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Review

Effects of Human Resources Motivation on the Development of Healthcare Institutions

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Abstract: This paper deals with the topic of employee motivation in the healthcare system and its impact on the success of the functioning of healthcare institutions. The importance of motivation as a key factor for increasing productivity, satisfaction and loyalty of employees was highlighted. The paper combines a theoretical approach to motivation and human resource management with practical analysis. The survey included 91 employees and was conducted using McClelland's motivation test. Special attention is paid to differences in motives in relation to gender, age, education and work status. The results show that the motive of success is dominant, while the motives of belonging and power are less prevalent. Based on the obtained data, conclusions were drawn about the degree of motivation and its connection with theoretical models. Key motivational factors were identified and specific measures for their improvement were proposed. The proposals relate to strengthening team cooperation, recognizing work results and personalizing access to employees. The goal of the work is to contribute to the improvement of the motivational strategy and more efficient management of human resources in the public sector.

Keywords: *Human resources; motivation, health institutions; effects.*

1. Introduction

The performance of healthcare institutions is of considerable importance not only from the perspective of management theory but, above all, for making strategically important decisions concerning the future functioning and development of the new, reformed healthcare system in Serbia [22].

Given the importance of motivation in the contemporary business environment, employee motivation in the workplace, as well as its impact on and relationship with job performance, has attracted considerable attention. Motivation is one of the key factors in human resource management and directly influences employee efficiency and productivity. In a dynamic and competitive business environment, managers increasingly recognize that satisfied and motivated employees represent one of the most valuable resources of any organization. Consequently, a growing number of managers are focusing not only on the technical aspects of work but also on the psychological and social factors that influence employee behavior [17].

Since all human behavior is driven by particular motives and directed toward specific goals, motivation can, in the broadest sense, be defined as everything that prompts individuals to take

action [6]. Understanding employees' motives and underlying drivers is essential for building a stable, effective, and successful workforce. A satisfied employee not only performs more effectively but also contributes positively to team dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and overall organizational effectiveness. This raises an important question: how does an individual's motivation affect the team in which they work, and how can shared motivation contribute to the achievement of common goals? Addressing these questions is of particular importance to managers seeking to enhance employee performance and facilitate the attainment of both individual and organizational objectives [17].

Motives constitute the fundamental driving forces underlying human behavior. They direct individuals' behavior toward particular courses of action and sustain their efforts until the desired goals are achieved. Throughout the development of management theory and practice, one question has consistently remained at the forefront: what motivates individuals to work, invest effort, and remain committed to the tasks they perform? Identifying the factors that drive employee behavior is a fundamental prerequisite for developing effective motivational strategies within organizations [17]. This study examines the fundamental mechanisms of motivation, as well as the psychological and social needs that encourage employees to remain engaged, productive, and committed to their organizations.

Human resource management (HRM) represents a critical function of contemporary organizations, focusing on attracting, developing, retaining, and advancing employees as one of the organization's most valuable resources. Its primary purpose is to ensure an effective alignment between employees' needs and organizational objectives. Within this context, employee motivation occupies a central position, as it directly influences employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction. Effective HRM strategies enable managers to identify employees' dominant motivational drivers and, accordingly, tailor their approaches to human capital development. The relationship between human resource management and employee motivation is reflected in the creation of a supportive and stimulating work environment in which employees develop a sense of belonging, have opportunities for professional growth and advancement, and are able to pursue their personal goals. Therefore, understanding and effectively managing employee motivation is of fundamental importance for the successful implementation of contemporary human resource management practices [34].

The empirical part of this study investigates employee motivation in healthcare institutions using McClelland's Motivation Test [17]. Particular attention is paid to differences in motivational needs according to gender, age, and educational level in order to identify the characteristics of different groups of employees. Based on the research findings, the level of employee motivation and its relationship with established theories of motivation are analysed, together with the key motivational factors influencing job satisfaction and work engagement.

Based on the obtained results, recommendations are proposed for improving employee motivation in healthcare institutions. These recommendations include both short-term and long-term measures that management can implement to enhance the organizational climate, improve employee performance, and contribute to the achievement of healthcare institution objectives.

2. Study Explanation

The study was conducted with the aim of identifying patterns of workplace motivation and determining the most significant motivational drivers among employees. The research sought to examine potential differences in the expression and influence of motivational factors according to employees' gender, job position, educational level, age, and supervisory responsibilities.

The research findings provide an overview of the current state of employee motivation and offer recommendations for effectively addressing issues such as employee dissatisfaction and declining motivation. The participants were selected randomly, and during the analysis, their respective work sectors were identified. The study included 182 employees and was conducted directly at their workplaces. The participants demonstrated a willingness to take part in the research and expressed interest in both their individual results and the overall findings.

The study employed McClelland's Motivation Test to identify the dominant motivational needs of employees. This instrument enables the assessment of the factors that motivate employees in the workplace. For each statement, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which it reflected their attitudes and behavior within their current work environment. Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 indicated strongly agree.

