

Employee Motivation and Healthcare Quality in the Post-COVID-19 Pandemic: A South African Public Health Sector Perspective

Motivación de los empleados y calidad de la atención médica en la pandemia post-COVID-19: una perspectiva del sector de salud pública sudafricana

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ABSTRACT

Employee motivation has been recognized as important in the public health sector as it plays a huge role in the effectiveness and quality of healthcare services. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a global impact, affecting both personal and professional aspects. Numerous authors have pointed out that COVID-19 has compounded the challenges faced by healthcare providers. Even though healthcare organizations implemented a COVID-19 disaster response plan, the effect of employee motivation on healthcare service quality has been inadequately addressed. Previous research primarily concentrated on factors influencing employee motivation in the healthcare sector at large, while the public health sector in South Africa has received less attention, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This article investigates the main factors influencing employee motivation in South Africa's public healthcare sector post-COVID-19. It explores the impact of motivation on healthcare quality and suggests strategies to enhance staff morale and service delivery in the post-pandemic context. A qualitative approach and secondary data are utilized in this article. The findings of this article indicate that elements such as the work environment, salary, leadership, and opportunities for career progression impact employee motivation in South Africa's public health sector, with the COVID-19 pandemic intensifying issues such as staff shortages and burnout. To tackle these problems, the article's recommendations include enhancing the workplace environment, increasing compensation, bolstering leadership, and providing more opportunities for career advancement to improve staff retention and the quality of healthcare services.

Keywords: Employee Motivation; Public Health Sector; Healthcare; Career Development; Healthcare Providers.

JEL Codes: I18; J28; J44; M54; H75

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RESUMEN

La motivación de los empleados ha sido reconocida como un factor clave en el sector de la salud pública, ya que desempeña un papel fundamental en la efectividad y calidad de los servicios de salud. La pandemia de COVID-19 ha tenido un impacto global, afectando tanto los aspectos personales como profesionales. Numerosos autores han señalado que la COVID-19 ha agravado los desafíos que enfrentan los proveedores de atención médica. Aunque las organizaciones sanitarias implementaron un plan de respuesta ante desastres por COVID-19, el efecto de la motivación de los empleados en la calidad de los servicios de salud ha sido abordado de manera insuficiente. Las investigaciones previas se han centrado principalmente en los factores que influyen en la motivación de los empleados en el sector de la salud en general, mientras que el sector de la salud pública en Sudáfrica ha recibido menos atención, especialmente en el período posterior a la pandemia de COVID-19. Este artículo investiga los principales factores que influyen en la motivación de los empleados en el sector público de salud de Sudáfrica después de la pandemia. Se analiza el impacto de la motivación en la calidad de la atención médica y se sugieren estrategias para mejorar la moral del personal y la prestación de servicios en el contexto postpandemia. Para ello, se emplea un enfoque cualitativo y el uso de datos secundarios. Los hallazgos del estudio indican que elementos como el entorno laboral, el salario, el liderazgo y las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional influyen en la motivación de los empleados en el sector público de salud en Sudáfrica, y que la pandemia de COVID-19 ha intensificado problemas como la escasez de personal y el agotamiento laboral. Para abordar estos desafíos, las recomendaciones del artículo incluyen la mejora del ambiente de trabajo, el aumento de la remuneración, el fortalecimiento del liderazgo y la ampliación de oportunidades de desarrollo profesional para mejorar la retención del personal y la calidad de los servicios de salud.

Palabras clave: Motivación de los empleados; Sector de salud pública; Atención médica; Desarrollo profesional; Proveedores de salud.

1. Introduction

The global significance of healthcare services is widely recognized, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which aims to improve global health and well-being. In South Africa, the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision for 2030 seeks to create a healthcare system that ensures equitable access to quality care for all citizens (Republic of South Africa, 2013). Adding to the above, healthcare is enshrined as a fundamental human right in Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution, reinforcing the responsibility of public administration to uphold this right through effective service delivery (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Ensuring high-quality healthcare is, therefore, vital for meeting constitutional obligations, promoting public welfare, and advancing social justice. A well-functioning healthcare system requires motivated healthcare providers, as they are central to delivering patient-centered care

(Schoeb, 2016). The Batho Pele principles further emphasize the importance of high-quality service delivery, patient rights, and accountability in public healthcare. However, South Africa's public health sector continues to struggle with challenges such as staff shortages, poor working conditions, inadequate salaries, and limited career growth opportunities (Govender, Gerwel Proches & Kader, 2018; De Beer, 2019; Abrahams, Thani & Kahn, 2022).

