

Original Article

**EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND THE SUCCESS OF
HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS****Borko Maraš^{1,2}, Damir Peličić^{2,3}, Tanja Boljević^{2,3}, Ranka Konatar¹,
Kenan Music⁴**¹Vocational Medical School, Podgorica, Montenegro²University of Montenegro, Faculty of Medicine, Podgorica, Montenegro³Scientific Center, Clinical Center of Montenegro, Podgorica, Montenegro⁴Emergency Medical Service – Tuzi, Montenegro**Received:** January 21, 2025; **Revised:** March 13, 2025.**Accepted:** March 14, 2025; **Published:** March 15, 2025.**DOI:** 10.5937/annnurs3-56201**Abstract**

Background: Job satisfaction and positive emotions significantly impact patient safety, the quality of services provided, employee commitment, and retention within the organization and profession.
Aim: To assess the level of work motivation among healthcare workers at the Clinical Center of Montenegro.

Materials and Methods: This research was conducted as a cross-sectional study involving 104 healthcare workers employed at the Clinical Center of Montenegro in Podgorica. The research instrument was an original questionnaire designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire consisted of demographic data and a scale for assessing work motivation. The scale included 24 items related to employee satisfaction and motivation, working conditions, communication with colleagues and superiors, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. Responses were measured on an agreement scale from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (completely agree). If the statement were negative, the rating would be inverted.

Results: The results indicate that employees were relatively less satisfied with benefits (Mean=2,47), rewards and incentives at work (3,03) and the opportunities for advancement at work (3,48). Meanwhile, relationships with their superiors and colleagues at work were rated relatively high (4,11 and 3,80, respectively).

Conclusion: The respondents' satisfaction scores with their benefits, rewards and incentives, and opportunities for advancement at work were relatively low. As this may affect efficiency, productivity, and attitudes toward patients and their family members, every effort should be made to improve these factors.

Keywords: motivation, nurses, satisfaction, work environment

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Introduction

Job motivation refers to the evaluation of job characteristics and emotional experiences at work. In other words, job satisfaction and motivation are considered a set of attitudes toward various aspects of one's job^{1,2}. The significance of job satisfaction and employee motivation lies in their impact on workplace outcomes—dissatisfaction often leads to absenteeism and voluntary resignation, whereas high job satisfaction contributes to work quality, engagement, and productivity^{3,4}.

Research on employee motivation highlights this concept in two ways. First, motivation can be viewed as a general attitude toward work or as a response to specific job dimensions, such as salary, opportunities for advancement, department staffing levels, routine tasks, the sophistication of equipment and supplies, job variety, workload, and shift work⁵. Among interpersonal factors, the most influential include autonomy, interactions with colleagues and superiors, professional development, quality of healthcare, relationships with patients and their families, support from coworkers and supervisors, and task complexity^{6,7}.

The third category of factors affecting employee motivation consists of personal characteristics, such as personality traits (e.g., self-esteem or stress tolerance), as well as age, years of service, positive and negative emotionality, job status, and overall life satisfaction⁶. Given that the medical profession is generally recognized as both emotionally and physically demanding, most research has focused on nurses' working conditions, demonstrating how various aspects of the work environment influence job satisfaction and motivation^{8,9}. However, two key areas stand out: interpersonal relationships among nurses and the quality of patient care. Nurses often cite patient-centered work as the most crucial factor in their job satisfaction.

Poor working conditions frequently result in job dissatisfaction, which is a primary contributor to workplace stress. This, in turn, negatively affects the quality of healthcare services and the overall efficiency of healthcare institutions^{10,11,12}.

The aim of this study is to assess the level of work motivation among healthcare workers at the Clinical Center of Montenegro.

Materials and Methods

The research was conducted as a cross-sectional study. The sample included 104 healthcare workers employed at the Clinical Center of Montenegro in Podgorica. An original questionnaire, specifically designed for this study, was used as the research instrument. The questionnaire comprised two sections: the first collected general demographic data such as gender, age, and education, while the second included a scale for assessing healthcare workers' motivation toward their work.