The questionnaire measures the three fundamental motivational needs proposed by McClelland: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power.

3. The Importance of Human Resource Management in Healthcare Institutions

Developing appropriate knowledge and skills in human resource management (HRM) is essential for achieving meaningful improvements in the healthcare system and enhancing its overall performance and functionality. Effective human resource management encompasses workforce planning, recruitment and selection, training, performance evaluation, and employee motivation, all of which are vital for the efficient operation of hospitals and primary healthcare centers [23].

Healthcare institutions face numerous challenges, including workforce shortages, occupational stress, high levels of burnout, and the migration of healthcare professionals. Consequently, human resource management has become a strategic priority within healthcare organizations [40]. The implementation of HRM strategies enables the optimal allocation of personnel, timely professional training, and continuous employee support, thereby reducing staff turnover and improving the quality of healthcare services [14].

Through effective human resource management, healthcare institutions can strengthen interpersonal relationships, communication, and teamwork, which are essential in multidisciplinary healthcare environments. Investment in employees' professional development and continuing education enhances their competencies, leading to improved treatment outcomes and greater patient safety [31]. In addition, HRM facilitates the monitoring of employees' satisfaction and the development of motivational strategies, which increases employees' engagement while reducing occupational stress.

The role of HR managers in healthcare also includes implementing performance appraisal systems, ensuring transparency in promotion procedures, and establishing fair reward and recognition systems. These practices contribute to organizational justice and enhance employee morale. Furthermore, effective HRM enables healthcare institutions to adapt to changes in healthcare policies, digital transformation, and evolving patient expectations. It also strengthens organizational resilience by supporting resource reallocation and crisis planning during public health emergencies, such as pandemics [10].

The contemporary approach to human resource management in healthcare is based on strategic thinking, recognizing employees as the most valuable organizational asset and a key determinant of organizational competitiveness and long-term sustainability. Employee motivation, well-being, and job satisfaction have a direct impact on the quality of healthcare services and the reputation of healthcare institutions. Organizations that adopt a systematic approach to human resource management demonstrate higher standards of professional ethics, fewer workplace errors, and greater patient trust.

In this context, the importance of human resource management in healthcare is multidimensional, encompassing improved work organization, increased efficiency and effectiveness, protection of employee well-being, and the achievement of higher standards of healthcare delivery. Investment in human capital should be regarded not as an expense but as a strategic investment in the future of the healthcare system. Without a professional and well-organized human resource management function, healthcare institutions cannot fully realize their potential to provide high-quality healthcare services.

4. The Role of the Human Resource Manager

In today's business environment, characterized by rapid change, globalization, and technological advancement, the role of the human resource (HR) manager has become increasingly important. HR managers are no longer merely administrative personnel responsible for maintaining employee records; instead, they have evolved into strategic partners who directly contribute to organizational performance and long-term success [1]. Their responsibilities include workforce planning, recruitment and selection, talent development and retention, as well as fostering employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational culture.

One of the primary responsibilities of HR managers is workforce planning, which involves ensuring that the organization has the appropriate number of employees with the required knowledge, skills, and competencies at the right time and in the right positions. This function is of strategic importance because it contributes to organizational efficiency, cost reduction, and the achievement of a sustainable competitive advantage. As part of this process, HR managers work closely with department managers to identify current and future staffing needs while considering planned projects, employee turnover, retirements, organizational expansion, and other relevant factors.

In addition, HR managers analyse labor market conditions to assess the availability of qualified personnel and the level of competition for attracting and retaining talent. Organizational strategies, growth objectives, and financial resources are also taken into account. Workforce planning further includes evaluating existing internal resources, employee competencies, development potential, and opportunities for internal mobility and professional training [7].

HR managers also play a central role in the recruitment and selection process by ensuring that individuals whose knowledge, skills, competencies, and personal values align with organizational objectives are hired. Their responsibilities include preparing job advertisements, organizing interviews, administering psychological assessments when appropriate, and evaluating candidates' compatibility with the organization's culture and values [8].

Following recruitment, HR managers oversee employee training and development, which represent continuous processes aimed at enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies. They design training programs, coordinate educational activities, maintain records of professional development, and evaluate training outcomes. Furthermore, HR managers contribute to career planning and succession management for key organizational positions [24].

One of the most significant dimensions of human resource management is employee motivation. HR managers must understand the diverse motivational needs of employees and develop strategies that foster productivity, engagement, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. To achieve these objectives, they implement both financial and non-financial reward systems, conduct performance evaluations, and establish employee recognition programs [11, 30].

HR managers are also responsible for developing and maintaining a positive organizational culture characterized by mutual respect, open communication, collaboration, and ethical behavior. Organizational culture has a direct influence on employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and staff retention.

Another increasingly important responsibility of HR managers is diversity management. As organizations become more diverse in terms of culture, age, gender, and abilities, HR managers play a critical role in creating inclusive workplaces. They develop and implement policies that prevent discrimination and promote equal opportunities for all employees [4].