These issues negatively affect employee motivation, which in turn impacts the quality of healthcare services (Parashakti et al., 2020). It is important to point out that these problems were intensified by the occurrence of COVID-19. This claim is backed by the studies of Coovadia et al. (2009) and Sikkwela (2016), who also pointed out that even prior to COVID-19, the public health system faced challenges with recruiting and retaining healthcare providers, as well as issues related

to inadequate pay and working conditions. Post-COVID-19, significant evidence exists showing that these issues persist in the South African public health system and have exacerbated over time (Deonarain, 2024). This is because many healthcare providers lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic (Dramowski et al., 2020). According to Adebanjo (2024), it is estimated that between January 2020 and May 2021, approximately 80,000 to 180,000 healthcare workers may have died from COVID-19.

As a result, people have not received adequate services, which is well documented and supported by the findings of Sono-Setati et al. (2022), who noted that during COVID-19, there was a shortage of staff in the wards and patients were not seen by doctors at the COVID-19 ward from the day of referral. These issues have tampered with health providers' motivation to perform their duties due to issues such as poor working conditions and burnout. Prior studies have been conducted regarding the factors affecting employee motivation in the healthcare sector as a whole, but less attention has been given to the public health sector in South Africa, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. This current article exists to close this gap by exploring key factors affecting employee motivation in South Africa's public healthcare sector, especially after COVID-19. It examines how motivation impacts healthcare quality and identifies strategies to improve staff morale and service delivery in the post-pandemic era.

2. Literature Review

Ebi (2016) asserts that South Africa focuses on establishing a health system that guarantees equitable access to quality healthcare for all citizens. Achieving this vision requires skilled and motivated healthcare providers in the public health sector who are committed

to performing their duties to the best of their abilities. This is supported by researchers like Parashakti et al. (2020), who assert that having high-quality personnel in healthcare facilities is crucial for providing outstanding services. Although the majority of the population, especially those unable to pay for private healthcare, rely on South Africa's public healthcare system, the public healthcare system faces numerous challenges, including staff shortages, limited resources, and high patient demand (Van Rensburg, 2014; Netshisaulu, Malelelo-Ndou & Ramathuba, 2019; Abrahams et al., 2022; Van Wyk, 2023; Mokgolobotho & Nkgapele, 2024).

These issues greatly impact healthcare providers, who frequently deal with elevated workloads, insufficient pay, and challenging work environments. Consequently, there is a growing focus on issues related to employee motivation. Abbah (2014) suggests that employees who are motivated tend to show greater engagement, efficiency, and dedication to their responsibilities, traits that are crucial in fields where service quality can impact survival. However, the reality in South Africa's public health sector is marked by low morale, burnout, leadership challenges, and high turnover rates among healthcare workers (Selamu, Thornicroft, Fekadu & Hanlon, 2017; Govender, Gerwel Proches & Kader, 2018; Mafhungo, 2022). According to Afolabi, Fernando, and Bottiglieri (2018), the South African public health sector is struggling to provide quality healthcare services due to widespread employee demotivation, which presents a major barrier to achieving the required standards of care and improving health outcomes.

Many studies have pinpointed multiple elements that contribute to employee demotivation, such as unfavorable working conditions, insufficient pay, restricted career

advancement opportunities, and a lack of appreciation and support (Ghimire et al., 2013; Akintola & Chikoko, 2016; Manyisa & Van Aswegen, 2017). These issues result in inefficiencies in service delivery, inadequate patient care, and a general reduction in healthcare quality. Although prior studies have examined job satisfaction and systemic challenges within the healthcare sector, a gap persists in understanding the direct link between employee motivation and healthcare quality in South Africa, especially in the post-COVID-19 era. This article seeks to fill this gap by investigating how employee motivation affects healthcare service quality and determining strategies to improve staff morale and performance in the changing public health landscape.

