

Human resource management measures with special consideration of the motives of skilled workers

*An empirical industry comparison between
nursing and banking in Germany*

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Abstract: This study investigates how human resource management in the German banking and nursing sectors addresses skilled labor shortages, focusing on the motivational factors influencing professionals in both fields. Through qualitative, semi-structured interviews with sector experts, the research identifies both intrinsic (e.g., sense of purpose, personal development, recognition) and extrinsic (e.g., salary, career prospects, working conditions) motivators as significant in both industries. In banking, extrinsic factors such as employer attractiveness, flexibility, and development opportunities are predominant, with salary functioning more as a hygiene factor than a primary motivator. Conversely, in nursing, intrinsic motivations – particularly the pursuit of meaningful work, professional development, and social recognition – are more salient, while financial considerations, though relevant, are secondary.

Commonalities between the sectors include the importance of employer attractiveness, a positive work environment, flexibility, opportunities for development, and appreciation. However, nursing professionals place greater emphasis on the quality of care and the social significance of their work, whereas banking professionals are more influenced by the institution's image and economic function. The findings underscore that effective human resource management must address industry-specific motivational profiles to successfully attract and retain skilled workers.

Keywords: *human resources, skills shortage, motivation, care, banking*

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Introduction

Skills shortages pose a challenge in numerous sectors of the economy, impacting production and services (Breinich-Schilly, 2022). In Germany, this shortage has significant repercussions and influences on the overall economy. The financial sector (Hellenkamp, 2023) and the care sector (BMWK, 2024) are particularly affected. It remains to be investigated to what extent a comparison of these two sectors provides new insights, for example regarding the motivation of skilled workers or the design of personnel policy and recruitment.

In both sectors, competition and the struggle for skilled personnel have increased and are expected to intensify further (Effert, 2010; Kohl, 2019; SBEGP, 2024, pp. 91–92). This shortage of skilled workers, for example, negatively impacts productivity and incurs high costs due to absenteeism, early retirement, and temporary agency work (Kohl, 2019; SBEGP, 2024, pp. 91–92).

Both sectors are also concerned about the aging population in Germany (Statista, 2024; Steffens, 2012). This demographic situation presents significant challenges, particularly in human resources, such as difficulties in finding suitable skilled workers and applicants or retaining existing staff (Schirner et al., 2021). The significantly declining demographic forecasts indicate that Germany is particularly affected by demographic change (Leibert, 2024).

As part of human resource policy, the recruitment and retention of suitable personnel are considered part of the resource policy (Gentischer, 2012). Human resource policy in banks has specific characteristics and requirements shaped by regulatory demands, technological advancements, industry-specific risks, and intense competitive pressure (Kirmße, 2017). In contrast, the healthcare sector faces specific challenges due to unfavorable working conditions, competition, and high costs resulting from the frequently necessary use of temporary workers (Auffenberg & Heß, 2021; Millich, 2023). Motivation plays a crucial role in both sectors.

Theoretical background

The banking sector in Germany is a bank-based financial system that finances businesses in the economy (Römberg & Wagner, 2014). Banks are companies that provide money and credit-related services with a particular relevance to the national economy (Hellenkamp, 2015). Banks also have an important

function within individual economies by offering to individuals and legal entities the opportunity to hold, exchange, or transfer liquid monetary funds. Furthermore, they typically have financing functions, meaning they lend money to third parties (Hellenkamp, 2015; Varmaz, 2006).

The nursing care sector in Germany is divided into outpatient, inpatient, and clinical sectors, as well as short-term and long-term care. It is considered part of the healthcare sector and an economic factor. Nursing care is a cross-cutting sector with diverse economic and social impacts and makes a significant contribution to economic output and employment in Germany (BMWK, 2024).

In science, motivation is understood as a conceptual construct used to explain goal-directedness, persistence, and intensity of behavior (Reuter, 2007). The most important scientific foundations for this work were laid by Malsow with the hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1987), Herzberg with the 2-factor theory (Herzberg, 2017) and Marquardt with the self-determination theory (Marquardt, 2022).