Beyond operational responsibilities, HR managers actively participate in strategic decision-making. They analyse organizational structures, recommend improvements to work processes, initiate organizational restructuring projects, and collaborate with senior management to achieve long-term strategic objectives. In this capacity, HR managers serve as strategic partners and organizational advisors [35]. Their responsibilities also include conflict management, dispute resolution, and the administration of disciplinary procedures. They are expected to promote constructive communication, mediation, and the alignment of interests between employees and management.

Within healthcare institutions, HR managers assume additional responsibilities because they operate in environments characterized by high levels of stress, demanding workloads, and situations in which errors may have serious consequences. In such settings, HR managers must pay particular attention to employee mental health, workplace well-being, organizational climate, and work–life balance.

Given these diverse responsibilities, HR managers must be proactive, adaptable, well-informed, and committed to the highest ethical standards. Their role has evolved from a primarily operational function to a strategic one that requires anticipating environmental changes and implementing initiatives that support the organization's long-term growth and sustainability. This includes continuously monitoring trends such as the digitalization of HR processes, the implementation of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS), automation of recruitment and selection procedures, the use of people analytics for monitoring employee performance and development, and the integration of artificial intelligence into recruitment, training, and talent management processes [20].

Furthermore, HR managers must recognize the growing importance of flexible work arrangements—including remote work, hybrid work models, and flexible working hours—which have become increasingly common, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. They must also understand and effectively manage generational diversity within the workforce, including Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, as each generation demonstrates distinct values, communication styles, work preferences, and expectations regarding career development and motivation [26].

Given this diversity, HR managers are expected to develop tailored strategies that promote employee engagement, satisfaction, and long-term organizational commitment. They must also uphold high ethical standards by protecting employee privacy, ensuring fairness and transparency in recruitment, promotion, and reward systems, and fostering a culture of trust, integrity, and mutual respect throughout the organization [3].

An effective HR manager is one who not only understands employees' needs and organizational objectives but is also capable of integrating them through well-designed HR policies, modern management tools, and strategic initiatives that generate sustainable value for both employees and the organization as a whole [3].

In light of the above, the HR manager represents a key figure in modern organizations. The role is multidimensional and interdisciplinary, requiring a combination of strategic thinking, interpersonal competence, organizational expertise, and an understanding of human behavior. The success of HR managers is reflected in their ability to align employee needs with organizational goals, maintain high levels of motivation, retain talented employees, and enhance organizational effectiveness. Organizations that recognize the strategic importance of this role typically achieve greater organizational stability, higher employee satisfaction, and a stronger competitive position in the marketplace [3].

5. Motivation and Productivity

Many people mistakenly believe that motivation is an innate characteristic—that some individuals naturally possess it while others do not. In practice, inexperienced managers often perceive employees who appear to lack motivation as lazy, implying that such individuals are inherently unmotivated. However, contemporary research has demonstrated that this assumption is inaccurate and that employee motivation is influenced by numerous factors [30].

Motivation is defined as the process of initiating, directing, and sustaining human behavior toward the achievement of specific goals. The fundamental components of this process are needs, drives, and rewards. A need represents a state of internal deficiency that creates psychological or physiological tension. A drive is the action through which an individual attempts to reduce this tension, while a reward represents the fulfillment of the need and the elimination of the resulting tension [29].

Individuals with high levels of motivation are generally willing to perform their work efficiently and effectively, thereby increasing productivity, organizational revenue, and cost savings while

simultaneously enhancing satisfaction among both employees and employers. Conversely, employees with low motivation often work less efficiently, pay less attention to productivity, and may ultimately contribute to financial losses for the organization. Low motivation may result from a lack of clear direction or purpose, whereas establishing well-defined goals can help overcome motivational deficiencies [28].

Motives and motivation are fundamental psychological constructs with considerable importance in management. Success in any professional field depends not only on an individual's abilities, available resources, and working conditions but also on motivation. Together, these factors shape employee behavior and determine work performance [20].

For managers, maintaining employee motivation is essential because it serves as a mechanism for aligning individual and organizational interests. Sustaining motivation requires continuous attention and periodic reinforcement. Organizations should create working conditions that are supportive, inspiring, and capable of satisfying employees' needs while simultaneously facilitating the achievement of organizational goals and strategic objectives [37].

Consequently, it is important to understand which motivational techniques are most effective, under what circumstances they should be applied, and how they contribute to the development of an effective motivational system. Research in this area is particularly valuable when it identifies and explains the broad range of factors influencing work motivation. Such studies contribute by identifying and eliminating factors that negatively affect employee performance, thereby improving organizational efficiency and business outcomes [7].

Improved work efficiency also has broader social significance. Organizations that operate more efficiently are better able to fulfill their responsibilities toward society while reducing the proportion of underperforming employees. Reduced productivity should not be viewed solely as an employee-related issue but also as a reflection of managerial effectiveness and, ultimately, of organizational and societal performance as a whole [12].

