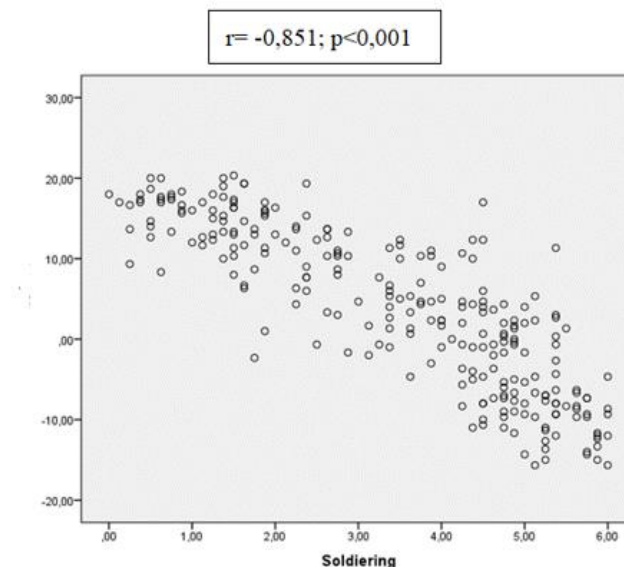
<b>PAWS Item reliability of sub-constructs</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
<b>Soldiering</b>	0,984
<b>Cyberslacking</b>	0,915
<b>Procrastination (total score)</b>	0,980

*Source:* own processing

In our research, we constructed several hypotheses that we tested. In this paper, we report the validation of the hypothesis that we statistically investigated the relationship between overall motivation and soldiering as a type of offline procrastination among SME employees. We hypothesised that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between motivation and soldiering among SME employees. We deal with soldiering where the p-value reaches  $p < 0.001$  and thus we can say that there is a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient has a value of -0.851, which indicates a very strong negative relationship between these variables.



We confirm this hypothesis as we have shown that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between motivation and soldiering as a type of offline procrastination of SME employees. If an employee does not have sufficient motivation to complete his/her work tasks, he/she may procrastinate. This may put him/her in a situation where he/she has little time to complete his/her tasks and will try to avoid his/her duties. Instead, he will engage in other activities that will not stress him out. It is important for employees to identify and resolve the causes of their procrastination so that they can focus on completing their work tasks efficiently (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The link between total score of motivation and soldiering of SME employees.

*Source:* own processing

Grund and Fries (2018) suggested that interventions targeting procrastination should focus on motivation, such as goal setting, rather than solely emphasising the implementation of goals. It is important to note that not all forms of passive procrastination need intervention from managers (Grund & Fries, 2018). Some employees may procrastinate because they are experiencing difficulties with a specific task. These challenges can be related to cognitive, emotional, or social factors, leading to stalled progress (Ahern & Manathunga, 2003). Additionally, according to Wan et al. (2014), factors such as unclear job responsibilities, vague tasks, limited influence in decision-making, and a scarcity of challenging assignments are associated with decreased energy and motivation. These conditions can ultimately result in feelings of boredom (Wan et al., 2014), (Zsigmond & Mura, 2023).

Therefore, regarding these conclusions, boredom at work can lead individuals to procrastinate to escape or avoid the monotony and dullness of their tasks. Procrastination becomes a means of filling time or seeking more stimulating activities instead of focusing on uninteresting tasks. This behaviour can deplete motivation, creating challenges for individuals in mustering the necessary energy and determination to initiate or finish their work tasks.

The quantitative research aimed to examine the relationship between several variables. Among the main variables, we included motivational tendencies based on self-determination theory and work procrastination with variables such as cyberslacking (online procrastination) and soldiering (offline work procrastination). Table 3 summarises the key findings from the quantitative research. The first finding deals with intrinsic motivation where the p-value is  $p < 0.001$ ; hence, we can talk about a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient has a value of  $-0.644$ , indicating a strong negative relationship between these variables. Therefore, there is a statistically significant negative relationship between intrinsic motivation as one of the motivational tendencies and procrastination of SME employees.