The subject of motivational psychology is the goal-oriented behavior of people (University of Zurich, 2023). A distinction is made between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The motivation of professionals is a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Hofstede, 2013; Markus & Kitayama, 2014).

Common research interest

In order to close the hitherto understudied field of comparing the banking and care sectors, the common research interest of this work lies in comparing the motivation of professionals and investigating the factors that contribute to work motivation in these seemingly contrasting, but equally challenging professional fields. Scope and research questions

The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of motivational measures in order to derive recommendations for long-term employee retention in both sectors. Specifically, measures for banks and healthcare providers to improve their recruitment of skilled workers will be developed.

This paper addresses the question of which intrinsic and extrinsic motivations dominate among skilled workers, how skilled workers see

themselves in their role, and what measures industries can take to improve the recruitment and retention of skilled workers.

Research questions:

- What measures can individual banks and care companies take to motivate employees and improve their recruitment of skilled workers?
 - What are the predominant motives for skilled workers choosing to take up their profession?
 - What similarities and differences exist in the motivation and understanding of the roles of skilled workers in the two industries?

This study aims to identify and compare the motivations of professionals from different sectors, thereby generating recommendations for action. To this end, data of their motivations were gathered through interviews with representatives from both sectors and interpreted after categorization.

Method

A qualitative design was chosen for the study. To answer the research questions, the study uses semi-structured, guided interviews, selected as the data collection instrument. The individual interviews were conducted using a semi-structured form with open and closed questions. Subsequently, a comparative analysis of the interview results was performed and discussed. Based on the insights gained from the discussion regarding the differences and similarities between the banking and healthcare sectors, and taking into account the motivations of skilled workers in choosing their profession, recommendations for recruiting and retaining qualified employees in both sectors are developed.

Methodological considerations

For the data collection in this study, we had to decide, which forms of data generation we use, and how we discuss and analyze the results.

The primary goal of the underlying research is to identify and understand the motivations of managers and caregivers. This includes uncovering motivations that are not fully or consciously recognized by the participants. The data, derived from language, requires interpretation. Throughout the

interviewing, we aimed to remain unbiased and avoid influencing the participants. This adheres to the principle of openness, a key aspect of qualitative research. Furthermore, the research seeks to draw general conclusions from individual cases. This inductive approach is also typical of qualitative research. The choice of qualitative research is also justified by the fact that we seek to map and explore individual motivations and meaning-making rather than surveying a large number of individuals.

Choice of evaluation method

Using the transcripts obtained from the in-depth interviews, the analysis aims to identify common characteristics in the motivation of managers and nursing staff, and to examine these motivations separately from those of the individuals. Thus, the method used here is based on qualitative content analysis.

In contrast to Grounded Theory, which is exclusively exploratory, the strict rule-based approach of Mayring's qualitative content analysis is convincing, as its rule-based nature provides a corrective for the researcher.

The option to choose between inductive and deductive category formation as a summarization technique according to Mayring (Mayring, 2023) offers advantages for the present research. While main categories emerge from theoretical research and have already been incorporated into the structure and questions of the interview guide, a definitive category formation *ex ante* is not possible because the topic remains largely unexplored. Furthermore, the interviews revealed additional aspects that had not been anticipated. Therefore, it is important to remain open to the construction of further categories during the analysis in order to answer the present research questions. Against this background, the authors have opted for an inductive approach to category formation.