The motivation scale consisted of 24 items related to employee satisfaction and motivation concerning working conditions, communication with colleagues and superiors, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement.

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Clinical Center of Montenegro on March 1, 2022. Statistical data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The results were processed using descriptive statistics, with numerical characteristics presented as mean values and standard deviations. Findings are displayed on a table.

Results

Demographic Data

A total of 104 respondents, including nurses and technicians employed at the Clinical Center of Montenegro, participated in the survey. The gender distribution revealed that most respondents were women (76%). The average age of the respondents was 41 years, with the youngest being 20 years old and the oldest 65 years old.

Regarding education levels, 81% of respondents had completed secondary education, 3% had completed higher education, and 16% had obtained a university degree. The average length of work experience among respondents was 15 years, with the shortest being one year and the longest being 42 years.

The highest percentage of respondents (34%) worked the morning shift, followed by 30% who worked in rotating shifts, 22% who worked on duty, and 14% who worked in two shifts.

Respondents' Satisfaction with Rewards and Incentives at Work

Regarding job satisfaction related to rewards and incentives, 22% of respondents disagreed with the statement "I believe that I am adequately paid for the work I do," while 18% completely disagreed. Additionally, 20% of respondents agreed with the statement, 16% neither agreed nor disagreed, and only 1% completely agreed. The mean agreement score for this statement on a scale from 1 to 6 was 3.01, SD = 1.42.

For the statement "When I think about my salary, I feel that the organization does not value me enough," 32% agreed, 8% completely agreed, and 12% slightly agreed. Meanwhile, 19% disagreed, 8% completely disagreed, and 22% slightly disagreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 3.37, SD = 1.48.

When evaluating the statement "I am satisfied with the opportunities for salary increases that are offered to me," 27% disagreed, 7% completely disagreed, and 12% slightly disagreed. On the other hand, 21% agreed, 16% completely agreed, and 17% slightly agreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 3.36, SD = 1.67.

For the statement "I believe that my effort is not rewarded as much as it should be" 36% agreed, 19% completely agreed, and 12% slightly agreed. Conversely, 15% disagreed, 7% completely disagreed, and 12% slightly disagreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 2.88, SD = 1.57.

Respondents' Satisfaction with Benefits at Work

Regarding satisfaction with work benefits, 31% agreed with the statement "I am not satisfied with the benefits offered by my employer," while 19% completely agreed and 9% slightly agreed. Meanwhile, 21% disagreed, 12% completely disagreed, and

16% slightly disagreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 3.39, SD = 1.64.

For the statement "When I do something well at work, I receive adequate recognition for it," 27% disagreed, 15% completely disagreed, and 18% slightly disagreed. Meanwhile, 13% agreed, 12% completely agreed, and 20% slightly agreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 3.07, SD = 1.47.

Regarding respondents' agreement with the statement, "Benefits for employees in my organization are as good as in most organizations," the largest percentage (32%) disagreed, while 16% completely disagreed, and 17% disagreed more than they agreed. Conversely, 23% agreed with the statement, 5% completely agreed, and 7% slightly disagreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean = 3.03, SD = 1.55.

The statement "I think the benefits package we have in the organization is fair" received the highest agreement from 27% of respondents. Meanwhile, 21% completely disagreed, and another 21% disagreed more than they agreed. On the other hand, 19% agreed, 3% completely agreed, and 8% agreed more than they disagreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean = 2.85, SD = 1.49.

Regarding respondents' agreement with the statement "I think there are benefits that employees in my organization should not have," the largest percentage (38%) agreed, followed by 28% who completely agreed and 9% who agreed more than they disagreed. In contrast, 10% disagreed, 3% completely disagreed, and 13% disagreed more than they agreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean $\pm$ SD = 2.47 $\pm$ 1.42.