**Table 3.** Summary of results

<b>The link between procrastination and motivational tendencies</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>
Intrinsic motivation	-0,644	<0,001
Integrated regulation	-0,482	<0,001
Identified regulation	-0,340	<0,001
Introjected regulation	-0,206	0,001
External regulation	0,088	0,162
Amotivation	0,703	<0,001
<b>The relationship between motivation and the types of procrastination</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>p</b>
Soldiering	-0,851	<0,001
Cyberslacking	-0,768	<0,001
<b>The link between age and procrastination</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Overall rate of procrastination and age	75	1,46491
	113	1,69216
	65	1,70739
	4	1,71895
<b>The dependence between gender and procrastination</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Overall procrastination rate and gender	127	1,65661
	130	1,65615
<b>The relationship between education level and procrastination</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
The link between education level and procrastination	73	1,46491
	67	1,69216
	90	1,70739
	27	1,71895

*Source:* own processing

The second finding deals with integrated regulation, where the p-value is  $p < 0.001$ , and thus, we can speak of a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient reached -0.482, which indicates a moderately strong negative relationship between these variables. There is also a statistically significant negative relationship between integrated regulation as one of the motivational tendencies and procrastination of SME employees.

The third finding describes the relationship of procrastination with the identified regulation, where the p-value is  $p < 0.001$ , and thus, we can speak of a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient reached -0.340, which indicates a moderate negative relationship between these variables. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between the identified regulation as one of the motivational tendencies and the procrastination of SME employees.

The fourth relationship describes the relationship with introjected regulation, where the p-value is less than 0.05 ( $p = 0.001$ ), and thus, we can speak of a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient reached -0.206, indicating a weak negative relationship between these variables. We have shown a statistically significant negative relationship between introjected regulation as one of the motivational tendencies and procrastination of SME employees.

Regarding the next observation, we consider the external regulation where the p-value reaches  $p = 0.162$ ; hence, there is no statistically significant relationship between these variables.

Within amotivation (Amo), the p-value is  $p < 0.001$ ; therefore, these variables have a significant relationship. The correlation coefficient has a value of 0.703, which indicates a strong positive relationship between these variables. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between amotivation as one of the motivational tendencies and procrastination of SME employees.

For soldiering, we found a p-value of  $p < 0.001$  and thus we can speak of a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient has a value of -0.851, which indicates a very strong negative relationship between these variables. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between motivation and soldiering as a type of offline procrastination of SME employees.

In the case of online procrastination (cyberslacking), the p-value reaches  $p < 0.001$ , and thus, we can indicate a significant relationship between these variables. The correlation coefficient is -0.768, which shows a very strong negative relationship between these variables. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between motivation and online procrastination or cyberslacking of SME employees.

Within the association of respondents' age with offline procrastination (soldiering), the p-value was higher than 0.05 ( $p = 0.104$ ), and thus, there is no statistically significant relationship between these variables. However, across generations (Table 4), we found online procrastination, especially among the youngest Generation Z. This generation has grown up with technology and digital devices, which means they are much more used to working with computers and smartphones. This can lead to higher rates of online procrastination as they are more likely to be exposed to Internet distractions. Generation Z is also known for their addiction to social networking sites, which may be one of the main causes of online procrastination.

**Table 4** Average rate of procrastination by age group.

Age group	Mean	N
Gen Z	3,7389	75
Millennials	3,3260	113
Gen X	3,4038	65
Boomers	1,6458	4

*Source:* own processing

Regarding the overall procrastination rate and gender men 3,3150 and women 3,5622 the slightly higher rates of procrastination in case of women may be related to women's tendency to switch between multiple tasks at once. This behaviour can lead to online procrastination, as they can easily become distracted by different online activities instead of focusing on one task. They can also be affected by their emotional states as men. When they feel stressed, tired, or frustrated, they may switch off and exhibit online procrastination. Women may be subjected to more pressure and expectations around their work performance and family commitments, which can lead to more stress and anxiety. This stress can increase the likelihood of seeking an escape from procrastination.

Regarding education and procrastination, our findings suggest that employees with lower levels of education have a higher tendency to procrastinate on tasks and are more likely to use strategies such as procrastination or "looking for alternative activities" to avoid unpleasant tasks. However, it is important to emphasise that procrastination is not only a problem for employees with lower education levels and can affect anyone, regardless of their education. The causes of procrastination are varied and can differ from person to person, so it is essential to focus on addressing the causes and creating healthy habits to help manage procrastination.