3. Theoretical Framework

Maslow's Theory of Hierarchy of demands

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is arranged by priority, reflecting the idea that employee motivation originates from five fundamental needs: physiological needs, security needs, esteem needs, social needs, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). This theory provides a strong structure for comprehending and tackling employee motivation within the South African public health sector. This theory consists of the following needs:

Physiological, Safety, and Needs

Physiological needs, identified by Ştefan, Popa, and Albu (2020), include fundamental survival requirements such as food, shelter, and financial compensation. However, healthcare providers in South Africa often struggle to meet these basic needs due to low salaries, delayed wage payments, and inadequate workplace facilities (Akintola &

Chikoko, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these issues, as many healthcare workers faced salary cuts, a lack of essential protective equipment, and excessive work hours, leading to burnout and dissatisfaction (De Villiers, Cerbone & Van Zijl, 2020; Mathevula & Dhliwayo, 2022). Beyond physiological needs, safety concerns such as job security, workplace stability, and access to health benefits play a crucial role in motivation. McLeod (2007) emphasizes that individuals seek workplace safety to reduce stress and ensure long-term career stability. However, in South Africa, public healthcare workers often experience unsafe working conditions, including exposure to workplace violence, understaffing, and inadequate health insurance coverage (George et al., 2022). These safety concerns have been linked to increased stress levels and reduced job commitment, particularly post-pandemic, where many healthcare workers have reported heightened anxiety and uncertainty regarding their employment conditions (Zungu & Dlamini, 2022).

Social and Esteem Needs

Social needs, also referred to as the need for belonging, focus on building relationships and workplace cohesion (Maslow, 1943). According to Wahome (2022), fostering a sense of belonging among healthcare providers can improve job satisfaction and teamwork. However, research by Cabral et al. (2015) allude that public healthcare facilities in South Africa often neglect team-building and psychological support programs, leaving workers feeling isolated, particularly in high-stress environments. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these challenges, as social distancing measures and increased workloads led to a decline in peer support networks, further impacting motivation (Nelago, 2024). Esteem needs, which involve recognition and respect,

are essential for maintaining high motivation levels among healthcare workers. Wahome (2022) suggests that recognizing employees' contributions through awards, performance-based incentives, and peer acknowledgment can enhance their sense of achievement. However, within the South African public health sector, recognition is often limited, with healthcare workers expressing frustration over inadequate career progression opportunities and a lack of appreciation for their efforts, particularly during the pandemic (Feldacker et al., 2017).

Self-Actualization Needs

Self-actualization is the inherent drive within individuals to achieve their maximum potential, as described by Maslow (1943). According to Nkgapele and Thusi (2025), in the healthcare realm, fulfilling self-actualization needs includes having access to professional growth, career progression, and the capacity to make a substantial impact. As noted by Feldacker et al. (2017), healthcare provider in South Africa often point to the lack of sufficient career advancement opportunities as a primary source of demotivation. Furthermore, the pandemic has highlighted

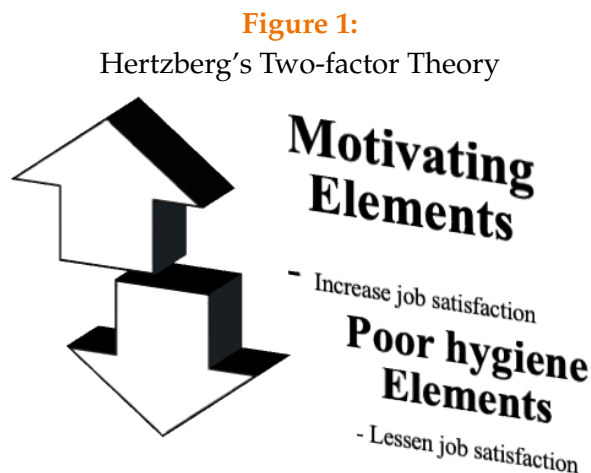
major gaps in training access, prompting many frontline workers to call for improved ongoing professional development initiatives.

The Application of the Theory in the Study

Implementing this theory within South Africa's public health institutions would enable policymakers to create strategies that comprehensively tackle the motivation of healthcare providers. For example, enhancing salaries, providing career advancement opportunities, and offering benefits such as housing allowances, subsidies, or paid leave could help keep healthcare providers motivated.

Hertzberg's Two-Factor Theory

As per Fugarv (2007), this theory is referred to as the theory of motivational hygiene. The author expresses the view that this theory comprises five motivational traits that determine job satisfaction: achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, and progress. This theory proposes the existence of two separate sets of components that affect employee motivation and job satisfaction:



Source: (Alrawahi et al., 2020)

As shown in the figure above, this theory consists of motivating and Poor hygiene elements, which are further explained below:

Motivating Elements

Motivators, such as recognition, career advancement, and job autonomy, play a crucial role in driving employee engagement (Rai, Thekkekara & Kanhare, 2021). Public healthcare institutions in South Africa often struggle to provide career progression opportunities, leading to high turnover rates among skilled professionals (Maphumulo & Bhengu, 2019). Recent studies indicate that post-pandemic, healthcare workers have increasingly sought better professional growth opportunities, mental health support, and work-life balance (Celestin & Vanitha, 2023).