Respondents' Satisfaction with Their Relationship with Their Superior

Regarding the statement "My superior is competent enough for the job he/she does," 32% disagreed, 18% completely disagreed, and 11% slightly disagreed. Meanwhile, 20% agreed, 9% completely agreed, and 11% slightly agreed.

For the statement "I think my superior is not fair to me," 36% disagreed, 27% completely

disagreed, and 9% slightly disagreed. On the other hand, 13% agreed, 9% completely agreed, and 11% slightly agreed. The mean score for this statement was 4.40, SD = 1.53.

Regarding the statement "My supervisor is little interested in the feelings of his employees," the largest percentage of respondents disagreed, with 32% disagreeing, 18% completely disagreeing, and 11% disagreeing more than agreeing. Conversely, 20% agreed, 9% completely agreed, and 11% agreed more than they disagreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean $\pm$ SD = 3.89 $\pm$ 1.65.

Respondents' Satisfaction with Relationships with Colleagues

Regarding relationships with colleagues, 30% agreed more than disagreed with the statement "I like the people I work with," while 25% agreed and 15% completely agreed. Meanwhile, 11% disagreed, 4% completely disagreed, and 15% slightly disagreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 4.08, SD = 1.34.

Regarding respondents' agreement with the statement "I think communication in my organization is good" 23% agreed, 11% completely agreed, and 17% agreed more than they disagreed. On the other hand, 19% disagreed, 7% completely disagreed, while

23% disagreed more than they agreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean = 3.63, SD = 1.46.

Regarding the statement "I think I have to work harder at work because my coworkers are not capable enough" the highest percentage of respondents (31%) disagreed more than they agreed, 28% disagreed, and 14% completely disagreed. Conversely, 10% agreed, 11% completely agreed, and 7% agreed more than they disagreed. The average agreement rating on a scale from 1 to 6 was Mean $\pm$ SD = 3.99 $\pm$ 1.51.

For the statement "I enjoy working with my colleagues," 32% disagreed, 8% completely disagreed, and 22% slightly disagreed. Meanwhile, 20% agreed, 12% completely agreed, and 7% slightly agreed. The mean agreement score for this statement was 3.35, SD = 1.56.

Average Values of Motivation and Satisfaction by Domain

When analyzing the results across different domains used to measure motivation and satisfaction, the findings indicate that respondents were least satisfied with rewards and incentives at work and benefits and the opportunities for advancement at work. However, the most positive ratings were observed in the domain of relationships with superiors and colleagues at work (Table 1).

Table 1. Average scores of employee motivation and satisfaction (N=104)

Domain of Employee Satisfaction	Mean	SD
Rewards and incentives at work	3,03	0,94
Benefits	2,47	1,42
Relationship with their superiors	4,11	1,21
Opportunities for advancement at work	3,48	1,49
Relationship with colleagues at work	3,80	1,42

Discussion

Our study points out that the highest employee satisfaction ratings were found for relationships with their superiors and colleagues at work. Meanwhile, rewards and incentives at work and benefits and the opportunities for advancement at work were rated relatively low.

Employee motivation and job satisfaction are defined as the pleasant feelings that arise from the perception that one's job fulfills or enables the fulfillment of important personal values. Examining these aspects is one of the most complex and intricate topics in human resources management. In healthcare, motivation and job satisfaction significantly impact the quality and efficiency of work, ultimately affecting patients and the entire healthcare system.

The professional motivation and job satisfaction of healthcare workers are directly linked to interpersonal relationships, organizational dynamics, and absenteeism. It is crucial for nurses, technicians, and other healthcare professionals to feel satisfied in their workplace. This benefits not only the workers themselves but also their colleagues, patients, family members, and the broader community. Employees who are motivated and satisfied with their jobs—and who are willing to learn and grow—form the foundation of a high-quality work environment. A satisfied worker is a productive worker¹³. Moreover, leadership styles in nursing influence nurses' well-being at work and the quality of care provided to patients¹⁴.