Regarding the results of the statistical validations and their interpretation, we consider that correlation is not one-sided and is not identical to causality. In the qualitative part, which was conducted through structured expert interviews with managers of small and medium-sized enterprises, we conclude that addressing the issue of work motivation and procrastination is not a priority in every case. Several reasons may explain this finding. For example, managers often have many duties and responsibilities to take care of, which seem to be more important



than employee motivation. They may have time constraints on project planning, responsibilities for managing budgets and finances, or ensuring that teams are productive and meet deadlines. Equally, managers don't always have the expertise to deal with and procrastination.

These problems are often complex and may require knowledge of sociology and psychology. Not every manager has this knowledge and, therefore, may not feel competent to deal with and deliberately avoid these problems. In practice, however, employees are also often expected to be motivated and productive without the manager constantly monitoring and motivating them. Managers may feel that it is the employees' responsibility to feel motivated and perform their tasks in a timely and quality manner. However, in the intervention process, some managers may not have sufficient tools to monitor and address motivation and procrastination issues.

Special tools to monitor and manage employee productivity and motivation may be necessary in many cases, which can be costly for managers. Our research has limitations that may affect the results and their interpretation, such as the sample's specificity, the respondent's subjective assessment that may affect the consistency of the results, and the dynamics of time; our research was conducted over two years, 2022-2023. We also consider the cultural differences between different cultural groups as limiting. Some results may not be applicable to other cultures.

## 5. Conclusions

Lack of work motivation and prevalent procrastination can cause long-term problems that take time and patience to resolve. As it was stated in the literature review, according to self-determination theory, the satisfaction of three psychological needs (competence, autonomy, and relatedness) influences work motivation, which affects outcomes. This might be the most practical way for managers to enhance motivation and reduce procrastination regarding their employees.

- **Autonomy** - requires internal behavioural support so that employees experience a sense of control over their actions. The need for autonomy is manifested in the desire to have the possibility of self-realisation by one's own integrated meaning. The need for autonomy is related to work meaningfulness because if employees can choose their work tasks and how to do them and feel supported and in control of their destiny, it will likely lead to more meaningful work.
- **Competence** - refers to the desire to deal effectively with one's environment and a sense of effectiveness in one's activities. In a work context, employees want to succeed in their work tasks and anticipate development and growth in terms of their skills and expertise to satisfy their need for competence. Achieving goals, responding successfully to challenges at work, and experiencing growth can lead to feelings of competence that provide a sense of meaning at work.
- **Relatedness** - includes a sense of mutual connection and belonging. Relatedness needs are satisfied by creating and maintaining interpersonal relationships with colleagues and superiors. Fostering a relationship refers to behaviours demonstrating ongoing and authentic interest, care, and friendship among employees. This involves active listening, perspective-taking, mentoring and opportunities to develop relationships with others.

By implementing specific steps based on promoting autonomy, relatedness, and competence based on Self-determination theory, managers can increase employees' motivation and create a more engaged and productive workforce.

Like other developed countries, small and medium-sized enterprises are Slovakia's most common form of entrepreneurship. They are the basis for the social and economic development of regions, helping to reduce unemployment and increase the growth of the standard of living. However, when adverse changes hit the economy, these enterprises also must think about survival and maintaining optimal functioning. The nature of work is changing, and employees must also develop new skills to remain competitive. In this context, managing and supporting employees sustainably is critical, especially for employees more prone to negative work habits such as procrastination in completing work tasks. Based on our research, in the specific conditions of the Slovak

Republic, we have identified the most effective ways managers can learn to communicate effectively, build relationships, and create a team atmosphere that contributes to achieving collaboration and increasing the efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Overall, small and medium-sized enterprises in Slovakia need a strategy to increase work motivation and eliminate employee procrastination because motivated employees are more productive, loyal, and less prone to fluctuation. When employees feel that they can contribute to the development and improvement of the business, they will be more willing to put forward new ideas and solutions. Motivating employees is crucial for companies because it helps increase employee efficiency, productivity, and performance, encourages teamwork, and fosters creativity and innovation. An anti-procrastination strategy can also help employees improve their organisation and planning, leading to better use of time and higher productivity. It gives employees more control over their work and time, increasing satisfaction and motivation. SMEs can thus gain a competitive advantage through more efficient use of employees' time and resources. When employees are better organised and planned, businesses can perform better and improve their market position.

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