Poor Hygiene Elements

These elements include wages, employment conditions, and job stability (Alrawahi et al., 2020). In the South African healthcare sector, insufficient pay, extended working hours, and substandard facility conditions greatly contribute to discontent (Thant & Chang, 2021). Studies conducted after the pandemic have further revealed that healthcare workers experienced heightened job stress, emotional burnout, and a lack of adequate mental health support (Dawood, Tomita, & Ramlall, 2022).

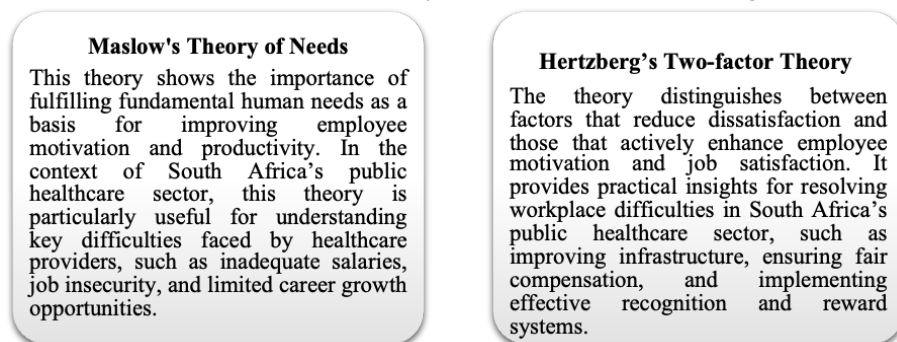
The Application of the Theory in the Study

Utilizing theory in South Africa's public healthcare sector emphasizes the importance of both hygiene factors and motivators to enhance job satisfaction and retention among healthcare providers. Tackling hygiene factors like competitive salaries, secure working environments, and equitable policies can lessen dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, adding motivators such as career growth opportunities, recognition initiatives, and meaningful work can boost job engagement and long-term dedication. Thus, through the application of this theory, policymakers can develop strategies that not only prevent demotivation but also foster a workforce that is more motivated and content.

Comparison and Complementary Application

Combining Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory enables policymakers and managers within the South African public health sector to formulate thorough strategies to boost employee motivation and job satisfaction. Figure 2 below displays the main distinctions between these two theories:

Figure 2:
The distinctions between Maslow's Theory of Needs and Hertzberg's Two-factor Theory



Source: Author's Own Compilation

Together, these theories give a comprehensive approach to boosting motivation in South Africa's public health sector. Therefore, by meeting fundamental human needs and considering workplace dynamics, healthcare leaders can foster an atmosphere where healthcare providers are more driven, content, and efficient.

4. Research Methodology

This article employed a qualitative research approach, relying exclusively on secondary data to explore the effects of employee motivation and healthcare quality in South Africa's public health sector in the post-COVID-19 era. As noted by Moore (2007), qualitative research involves the use of both primary and secondary data sources. However, this article specifically focused on secondary data due to its ability to provide a comprehensive understanding of existing research, policies, and systemic difficulties without the constraints of direct data collection. As previously mentioned, the article used secondary data that was gathered from accredited and peer-reviewed academic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, PubMed, and institutional repositories. Key search terms used to find the data were "Employee Motivation in Public Health," "Healthcare Provider's Motivation and Quality of Health Services in South Africa," and "Post-Covid-19 Challenges in Public Health Service Delivery in South Africa". The article followed inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The inclusion criteria for the selected sources required that they be:

- Published within the last ten years to ensure relevance to contemporary healthcare challenges.

- Peer-reviewed or officially published by government or policy institutions to maintain academic rigor.
- Directly related to employee motivation, healthcare service quality, and systemic challenges in the South African public health sector.

Sources were excluded if they:

- Lacked empirical evidence or theoretical grounding.
- Focused on healthcare systems outside of South Africa without direct relevance to the local context.
- Were opinion pieces, non-academic blog posts, or unpublished materials lacking institutional backing.

This article made use of thematic content analysis to examine the collected data, which allowed the discovery of recurrent themes, patterns, and connections in the literature. This method offered an organized interpretation of the impact of motivational factors on healthcare service delivery while emphasizing strategies to boost employee motivation. Because of this analysis method, the article delivered a detailed perception of the effects of employee motivation and service quality in South Africa's public health sector in the post-COVID-19 era.