Analysis of Results

The analysis reveals that most respondents are female. Despite historical gender biases in nursing, the number of male workers in the profession is steadily increasing¹⁵.

Regarding job satisfaction with rewards and incentives, respondents gave relatively low average score of 3,03 on a scale of 1 to 6. This finding aligns with numerous previous studies¹⁶⁻¹⁸. However, assessing the impact of rewards and incentives on job satisfaction requires an understanding of the broader social and economic context. While salary may not be the primary motivator for some employees, its impact on quality of life and job

satisfaction cannot be overlooked. Psychologically, salary serves not only as a means of survival but also as recognition of an employee's skills and contributions. Individuals with low incomes tend to face financial constraints that limit their access to quality food, healthcare, clothing, transportation, education, and social activities. Research supports these observations^{19,20}.

A study by Cowin on nurse motivation and job satisfaction in Austria found that, although nurses did not rank salary as their top concern, they still considered it the least satisfactory aspect of their job due to discrepancies between pay and education levels²¹.

Respondents rated their satisfaction with their relationships with superiors and colleagues at work indicated relatively high level of satisfaction (4,11 and 3,80, respectively). However, satisfaction with opportunities for career advancement was low, with an average score of 3.48 out of 6. This may be related to the fact that, in Montenegro, nursing degrees are not yet recognized or valued as they should be.

Regarding benefits at work, respondents expressed relatively low level of satisfaction, with an average rating of 2.47 out of 6. Dissatisfaction was also reported concerning rewards and incentives at work.

Consistent with the findings of Lorber and Savič²², the most significant factors affecting motivation and satisfaction among healthcare workers are relationships with colleagues, salary, recognition from superiors, opportunities for career advancement, and training prospects²³⁻²⁴. Studies also show that direct and indirect communication between nurses affects the quality of healthcare provided²⁵.

A meta-analysis by Niskala et al.²⁶ suggests that healthcare organizations and head nurse managers should implement strategies to enhance employee motivation, especially given the global decline in the nursing workforce²⁷⁻²⁸. Ineffective communication in healthcare settings can contribute to burnout, leading to significant financial and emotional costs for organizations, health insurance providers, and individual employees²⁹⁻³⁰.

Recommendations

The study's findings indicate that most respondents report negative experiences related to motivation and job satisfaction. To address these issues, healthcare management should implement specific measures to improve working conditions at the Clinical Center of Montenegro. Recommended strategies include:

- Developing a feedback system for employee satisfaction assessments: Establishing regular feedback mechanisms can help identify key factors influencing job satisfaction and allow for ongoing improvements.
- Enhancing leadership quality: Effective leadership is essential for a well-organized workplace and employee satisfaction. Healthcare organizations should prioritize selecting capable leaders.
- Implementing professional development and education plans: Investing in continuous training and education ensures that employees acquire new skills and enhances overall work quality.
- Improving internal communication: Strengthening communication between employees and between staff and superiors is essential for workplace productivity, motivation, and satisfaction.
- Establishing reward and recognition programs: Recognizing employees' efforts through rewards such as public acknowledgment, financial incentives, extra leave, or inclusion in decision-making can significantly boost morale.
- Introducing team-building strategies: Formal and informal gatherings can foster stronger relationships among employees, improving collaboration and workplace harmony.
- Optimizing work schedules and shift organization: Ensuring fair and manageable work schedules is critical for both healthcare efficiency and employee well-being, particularly in high-stress environments.

By implementing these strategies, healthcare institutions can improve job satisfaction, enhance motivation, and create a more productive and supportive work environment.

Conclusion

Apart from relationships with their superiors and colleagues at work, the average satisfaction scores for all other key factors influencing employee motivation were relatively low. Since this could impact efficiency, productivity, and interactions with patients and their families, it is essential to take measures to enhance employee satisfaction.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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