

# Motivational Factors Among Nurses at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kaunas Hospital

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## Introduction

In the contemporary healthcare system, nurses' motivation is a critical factor in ensuring service quality and staff retention within the profession. According to Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, employee satisfaction is determined by hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators. This study analyzes the motivational characteristics of nurses working at LSMU Kaunas hospital in order to determine the influence of different variables on overall job satisfaction (which reached 50.5 points in this study).

The results reveal that financial compensation (21.33 points) remains the dominant motivator, surpassing job content (20 points) and interpersonal relationships (18.9 points). Although career opportunities and increased responsibility are evaluated positively, their relative impact on motivation is lower. Therefore, it is essential to understand how to balance economic incentives with the emotional work environment and meaningful job content [1].

## Methodology

The primary research instrument was a standardized questionnaire developed in accordance with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, supplemented by an author-designed questionnaire. The study involved nurses working at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kaunas Hospital (Hipodromo St. 13 and Josvainių St. 2). A total of 143 nurses participated in the study, with a response rate of 99.1%. Approval for the study was obtained from the Bioethics Center of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (No. BEC2-797, 2024-06-17).

## Results

According to the study data, the overall job satisfaction of nurses reached 50.5 points. The findings indicate that the following factors have the strongest influence on motivation:

- **Financial compensation (21.33 points):** Identified as the most significant factor. This confirms that, in the current economic context, adequate remuneration remains the primary indicator of security and recognition.
- **Job content (20 points):** Nurses highly value the meaningfulness of their work and the opportunity to provide direct assistance to patients.
- **Interpersonal relationships (18.9 points):** Collegial support and effective team communication function as protective factors against burnout.

A smaller, yet still significant, influence was observed for increased responsibility (15.33 points) and career opportunities (13.58 points). The results suggest that, at present, nurses prioritize stability and a positive workplace microclimate over vertical career advancement [2].

## • Hierarchy of Nurses' Motivational Factors

The study revealed that slightly more than half (50.5%) of respondents consider nursing to be interesting and enjoyable work; however, only 1.1% view it as an opportunity for professional growth. When analyzing the motivational profile according to Frederick Herzberg's scales, it was found that the strongest motivators are economic factors (21.33 points) and job content (20 points). The least influential factors were responsibility (15.33 points) and career prospects (13.58 points).

When evaluating specific measures, nurses identified indirect material incentives (4.04 points) as the most important, particularly compensation for transportation expenses (4.08 points), although their implementation in the workplace was rated low (2.77 points). Among non-material measures, priority was given to flexible vacation planning (4.19 points) and recognition from supervisors (4.00 points) [3].

**Career Prospects and Loyalty**

A critical trend was identified: only 2% of respondents had never considered changing jobs. The remaining participants reported thinking about it at least sometimes (34%), often (27%), or very often (25%). The most important factors retaining nurses in their current workplace were a flexible work schedule (3.88 points) and the perception that their work is important to the institution (3.81 points). Career aspirations are most strongly encouraged by recognition from colleagues and supervisors (3.73 points) as well as the opportunity for professional self-realization without changing the workplace (horizontal career) (3.66 points) [4].

**Relationship Between Motivation and Sociodemographic Indicators**

Spearman’s correlation analysis (see table below) revealed statistically significant relationships ( $p < 0.05$ ):

- **Education:** Positively correlated with economic factors ( $r = 0.512$ ) and the importance of job content ( $r = 0.220$ ). This indicates that professionals with higher education are more oriented toward financial compensation and professional self-expression. In contrast, nurses with lower levels of education place greater importance on social factors, such as relationships with supervisors ( $r = -0.343$ ) and career aspirations ( $r = -0.490$ ).
- **Length of service within the institution:** As tenure increases, so does the need for recognition ( $r = 0.219$ ) and high-quality relationships with supervisors ( $r = 0.279$ ). This confirms that long-term employees place greater value on emotional connection with the organization.
- **Age:** For younger nurses, the employer’s motivation system is more significant compared to their older colleagues ( $r = -0.211$ ).

**Summary of Correlations (Key Indicators)**

Factor	Education (r)	Length of Service (r)	Age (r)
Economic factors	0.512*	-0.009	-0.033
Relationship with supervisor	-0.343*	0.279*	0.093
Career	-0.490*	0.168	0.086
Microclimate	0.015	-0.213*	-0.156

\*Statistical significance at  $p < 0.05$

**Discussion**

The results of our study, showing that financial compensation (21.33 points) is the most important motivator, partially coincide with data from other Lithuanian authors but differ from some Western European studies.

**The Financial Aspect and the “Lithuanian Phenomenon”**

Although the scientific literature states that nurses represent an altruistic profession, where helping others is the primary value, your study (compensation – 21.33 points) and the work of other Lithuanian researchers (11) indicate that nursing staff in Lithuania experience significant dissonance between responsibility and remuneration. This explains why as many as 98% of respondents in your study consider changing jobs—whereas in Western Europe this indicator fluctuates around 20–30% (81).

**The Phenomenon of Career Opportunity Evaluation**

The study results, showing that career opportunities received the lowest score (13.58), reveal a specific attitude of nurses towards professional growth. It can be assumed that nurses at LSMU Kau-nas hospital prioritize stability and professional security over vertical career advancement (managerial positions).

- **Age factor:** The average age of respondents (49.36 years) indicates that the majority of staff are in the later stage of professional maturity. At this stage, employees tend to value work–life balance and flexible scheduling more than new challenges or positions of authority.
- **Horizontal career:** The results show that nurses place greater value on self-realization without changing their workplace (e.g., becoming specialists in a particular field). This suggests that professional identity in nursing is closely linked to direct patient care, while administrative responsibility is often perceived as additional stress that does not compensate for motivational benefits.

**The Role of the Manager**

The relationship identified in your study between length of service within the institution and the need for recognition ( $r = 0.219$ ), as well as relationships with the supervisor, is consistent with research (18, 51) stating that "nurses join an institution but leave a manager." Your findings confirm that for long-tenured employees, emotional security and appreciation from their supervisor are more important than new authorities or responsibilities.

**Interpersonal Relationships as the “Emotional Glue”**

One of the strongest findings of the study is the high evaluation of interpersonal relationships (18.9 points). This allows us to conclude that collaboration within the nursing team functions as the primary "emotional glue" that holds the team together even in the presence of unfavorable hygiene factors (e.g., heavy workload).

- **Psychological resilience:** Nursing work involves a high psycho-emotional burden; therefore, collegial support becomes an essential tool for burnout prevention. High-quality relationships with colleagues create a safe environment where nurses can share responsibility and emotional strain.
- **Relationship with the supervisor:** The study confirmed that good relationships with the immediate supervisor directly correlate with nurses’ loyalty. In this context, the manager is not merely an administrator but a cultivator of the emotional ecosystem, whose demonstrated recognition (4.00 points) helps maintain team cohesion.

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

Nurses’ motivation is complex although money is important, financial compensation alone is not sufficient without a positive work microclimate and meaningful job content. The study revealed that nurses’ motivation is primarily determined by economic factors related to salary and social factors related to job content and relationships with colleagues.

Job content and good relationships with colleagues were rated as more important than career opportunities and the assignment of additional responsibilities. An important component of

motivation also includes recognition from managers and colleagues, participation in decision-making, and a flexible work schedule.

These results partially confirm Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, but also demonstrate that not only motivating factors but hygiene factors as well have a significant impact on nurses' motivation.

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