5. Results and Discussion

Theme 1: Determinants of Employee Motivation in the South African Public Health Sector Post-COVID-19

Recent research underscores the critical impact of workplace conditions on employee motivation in South Africa's public healthcare field. Studies repeatedly point out insufficient staffing, lack of resources, and heavy patient

loads as primary factors leading to decreased motivation (Mabena, 2022; Rauf et al., 2024; Baartman, 2024). These issues exert significant pressure on healthcare providers, causing frustration and fatigue, which negatively affect their involvement and productivity in patient care. The requirement to handle large volumes of work with inadequate resources frequently leads to lowered job satisfaction, as healthcare providers feel unappreciated and overwhelmed. As a result, this diminishes the quality-of-service delivery as healthcare providers struggle to uphold high standards of care. Ultimately, this results in burnout. Burnout is a major element affecting motivation, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic (Jalili et al., 2021). Healthcare providers in South Africa often face exhaustion from intense workloads and insufficient managerial support, increasing stress levels (Naidoo, Tomita & Paruk, 2020; Mnisi, 2022).

Burnout not only lessens individual well-being but also hinders performance, thereby lowering the quality of healthcare services. The absence of supportive systems for mental and physical health adds to these issues, resulting in higher staff turnover and more pressure on the remaining workforce. Compensation is another crucial element affecting motivation. Studies highlight that low wages act as a major demotivator, especially when compared to private-sector salaries (Jensen, Lund & Abrahams, 2022). Public healthcare providers often feel undervalued due to pay gaps, which adversely impact job satisfaction and retention (Billings et al., 2021). According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, fulfilling basic financial necessities is essential for achieving higher levels of job satisfaction and professional fulfilment. Similarly, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory highlights that adequate pay is a key component driving job satisfaction. When public

sector pay does not fulfil employees' financial requirements, healthcare providers may seek higher-paid roles in the private sector, further worsening staff shortages in public hospitals and clinics (Nkgapele & Mokgolobotho, 2024).

This persistent turnover disrupts service continuity and adversely affects patient care (Sikwela, 2016). Besides financial rewards, non-monetary incentives like career development opportunities also play a role in influencing motivation levels. Research indicates that the lack of professional growth pathways, such as promotions and specialized training, leads to dissatisfaction and stagnation among healthcare workers (Muthuri, Senkubuge & Hongoro, 2020). Many healthcare providers believe their efforts go unnoticed and that the limited opportunities for career advancement affect their long-term dedication to public service (Akintola & Chikoko, 2016). This absence of career progression not only reduces motivation but also affects service quality since healthcare workers see little reason to enhance their skills or stay in the sector.

Theme 2: The Impact of Employee Motivation on Healthcare Quality

Motivated healthcare providers exhibit a higher degree of commitment, attentiveness, and professionalism, thereby directly enhancing the quality of patient care (Chrest, 2020). Studies show that engaged staff display increased levels of empathy and diligence, which leads to better patient outcomes and stronger relationships between providers and patients (Gagné et al., 2022). Additionally, motivated healthcare providers are more capable of managing the emotional and physical demands of their jobs, decreasing the chances of medical errors and boosting patient satisfaction. On the other hand, low motivation adversely impacts service delivery, as healthcare providers facing

fatigue and frustration tend to withdraw from their responsibilities (Washeya, 2018). This disengagement results in decreased attentiveness, a rise in clinical mistakes, and reduced overall quality of healthcare.

Cases of medical negligence, often resulting from exhaustion-induced errors, impose an extra financial strain on the Department of Health, redirecting funds away from crucial healthcare advancements (Kolawole, 2023). Considering the current difficulties in hiring and retaining healthcare providers, it is crucial to prioritize employee motivation to reduce these risks and ensure the delivery of consistent, high-quality services. This is also important for the public health sector considering the fact that the country lost so many healthcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has worsened the shortages of health providers. Some left the field, while some passed away (Dramowski et al., 2020). It must be noted that low motivation results in increased absenteeism and staff turnover (Pervez, Kousar & Asghar, 2023). In South Africa's already overstretched public health sector, workforce shortages further worsen the situation, leading to a cycle of heavier workloads, increased stress, and reduced morale.