Various applications are available for evaluating data for qualitative content analysis. The authors chose to use the free online application QCAMap³. This decision was based on the interactive features of this web application, combined with the ability to trace the analysis process at any time. The rule-based approach, documentation, and verifiability were particularly important to the authors. The application was also helpful because the authors do not work in a research group and therefore, with regard to the reliability of the analysis, relied on a system that is both internally consistent and integrates

³ <https://www.qcamap.org/ui/de/home>

the process model of a qualitative content analysis into a single, self-contained system. Analysis using QCMap is verifiable and cannot be manipulated due to its inherent traceability. Within the QCMap program, both inductive and deductive approaches to category formation are possible. However, due to the aforementioned lack of literature on the topic, a theory-based deductive approach to category formation is not sufficiently feasible. Therefore, this study employs an inductive category formation method.

The decisive factor in choosing inductive category formation is that this technique ensures that only those text excerpts are used for the analysis that answer the research questions. Furthermore, the authors could make sure that the categories are formulated based on a predefined level of abstraction. The ability to further categorize the inductively formed categories into main categories, to which they are grouped, is another helpful aspect of the evaluation options offered by QCMap. This allows commonalities between the categories to be quickly identified.

Sampling, recruitment

The sample comprises ten individuals, five each from the banking and healthcare sectors (see Figures 1 and 2). It includes former or current professionals, individuals in management, trainees, or students. The educational level, age group, and years of professional experience of the recruited individuals are not specified.

Table 1: Test subjects from the banking sector

	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5
Gender	Masculine	Female	Masculine	Masculine	Female
Employment relationship	Active	Active	Active	Changed	Eliminated
Task	Clerk	Manager	Manager	Clerk	No

Source: own illustration

Table 2: Test subjects from the nursing sector

	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5
Gender	Masculine	Female	Female	Female	Female
Employment relationship	Eliminated	Active	Eliminated	Active	Active
Task	student	Care manager	Students	Care manager	Trainees

Source: own illustration

When selecting interviewees, care was taken to obtain the broadest possible range of information. Participants received advance notice regarding the length and scope of the interview.

Data collection

Depending on the interviewees' availability, the interviews took place online or in person. Each interview was scheduled to last approximately thirty minutes. The planned interview period was set at three months.

The interview guide contains nine open-ended questions, one of which describes the interviewee's career path, three of which address motivation, feelings, and the definition of their area of responsibility. Five questions aim to elicit wishes for the future, suggestions for improvement, and thoughts on employee motivation.

The interviews were conducted in pairs using semi-structured interview guides in a confidential setting by the authors. At the beginning of each interview, following introductory remarks, a brief overview of the research topic was provided. After the participants provided written informed consent, the interviews began. The interviews were recorded digitally, with the start of recording announced. The questions were asked in the order of the pre-prepared question catalog. The order of the questions varied depending on the information provided by the interviewee.

The interview content was subsequently fully transcribed and analyzed by the interviewers.

Data preparation and analysis

The audio recording of the interviews is transcribed verbatim according to the transcription rules of Kuckartz (2005). The data are analyzed using qualitative content analysis based on Mayring's (2010) category system. Following manual transcription, the transcripts are summarized into paraphrases. The first interview is used to establish categories and subcategories. Subsequent interviews are adapted to or supplement these categories or subcategories. The already categorized interviews are examined for the new categories and subcategories, and any additional content is subsequently assigned and documented (Mayring, 2010).

Consensual validation was achieved through repeated comparison of coded segments and agreement between researchers on category assignments. This improved analytical reliability. (Mayring, 2010)

Methods for complying with quality criteria

To ensure compliance with the quality criteria, attention is paid to validity, reliability, objectivity, applicability, transferability, and dependability (Döring & Bortz, 2016, p. 108ff). For objectivity, the researchers approach the interviews without prejudice and aim solely to understand the interviewees' thoughts. Validity is ensured by the submission of the interview questionnaire and informed consent. The verbatim transcripts (Kuckartz, 2005) of the interviews are available to the researchers as PDF files. The researchers collaboratively develop the indicators through verbal exchange to avoid potential misinterpretations. Consensual validation is achieved through objectivity, which is demonstrated by the comparability of the results. The researchers are aware of the inherent subjectivity and take it into account during the analysis. Reliability is ensured by the transparency of the research as well as by the number of researchers and interviewees. Usability is ensured by the topicality of the subject matter and the potential for practical improvement. Transferability is possible with regard to the respective areas. In addition, the research results were presented to the interviewees and discussed with them (triangulation).