Employee motivation is one of the fundamental prerequisites for organizational success. Therefore, motivational systems should be continuously evaluated and improved. Well-motivated employees understand what is expected of them and how to achieve organizational objectives efficiently and effectively, benefiting both the organization and themselves through appropriate rewards for their efforts [21].

A wide range of short-term and long-term measures, involving different levels of financial investment, can directly or indirectly influence labor productivity. Among these measures, motivation is widely recognized as one of the most effective. Research in psychology and related disciplines has shown that individuals differ in the way they respond to various motivational incentives. These findings have encouraged successful managers to increasingly incorporate motivational strategies into their efforts to improve employee productivity [18].

Although the impact of motivation on productivity is sometimes disputable, the question arises as to the actual effect of motivation compared with other measures, that is, whether motivating employees is a measure with a significant or only a minor impact on productivity [17]. Employee career choices, work engagement, and commitment largely depend on the type, intensity, and stability of motivational factors. As noted in the literature, "the contribution of motivation to work productivity is undoubtedly greater than that of other subjective factors, primarily because motivation plays a significant role in the development of abilities as well as in the acquisition of knowledge and skills" [36].

Employees achieve high levels of productivity only when their abilities, knowledge, and motivation are aligned with one another and with the requirements of their job. These determinants of work performance are dynamic rather than static, evolving continuously over time. Among positively motivated employees, the development of desirable competencies is typically more pronounced because motivation enhances not only productivity but also learning and professional development [27].

The general model describing the relationship between motivation and performance consists of input and output factors. Input factors include employees' needs and abilities. Individual needs develop through the process of socialization; however, identical needs may be satisfied through

different means. When selecting an appropriate motivational strategy, managers should consider both employee capabilities and managerial competencies. Organizations may recruit highly capable individuals and invest in their professional development, yet this alone does not guarantee that organizational expectations will be met. What is often missing is motivation—the driving force that enables employees to realize their full potential. In other words, job performance is determined by the interaction between ability and motivation [13].

Work activities vary considerably, and the same individual may perform more successfully in some tasks than in others depending on their abilities [9]. Work groups generally establish performance norms that define acceptable levels of output. These group norms exert the greatest influence on individuals whose personal values closely resemble those of the group and on employees for whom group acceptance is particularly important [16].

Technological processes differ substantially across organizations and even among departments within the same organization. Job tasks may therefore be classified according to the competencies required and the technological solutions involved in their execution. Research indicates that employees engaged in complex tasks generally demonstrate higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction because such work fulfills higher-order psychological needs. In addition, employees whose primary concern is job security often perform better and experience greater satisfaction in structured work environments with clearly defined responsibilities [9].

Managers can improve employee performance by introducing technological innovations or by modifying workforce composition. Performance may also be enhanced by strengthening individual motivation, recognizing that human resources represent the organization's most important input factor [16].

Output factors are evaluated through employee performance and job satisfaction. Performance is typically assessed using quantitative and qualitative indicators, complemented by managerial evaluations. Work outcomes may lead to either satisfaction or dissatisfaction among employees. When employees perceive their tasks as meaningful and important, successful task completion generates job satisfaction, which should be reinforced through appropriate rewards such as bonuses, financial incentives, salary increases, or promotions [13].

Employees' satisfaction ultimately depends on the extent to which job characteristics correspond to their personal values and standards, as well as on whether they perceive the rewards received for high-quality performance as fair and appropriate [13].

6. Motivators and Demotivators in the Workplace

Although identifying the factors that motivate employees is important, it is equally essential to recognize those that have a demotivating effect, as they can undermine even the most carefully designed motivational strategies [11]. For example, when a manager publicly criticizes an employee or points out a mistake in an aggressive or raised tone, the most common consequences are reduced motivation, feelings of humiliation, and diminished trust in management [1]. Some managers mistakenly believe that public criticism discourages others from repeating the same mistake; however, such practices generally create an atmosphere of fear and discomfort rather than improving performance [30].

Conversely, failing to acknowledge good performance is also a powerful demotivating factor. When managers do not recognize or praise work that has been performed successfully—whether publicly or privately—employees may begin to question whether their efforts are noticed or valued, reducing their willingness to maintain high levels of performance [9]. Another negative managerial practice occurs when managers encourage employee participation in decision-making by requesting opinions or suggestions but subsequently ignore those contributions or fail to provide feedback. Such behavior creates a sense of distrust and deception, ultimately weakening employee motivation over the long term [19]. Similar negative effects arise when managers arrive late to meetings, fail to respond to emails, appear disengaged, or focus on other activities while employees are speaking. In these situations, employees often perceive a lack of respect from their supervisors, which directly reduces motivation and organizational commitment [1].

Taking credit for employees' achievements represents a serious ethical violation that extends beyond a simple demotivating factor; it constitutes an abuse of managerial authority. Equally harmful is the practice of favoritism, as it conveys the message that employee performance, effort, and competence are less important than personal relationships or "factor X" [11]. Such practices erode trust, encourage passivity, and contribute to increased employee turnover.