Theme 3: The Role of Leadership in Motivating Healthcare Providers

Leadership plays an essential role in shaping the motivation of healthcare providers and influencing the quality of service within South Africa's public health sector. Strong leadership creates a supportive work atmosphere, prompting healthcare providers to achieve their best (Shipalana, 2019; Umeh, 2022). In environments where resources are limited, robust leadership is even more vital to overcome systemic challenges and ensure operational efficiency. South Africa's National

Development Plan: Vision 2030 underscores the significance of competent leadership in strengthening public healthcare systems and calls for skilled managers at every level of institutions (Republic of South Africa, 2013). Studies indicate that leadership characterized by empathy, communication, and support elevates healthcare workers' motivation and job satisfaction (Vizzuso, 2015). On the other hand, poor leadership leads to disengagement, high rates of turnover, and burnout, thereby adversely affecting service delivery (Jaeger et al., 2018). Frequent grievances among healthcare providers involve a lack of recognition, insufficient professional development opportunities, and unsatisfactory working conditions, all of which reduce staff motivation and weaken performance.

Investing in leadership training is vital for maintaining motivation and improving healthcare outcomes. Research indicates that programs aimed at developing leadership skills, such as emotional intelligence, strategic management, and team engagement, can greatly boost healthcare workers' morale (Mtimkulu, Naranjee & Karodia, 2014). In light of structural challenges like insufficient funding, staff shortages, and poor infrastructure, effective leadership can act as a catalyst for positive change, creating an environment that boosts employee engagement and job satisfaction (Mukwena & Manyisa, 2022). Transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiration, empowerment, and a shared vision, has been particularly successful in healthcare settings (Kumar & Khiljee, 2016). This form of leadership encourages innovation, collaboration, and a sense of purpose, all of which are vital for delivering high-quality patient care. On the other hand, transactional leadership, which relies on rewards and penalties, typically

results in only short-term motivation and lacks prolonged effectiveness (Richards, 2020).

Theme 4: Strategies to Improve Employee Motivation in Public Healthcare

Various strategies have been recognized for boosting motivation levels among healthcare providers in the South African public healthcare sector. A significant method focuses on enhancing working conditions by expanding staff numbers, improving infrastructure, and ensuring well-balanced patient-to-staff ratios (Van Wyk, 2023). Such enhancements would reduce stress for healthcare providers, allowing them to give more effective and efficient care to patients. Adequate pay and incentives based on performance are vital for improving motivation. Studies indicate that adjusting salaries and implementing structured reward systems can reinforce a sense of value and acknowledgment among healthcare providers (De Walque et al., 2022). Moreover, offering career growth opportunities through specialized training and professional development can mitigate stagnation and improve job satisfaction in the long term. Thusi and Nkgapele (2024) demonstrated that no single strategy can independently ensure complete recruitment, retention, and motivation. They recommended that all these strategies should be integrated for maximum effectiveness, as is applicable in this current paper. Moreover, strengthening management and leadership practices is another crucial strategy to increase motivation. Research stresses that effective leadership nurtures a supportive and encouraging work environment (Lee, Chiang & Kuo, 2019). Clear communication, regular feedback, and initiatives for staff recognition contribute to a committed and motivated workforce. Thus,

by focusing on these strategies, the South African public healthcare sector can enhance employee motivation, resulting in improved service quality, better patient outcomes, and a more sustainable healthcare system in the post-COVID-19 era.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This article's findings emphasize that multiple factors influence employee motivation in the South African public health sector, including working conditions, pay, leadership, and opportunities for career development. Following COVID-19, the sector has encountered major issues like staff shortages, heavy workloads, and insufficient resources, all contributing to burnout and reduced job satisfaction. These difficulties subsequently harm the quality of healthcare services by increasing staff turnover and lowering patient care standards. The article also discovered that leadership is critical in shaping healthcare providers' motivation, with strong, supportive management enhancing job satisfaction and engagement. To tackle these challenges, the article suggested improving work conditions by increasing staffing levels, investing in infrastructure, and implementing mental health support programs, while also boosting compensation through salary adjustments, performance-based incentives, and non-monetary benefits. Additionally, leadership should be strengthened to ensure better communication, along with expanding career development opportunities such as structured growth pathways, continuous education, and mentoring programs as these will further enhance motivation and retention. Implementing these recommendations can lead to higher healthcare quality, improved patient outcomes, and a more resilient healthcare system.

Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The article's limitation lies in its reliance on secondary data, potentially overlooking the firsthand experiences of healthcare providers in South Africa's public health sector following COVID-19. Moreover, differences in healthcare facility conditions across provinces and the disparities between rural and urban areas were not thoroughly examined, which might influence the generalizability of the results. Future research should include primary data collection through interviews or surveys with healthcare providers to obtain more profound insights, explore the long-term effects of workforce challenges after the pandemic, and evaluate how specific motivation strategies impact retention and the quality of service.

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