Results

Firstly, the results of the interviews are presented separately for the banking and healthcare sectors. This is followed by a comparative presentation.

Banking sector

Six main categories were formed from 26 categories in the transcripts, which in turn were derived from 389 codes within the transcripts. The motivation of skilled workers to pursue a career in banking encompasses diverse areas.

The category structure of the six main categories and the 26 categories is shown in the figure "Category structure in the banking sector".

Figure 1: Category structure in the banking sector

Main categories					
recognition	Employer attractiveness	flexibility	Development	Working conditions	uncertainty
Categories					
Experience	workload	Working hours	guide	Job satisfaction	flexibility
fairness	Workplace –	Family	competence	pay	Social
guide	Social	Health	motivation	guide	ignorance
Health	Workplace –	self-		conflicts	discontent
competence	Environment	determination		Meaningfulness	
	work				
	environment				
	Working hours				
	pay				
	recruitment				
	Social				

Source: own illustration

The results consistently show that all respondents consider all main categories important for their motivation: recognition, employer attractiveness, flexibility, personal development, and working conditions. External appreciation and the option of working from home are also important.

In addition to the consistent results of the categorization in the banking sector, differences also emerge regarding the key motivations of the respondents. These key motivations are of particular importance to the respondents’ motivation and are illustrated in Table 3, “Key Motivations in the Banking Sector.”

Table 3: Key motivational factors in the banking sector

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5
Active Clerk	Active Manager	Active Manager	Changed Clerk	Eliminated Returnees
employer attractiveness	employer attractiveness	employer attractiveness	employer attractiveness	employer attractiveness
work environment	Job satisfaction	Job satisfaction	justice	flexibility
enjoyment of the task	flexibility	work	workload	recognition
flexibility	recognition	environment	flexibility	
recognition	development	workload	development	
development		flexibility	social	
		recognition		
		development		

Source: own illustration

The results show that managers generally cite the same motivational factors as administrative staff and returning employees. Differences emerge in the emphasis placed on job satisfaction by managers. Two participants considered the work environment particularly important. Only one participant emphasized the enjoyment of the work itself. For the other participants, this aspect was subsumed under the category of work environment or job satisfaction.

It is worth noting that salary does not play a significant role. Only participant No. 4 mentioned it in connection with the concept of fairness. Thus, remuneration is a prerequisite but not the primary reason for entering or returning to the banking profession. Pay appears to be more of a hygiene factor than a motivator (Herzberg et al. 2017).

An influence on the results due to the composition of the sample (e.g., the representation of executives or the institutional context) cannot be completely ruled out.

Overall, the survey provided a consistent picture of the motivations for entering or returning to the banking profession.

Care area

Six main categories were formed from 22 categories in the transcripts, which in turn were derived from 539 codes in the transcripts. The motivation of skilled workers to enter the nursing profession thus extends to various areas. The category structure of the six main categories and the 22 categories is shown in Figure 2 “Category structure” in the nursing sector.

The results consistently show that respondents consider the main categories of employer attractiveness, development opportunities, flexibility, recognition, workplace attractiveness, and negative factors to be important for their motivation. Employer attractiveness is mentioned most frequently, followed by development opportunities, recognition of the profession, and the attractiveness of the immediate workplace. Negative factors are mentioned, but the focus is on the future and improving working conditions and the overall framework.

The categories are divided into the following subcategories: work environment, management structures, framework conditions and working time models, employee orientation and development, including career paths and the image of the nursing profession. Financial aspects and the organizational structures of the institutions are also considered. Negative factors include the subcategories of fear, workload, lack of motivation, discrimination, and uncontrolled recruitment.