Another common source of demotivation is the assignment of unrealistic goals or excessively short deadlines. When employees recognize that assigned tasks cannot reasonably be completed within the available time, they often lose enthusiasm and feel undervalued [30]. In many cases, managers do not intentionally impose unrealistic demands but simply underestimate the complexity of the work, a problem that can often be addressed through open and constructive communication.

Information asymmetry further contributes to employee demotivation. Employees cannot be expected to remain motivated if they do not receive the information necessary to perform their jobs effectively. Providing information alone is insufficient; managers should also explain the rationale behind organizational decisions so that employees understand the broader context and organizational objectives [9]. Nevertheless, some managers avoid providing such explanations because they fear that doing so may undermine their authority or be perceived as a sign of weakness [19].

Employees who are exposed to pressure from clients or other stakeholders without receiving adequate managerial support frequently become passive and limit themselves to "performing only the tasks explicitly assigned to them", avoiding initiative. Such behavior often reflects a perception that they are neither protected nor sufficiently valued by the organization [1]. Finally, investment in employee education and professional development should be strategically planned and supported with adequate organizational resources. When employees are expected to finance their own training and attend educational programs during their personal time, the organization conveys the impression that it is not genuinely committed to their professional growth [30]. Under such circumstances, employees are more likely to seek better employment opportunities elsewhere, taking with them valuable knowledge and expertise that the organization loses as a consequence of ineffective human resource and motivational practices.

7. Research on Employee Motivation in Healthcare Institutions

Demographic characteristics of the respondents: The study on workplace motivation was conducted in several healthcare institutions. Table 1 presents the demographic structure of the sample according to gender. A total of 182 healthcare professionals participated in the study, including 120 women (66%) and 62 men (34%).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender.

Gender	Number of respondents	%
Male	62	34
Female	120	66
Total	**182**	**100**

Distribution of respondents according to educational level: Table 2 presents the educational profile of the respondents. Sixty respondents (33%) had completed secondary vocational education, representing approximately one-third of the workforce included in the study. Thirty respondents (17%) held a college degree. The largest proportion of respondents had completed a university degree, comprising 70 participants (38%), making this the most represented educational category. Twenty respondents (11%) held a master's degree, while two respondents (1%) had obtained a doctoral degree (PhD).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by educational level.

Educational level	Number of respondents	%
Secondary vocational education	60	33
College degree	30	17
Bachelor's degree	70	38
Master's degree	20	11
Doctoral degree (PhD)	2	1
Total	**182**	**100**

Distribution of respondents by age group: Table 3 presents the age distribution of the respondents. The study included 30 healthcare professionals (17%) younger than 25 years of age and 24 respondents (13%) aged between 26 and 35 years.

The largest proportion of respondents belonged to the 36–45 years age group, comprising 60 participants (33%). Employees in the older age categories accounted for 37% of the total sample, with 46 respondents (25%) aged between 46 and 55 years, while 22 respondents (12%) were aged 56 years or older and were approaching retirement.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by age.

Age group	Number of respondents	%
Up to 25 years	30	17
26-35 years	24	13
36-45 years	60	33
46-55 years	46	25
56 years and above	22	12
Total	**182**	**100**

8. Results of McClelland's Motivation Test

The following section presents the results of McClelland's Motivation Test administered to a sample of 182 respondents in order to identify their dominant motivational needs. The instrument assesses the three fundamental motivational needs proposed by McClelland: the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power. The dominant motivational need identified among the respondents is presented below.

Table 4. Overall distribution of dominant motivational needs.

Motivation	Number of respondents	%
Achievement	144	79
Power	2	1
Affiliation	22	12
Equal scores	14	8
Total	**182**	**100**

Table 4 shows that 144 of the 182 respondents (79%) identified the need for achievement as their dominant motivational need. Respondents completed the questionnaire by rating each statement on a five-point scale without knowing which statements corresponded to the individual motivational dimensions.

The second most prevalent motivational need was the need for affiliation, identified as dominant by 22 respondents (12%). By contrast, the need for power was identified as the dominant motive by only 2 respondents (1%). In 14 cases (8%), respondents obtained identical scores across the three

motivational dimensions, indicating that achievement, affiliation, and power were equally important motivational drivers.

Table 5. Distribution of dominant motivational needs by gender.

Motivation / gender	Male	Female	Total
Achievement	27%	52%	79%
Affiliation	5%	7%	12%
Power	0%	1%	1%
Equal scores	2%	6%	8%
Total	**34%**	**66%**	**100%**

As shown in Table 5, the need for achievement was the predominant motivational factor among employees, accounting for 79% of all respondents. Within this group, 27% were men and 52% were women. These findings indicate that, regardless of gender, most employees are primarily motivated by achieving results, professional development, and opportunities for career advancement. Such a strong orientation toward achievement contributes to a positive organizational climate by encouraging continuous learning, professional growth, and higher productivity, all of which are essential for organizational development.