Figure 1: Category structure in the nursing sector

Main categories					
Employer attractiveness	Development	flexibility	recognition	Workplace attractiveness	Negative factors
Work environment Management structures Working hours Salary Employee orientation Framework conditions Appreciation of employees	Employee development Development of the professional group Career paths	Working time models Job Profile	Image of nursing Delegation of responsibility social standing Meaningfulness	Order of the institution Structural prerequisites	Fear Burden Lack of motivation Discrimination Uncontrolled recruiting

Source: own illustration

These key areas are of particular importance for the motivation of the respondents and are shown in the following Table.

Table 4: Key areas of motivation in the nursing sector

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4	Subject 5
Eliminated student	Active Care manager	Eliminated Students	Active Care manager	Active Trainees
Employer attractiveness recognition Development flexibility Negative factors Workplace attractiveness	Employer attractiveness flexibility Negative factors recognition Development Workplace attractiveness	Employer attractiveness flexibility Development recognition Negative factors Workplace attractiveness	Employer attractiveness flexibility Development recognition Negative factors	Employer attractiveness Workplace attractiveness Development Negative factors recognition flexibility

Source: own illustration

It turns out that managers generally cite the same motivational factors as employees who are developing their skills, have left the company, or are undergoing further training. All agree on the strong emphasis placed on employer attractiveness. Differences arise in the emphasis placed on flexibility, development opportunities, professional recognition, negative factors, and the actual working conditions. This picture could point to structural problems in

the labor market for nursing staff (e.g. wage compression, skills gaps or restrictions due to collective bargaining).

While salary wasn't the primary factor influencing the attractiveness of the profession for two participants, a direct question about their desired salary revealed that four participants' expectations were about one third higher than the standard rate. Only one participant, a manager, indicated a salary aligned with the current rate or even lower. However, all participants expressed support for a performance-based pay. Three participants – two students and one manager – emphasized the importance of clearly defined roles and the inclusion of different qualifications in the compensation scale.

The test subjects agree on the possibilities for further development and career advancement; however, the topic is more present for the two test subjects who are already on this path, followed by a person in management and the person in training.

A common thematic focus is on high-quality patient care. One participant emphasized the negative factors related to the onboarding process, expectations, and roles of nursing staff in connection with onboarding concepts and the quality of care.

Overall, the survey provided a homogeneous picture of the motivation to enter or return to the nursing profession.

Discussion

The following section discusses the similarities and differences in motivation and the understanding of roles of specialists in both industries.

Comparison of Motivation in Nursing and Banking

The motivation of professionals in banks is shaped by particular challenges such as high-performance demands and a dynamic economic environment (Andrae, 2018). This was confirmed by the survey results, as performance demands directly impact on employee motivation. In contrast to the literature, regulatory requirements, for example, only had an indirect effect on motivation among the respondents.

In the nursing field, motivation is influenced by social aspects, including high-quality patient care (Auffenberg & Heß, 2021). These aspects described in the literature are also reflected in the survey results.

A self-determined life and the working conditions also influence the motivation of nursing staff to remain in the profession (Auffenberg & Heß, 2021). This finding was confirmed by the present research and also applies to the respondents from the banking sector.

In both sectors, an interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among managers was observed, as described by Andrae (2018) and Auffenberg & Heß (2021). Intrinsic motivation is fostered by autonomy, competence, and social relatedness, while extrinsic motivation is influenced by financial incentives and career opportunities (Heckhausen-Heckhausen, 2018; Schäfer, 2021, pp. 100–101). This study also confirms these findings.

However, according to the results of this study, a difference lies in the weighting and the respective combination of motivational profiles derived from the categories. In the banking sector, extrinsic motivation is more pronounced, reflected in working conditions and employer attractiveness. In contrast, intrinsic motives predominate in the nursing sector, particularly in the category of employer attractiveness, which includes high-quality nursing care and the professional standing of the nursing profession.