The need for affiliation was identified as the dominant motive by 12% of respondents, including 5% of men and 7% of women. This distribution suggests that female employees place somewhat greater emphasis on positive interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and a sense of belonging within the workplace. These findings are important for management, as they indicate that fostering a supportive and collaborative work environment—particularly for female employees—may enhance organizational commitment and employee loyalty.

The need for power was the least frequently reported dominant motivational need, accounting for only 1% of respondents, all of whom were women. None of the male respondents identified power as their primary motivational driver. The very low prevalence of this motive may indicate that the organizational environment is characterized by a collaborative rather than a hierarchical culture, with relatively little emphasis on authority, control, or competition for influence.

Among 8% of respondents, all three motivational needs received equal scores, indicating a balanced motivational profile. Employees in this category appear to demonstrate a more flexible approach to work, which may represent an advantage for the organization because they are likely to adapt more easily to different tasks and team roles. Within this group, women accounted for 6% of respondents, compared with 2% of men.

Women represented 66% of the overall sample, whereas men accounted for 34%. This distribution reflects the predominance of female employees within the participating healthcare institutions and represents an important consideration for management when designing motivational policies, assigning work responsibilities, and developing employee benefit programs.

Overall, the findings indicate that the need for achievement is the primary motivational driver among employees, particularly among women. From a managerial perspective, this represents a positive finding, suggesting that healthcare institutions should continue to strengthen mechanisms that encourage individual initiative, recognize employee performance, and provide opportunities for professional growth and career advancement. At the same time, attention should also be given to employees who value stable interpersonal relationships, as they contribute significantly to a supportive and healthy organizational climate. Finally, the very low prevalence of the need for power further supports the conclusion that the participating healthcare institutions are characterized by a cooperative, non-confrontational organizational culture that positively influences the overall quality of the work environment.

Table 6: The findings indicate that the achievement motive is dominant across all educational groups. This suggests that the pursuit of results, the attainment of established goals, and professional advancement represent the primary motivational drivers among employees, regardless of their level of education. The highest proportion of employees motivated by achievement is found among those

with a university degree (37%), which may indicate that highly educated individuals are particularly oriented toward career development and personal accomplishment. A strong achievement orientation is also observed among employees with secondary vocational education (24%), while the results for those with a college degree (7%) and a master's degree (11%) indicate a moderate yet consistent presence of this motive. This motive was not identified among respondents holding doctoral degrees, which may suggest that their interests and motivational orientations differ, with a greater emphasis on academic objectives or research activities.

Table 6. Distribution of overall motivational needs according to educational level.

Motivation / educational level	Secondary vocational education	College degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree (PhD)	Total
Achievement	24%	7%	37%	11%	0%	79%
Affiliation	6%	5%	1%	0%	0%	12%
Power	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Equal scores	3%	5%	0%	0%	0%	8%
Total	33%	17%	38%	11%	1%	100%

The need for affiliation, reflected through the desire for acceptance, teamwork, cooperation, and positive interpersonal relationships, was most pronounced among employees with secondary vocational education (6%) and college degrees (5%). Among respondents with university degrees, this motive was considerably less represented (1%), while it was not recorded among employees with master's or doctoral degrees. These findings may indicate that highly educated employees rely more strongly on individual achievement and professional autonomy, whereas employees with lower educational levels may place greater importance on teamwork, social interaction, and workplace belonging.

The need for power, which reflects the desire for influence, decision-making authority, and control, was identified only among respondents with the highest level of education—those holding doctoral degrees (1%). This motive was absent in all other educational categories. Such a finding may indicate that employees are generally driven more by achievement and professional results than by authority, status, or control over others.

The category of equal scores, indicating a balanced importance of achievement, affiliation, and power, was present among 8% of respondents. It was most common among employees with secondary vocational education (3%) and college degrees (5%). The absence of this category among respondents with higher academic qualifications may suggest that highly educated employees tend to have more clearly defined motivational priorities and stronger orientation toward a specific professional objective. In contrast, employees with lower educational attainment appear to be influenced by a broader combination of factors, including workplace relationships, security, recognition, and opportunities for advancement.

When examining the overall educational structure of the sample, the largest proportion of respondents had completed a university degree (38%), followed by those with secondary vocational education (33%). Employees with college degrees represented 17% of the sample, while respondents with master's degrees accounted for 11%, and doctoral degree holders represented only 1%. This distribution helps explain why achievement motivation is particularly dominant among highly educated employees, as they represent the largest segment of the sample and demonstrate a strong orientation toward professional development and goal achievement.

Overall, the findings indicate that the need for achievement is the most significant and widespread motivational driver among employees, particularly among those with higher educational qualifications. The need for affiliation is more frequently observed among employees with lower levels of education, whereas the need for power appears only marginally and is identified exclusively among one respondent with a doctoral degree. These findings may provide valuable

guidance for management when developing employee motivation strategies. Employees with higher educational qualifications should be provided with challenging assignments, opportunities for professional development, and possibilities for career advancement. Conversely, for employees with lower educational attainment, management should focus on strengthening workplace belonging, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships in order to enhance motivation and organizational commitment.