Based on Maslow's model (Maslow & Frager, 1987), this study also revealed that the motives from Maslow's hierarchy of needs were reflected in the categories of both industries. This also applies to the motivators presented by Herzberg, such as recognition or personal development, and to hygiene factors such as salary, specifically in this study under the categories of fairness or working conditions (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Furthermore, the study confirmed that personal goal achievement and autonomy are frequently emphasized in Western, individualistic cultures (Hofstede, 2013; Markus & Kitayama, 2014).

Similarities between banks and the care sector

Similarities can be seen in the areas of employer attractiveness, the working environment and framework conditions, the social sphere, the enjoyment of the given task, flexibility, working hours, fairness, as well as career and employee development.

Human resources in organizations are comprised of the workforce that is available for a contractually agreed working time (Bendel, 2022). Human resource management controls this resource (Klimecki & Gmür, 2005). Skilled workers, due in part to their motivation, are an important link in the value chain of companies (Pietsch, 2017). This aspect was supported by both the results

from the banking and healthcare sectors. The areas of working conditions, compensation, meaningfulness of work, and development are particularly noteworthy.

These results should be viewed in the context of the qualitative and exploratory nature of this study, as well as the limited and heterogeneous sample.

Human resource policies in banks and the healthcare sector are thus characterized by a number of specific features that affect the recruitment of skilled workers and staff development. In both sectors, attractive working conditions should be created to remain competitive in the contest for highly qualified professionals (Steffens & Gerhard, 2012; DESTATIS, 2025).

Differences between banks and the care sector

In contrast to the banking sector, the care sector focuses on the patients receiving care. Professional care is the primary motivation for employment. Financial incentives exist, but they are not the main motivator. Flexible working hours, work-life balance, societal recognition of the profession, recognition within one's own professional group, and career opportunities all play a significant role.

These sector-specific motivational patterns are consistent with the self-determination theory (Marquardt, 2022), particularly regarding the different emphasis on autonomy and social relatedness in nursing compared to external regulation and organizational incentives in banking.

Banks

The relationship between private households and banks is described as the “house bank principle.” This means that a close customer-bank relationship (“know-your-customer”) exists (Römberg & Wagner, 2014). This pattern emerged consistently across multiple interview codes related to work environment and client interaction.

A positive image of the banking sector also includes the publicly perceived importance of the banks' economic function (Hellenkamp, 2015). This aspect was also highly significant in the research, particularly in the category of employer attractiveness.

Although external factors such as increasing competition (Smeets et al., 2023) or the ongoing consolidation process of banks (Gilquin 2014) indirectly negatively impact on working conditions, according to our results, meaningful

developments, for example regarding sustainability (Klagge, 2023), provide positive incentives.

Motivational personnel policies in banks exhibit specific characteristics shaped by regulatory requirements, technological advancements, industry-specific risks, and intense competitive pressure. This influences recruitment, employee management, compensation systems, and personnel development (Kirmße, 2017).

Healthcare

Personnel policy in the nursing sector is characterized by intense competition. In Germany, in 2020, 486,100 people were employed in nursing services in hospitals, an increase of 18%, while the combined number in nursing homes and outpatient care services rose by 40% compared to 10 years prior (DESTATIS, 2022). The number of nursing staff increased by 61% in outpatient care services and by 30% in inpatient settings. Almost two-thirds of these individuals work part-time. Despite the high number of employees, the demand for more staff is rising due to increasing care needs (DESTATIS, 2022).

These figures illustrate the significant resources that nursing staff represents within the nursing care sector. In addition, there are management challenges such as the location of the facility, working hours, shift work, digitalization or collective bargaining agreement (Auffenberg & Heß, 2021; Bayerische Staatskanzlei, 2006; ISAR SAS, 2023; VdPB, 2020).