The data presented in Table 7, which examines the distribution of dominant motivational needs according to respondents' age, reveal several important patterns in the motivational structure of employees. The need for achievement is dominant across all age groups, accounting for 79% of the total responses. It is particularly pronounced among respondents aged 36–45 years, where 29% identified achievement as their primary motivational factor. This finding suggests that employees in middle adulthood, who typically have established careers and greater professional responsibilities, are strongly motivated by professional advancement, goal achievement, and personal development.

Table 7. Distribution of overall motivational needs by age.

Motivation / age	Up to 25 years	26–35 years	36–45 years	46–55 years	Over 56 years	Total
Achievement	14%	6%	29%	20%	10%	79%
Affiliation	0%	7%	0%	4%	1%	12%
Power	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Equal scores	3%	0%	4%	0%	1%	8%
Total	17%	13%	33%	25%	12%	100%

In addition, respondents aged 46–55 years demonstrate a high level of achievement orientation (20%). This represents an important finding, indicating that employees in more mature age groups maintain strong work motivation, likely driven by the desire to accomplish professional objectives, consolidate their career achievements, and leave a meaningful contribution within their professional environment. In contrast, the youngest age group (up to 25 years) accounts for 14% of achievement-oriented respondents, indicating that the desire for accomplishment and professional recognition is already present at the beginning of employees' careers.

The highest representation of the need for affiliation was observed among employees aged 26–35 years (7%), followed by respondents aged 46–55 years (4%) and those older than 56 years (1%). These findings may indicate that employees at certain stages of their careers place greater importance on stable interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and a sense of belonging within the organization. The results are significant because they suggest that workplace relationships and social support become increasingly important motivational factors, alongside individual professional ambitions.

The need for power, consistent with previous analyses, was almost entirely absent and was recorded only among respondents aged 46–55 years (1%). This finding further supports the conclusion that the organizational environment is characterized primarily by cooperation and teamwork rather than by hierarchical competition.

The category of equal scores, where achievement, affiliation, and power received the same level of importance, was most frequently observed among respondents aged 36–45 years (4%), followed by employees up to 25 years of age (3%) and those older than 56 years (1%). These results may suggest that younger employees are still developing their professional values and motivational orientation, while older employees demonstrate a more comprehensive approach to workplace motivation, combining achievement with interpersonal relationships and, in some cases, a desire for influence or control.

When the overall age structure of the sample is analysed, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the 36–45 age group (33%), while the remaining age categories account for between 13% and 25% of the sample. This distribution is significant because it strengthens the conclusion regarding the dominance of the achievement motive within this age group, given that it represents one-third of the total sample.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the need for achievement is the dominant motivational factor across all age groups, while the importance of affiliation and balanced motivational profiles becomes more visible among older employees. These results may serve as a valuable basis for management when designing tailored motivational strategies – younger employees should be provided with challenging tasks, opportunities for professional development, while older employees may benefit from greater job stability and the development of supportive interpersonal relationships within the workplace.

9. Summary of Research Results

The research conducted during the period September–October 2025 aimed to identify the dominant motivational factors among employees in healthcare institutions and to analyse differences in motivation according to gender, age, educational level, and employment status (whether employees have subordinate staff or not). The study employed McClelland's Motivation Test, which identifies three fundamental motivational needs: achievement, affiliation, and power. The research sample consisted of 182 healthcare professionals from various healthcare institutions across the Republic of Serbia. The results indicate that the need for achievement is the most dominant motivational factor, with 79% of respondents (144 out of 182) identifying it as their primary motivator. This was followed by the need for affiliation, reported by 12% of respondents (22 individuals), while the need for power was identified among only 1% of employees (2 individuals). Among 8% of respondents (14 individuals), all motivational factors were assessed as equally important.

These findings indicate that employees in healthcare institutions are strongly oriented toward professional advancement, achievement of results, and personal development. Such motivation represents a favorable factor for organizations because it encourages productivity, initiative, professional growth, and work efficiency.

When analysed according to gender, the results show that female employees demonstrate a stronger orientation toward achievement (52%), as well as toward affiliation (7%). Among male employees, achievement is also the dominant motive (27%), while affiliation is less represented (5%). The need for power is present among a small proportion of female employees (1%) and is not recorded among male respondents. These findings suggest that women within the sample more frequently combine achievement orientation with the need for social connection and teamwork, whereas men demonstrate a stronger focus on individual accomplishment with less emphasis on group affiliation.

Regarding educational level, the highest percentage of employees motivated by achievement was found among respondents with a university degree (37%), followed by those with secondary vocational education (24%), master's degrees (11%), and college degrees (7%). Among respondents holding doctoral degrees, the dominant motivational factor was the need for power, which may indicate a greater orientation toward influence, responsibility, and decision-making at higher organizational levels.

The need for affiliation was most frequently observed among employees with secondary vocational education (6%) and college degrees (5%), while it was considerably less represented among employees with university degrees (1%). These results suggest that employees with lower educational qualifications may place greater importance on teamwork, interpersonal support, and a sense of belonging within the organization.

According to age, the highest proportion of achievement-oriented employees was observed in the 36–45 years age group (29%), which corresponds to a period typically characterized by intensive professional development and career advancement. The achievement motive remained present among employees older than 56 years (10%), indicating that older employees maintain professional engagement, initiative, and orientation toward achieving results.

The need for affiliation was most pronounced among employees aged 26–35 years (7%), while it decreased among respondents aged 46–55 years (4%) and those older than 56 years (1%). Among the

youngest employees, aged up to 25 years, a certain degree of motivational uncertainty was observed, as indicated by the fact that 3% of younger employees assessed all motivational factors equally.

Analysis according to whether employees have subordinate staff indicates that the need for achievement is dominant among both managers and employees without supervisory responsibilities. However, the need for affiliation is more frequently present among managers, suggesting that, in addition to achieving professional results, managers also place importance on maintaining positive interpersonal relationships within their teams. The need for power was identified in only one managerial employee (a female respondent with a college degree), further confirming that dominance and authority are not primary motivational drivers within healthcare institutions.

The results demonstrate that employees in healthcare institutions are predominantly motivated by achievement, particularly those with higher educational qualifications and employees in middle age groups. Although the need for affiliation is less pronounced, it still represents an important motivational factor, especially among women, older employees, and individuals with lower educational levels. Conversely, the need for power is almost entirely absent, indicating the presence of a cooperative and horizontally oriented organizational culture.

These findings have practical implications for healthcare management, suggesting that motivational strategies should focus on recognizing and rewarding employee achievements, supporting professional development, and providing opportunities for personal and career advancement. In addition, organizations should strengthen employees' sense of belonging through teamwork, collaborative activities, and open communication. Although power motivation is not dominant, managers should encourage employee autonomy, responsibility, and participation in decision-making processes in order to enhance engagement, commitment, and long-term organizational loyalty.

10. Conclusion

Motivation is an extremely complex phenomenon influenced by a wide range of different factors. In order to ensure full employee engagement within the healthcare system, it is necessary to identify appropriate methods of motivating employees, namely, to encourage their interest in performing their work with the highest possible quality and contributing to successful organizational performance. Investing in human resources and promoting work motivation represents a justified expense that generates multiple returns. A priority task and the foundation for designing all other activities is the organization of continuous and systematic assessment of employee satisfaction, including its intensity and direction.

Therefore, the importance of the conducted research becomes evident, as its results indicate that employee motivation directly influences job satisfaction. McClelland's theory emphasizes individual differences among employees and enables managers to identify dominant motivational needs in order to allocate tasks and responsibilities more effectively.

Possible recommendations for improving employee satisfaction, based on the obtained results, include: recognizing individual differences, adapting reward systems to individual needs, linking rewards to achieved work results, applying various forms of recognition, providing continuous employee training, and aligning financial compensation with employees' achievements.

The results of the conducted research demonstrate that employees are significantly driven by achievement as the primary factor influencing their work engagement. As many as 79% of respondents identified achievement as their dominant motive, indicating a strong orientation toward accomplishing results, professional development, and personal advancement. Such a motivational structure represents a favorable indicator for management, as employees with a strongly developed need for achievement generally demonstrate greater work efficiency, higher levels of initiative, and stronger commitment to organizational goals.

The need for affiliation is present to a lesser extent (12%), but it is particularly pronounced among women, older employees, and individuals with secondary and higher education levels. This highlights the importance of fostering positive interpersonal relationships and encouraging teamwork within healthcare organizations. In contrast, the need for power is almost entirely absent,

being identified in only one respondent, which suggests that the organization is based primarily on cooperative relationships rather than an authoritarian approach.

When the results are analysed according to gender, it can be observed that women more frequently identify affiliation as an important motivational factor compared to men, while achievement orientation is strongly expressed among both genders. From the perspective of educational structure, the achievement motive is most prevalent among highly educated employees, whereas employees with lower educational levels tend to demonstrate a combination of different motivational factors, including the need for affiliation. According to age structure, employees aged 36–45 years most frequently identify achievement as their dominant motive, which can be associated with a period of intensive professional development and career advancement.

It is noteworthy that employees older than 56 years also demonstrate a high level of achievement-oriented motivation, indicating continued professional commitment even in the later stages of their careers. Among employees in managerial positions, achievement is also the dominant motive; however, a somewhat stronger orientation toward affiliation is observed, suggesting an increased awareness of the importance of maintaining high-quality relationships with colleagues and team members.

In conclusion, the research results indicate that motivational strategies in healthcare institutions should focus on supporting personal and professional development, establishing clearly defined goals, implementing effective reward systems, and strengthening employees' sense of belonging through teamwork and open communication. Although the need for power is not significantly expressed, management should encourage employee autonomy and responsibility, as these factors further enhance engagement and loyalty. By maintaining a balance between the need for achievement and the need for affiliation, organizations can create a stable, supportive, and highly motivated working environment.

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