In summary, it is clear that the motivation of skilled workers is a complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation is fostered by autonomy, competence, and social integration, while extrinsic motivation is influenced by financial incentives and career opportunities. Clear goal setting and a supportive, transformational leadership style are crucial for maintaining motivation in the long term.

Conclusion

Attracting and retaining skilled workers is a key challenge for both banks and healthcare providers. Both sectors are experiencing a shortage of skilled workers, but the underlying causes and effective motivational measures differ significantly. The following section presents differentiated and practical

measures that banks and healthcare providers can implement to increase motivation and thus improve recruitment.

Summary of results

The results of the qualitative interviews were analyzed separately for the banking and healthcare sectors. In the banking sector, six main categories were identified that shape the motivation of skilled workers: recognition, employer attractiveness, flexibility, development, working conditions, and job insecurity. These factors are relevant for all respondents, with appreciation, employer attractiveness, flexibility, and development opportunities being particularly emphasized. Salary, on the other hand, plays only a minor role and is considered more of a prerequisite (a basic requirement) than a primary motivator. Differences emerge in the weighting of individual aspects: managers, for example, emphasize job satisfaction, while others highlight the work environment or the enjoyment of the work itself.

In the nursing sector, six main categories were also identified: employer attractiveness, flexibility, development, recognition, workplace attractiveness, and negative factors. Employer attractiveness, development opportunities, professional recognition and the attractiveness of the specific workplace are particularly important. While negative factors are mentioned, the respondents' focus is on improvements and future prospects. Salary is not the primary reason for choosing a career in nursing, although many desire performance-based pay and compensation proportionate to their qualifications. Development opportunities and career prospects are crucial for many interviewees, and so are the quality of care and the working conditions.

A comparison reveals that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors play a role in both sectors. In the banking sector, extrinsic motives such as employer attractiveness and flexibility dominate, while in the nursing sector, intrinsic motives such as a sense of purpose and social recognition are more prominent. Similarities between the two sectors lie in the importance of employer attractiveness, a good working environment, flexibility, development opportunities, and appreciation. An important difference is that in nursing the quality of care and the social significance of the profession are particularly important, while in the banking sector, the image and economic function of the bank play a greater role.

Overall, it is evident that the motivation of skilled workers in both sectors is an interplay of various factors, and successful human resource management must consider these sector-specific motivational factors in order to attract and

retain skilled workers. These results also point to a structurally determined divergence of motivational regimes in different sectors, and not merely to individual preference patterns.

Recommendations for action

The motivation of skilled workers in banks can be improved with the following measures:

Figure 3: Recommendations for action in the banking sector

Attractive compensation and bonus models
Performance-related bonuses (e.g., target achievement bonuses, team targets instead of
Flexible additional benefits such as company pension schemes, stock options or profit
Benefits such as job tickets, meal allowances, employee discounts or health programs.
Flexible work arrangements
Hybrid working (combining home office and on-site presence).
Flexible working hours and sabbatical options.
Part-time models also for managers.
Career and further training opportunities
Individual development programs and internal career paths.
Support for further training, e.g. for bank specialists, financial advisors or digitalization
Mentoring programs and leadership development.
Culture and orientation towards meaning
Promoting an open, innovative-friendly corporate culture.
Sustainability projects and social engagement (e.g., financial education for young people).
Creating meaning through peer-to-peer consultation instead of simply selling products.
Employer branding and modern recruitment
Authentic employer communication via social media, podcasts or career pages.
Employees as brand ambassadors.
Cooperations with universities and dual study programs.

Source: own illustration

The following measures can help increase motivation in the nursing sector:

Figure 2: Recommendations for action in the nursing sector

Fair and transparent payment
Above-standard wages and bonuses (night, weekend, and holiday shifts).
Bonus payments for special achievements or team goals.
Financial recognition of further training or additional qualifications.
Improve working conditions
Realistic staffing ratios to reduce overload.
Digital documentation systems to relieve administrative tasks.
Time for care instead of bureaucracy – clear division of tasks.
Appreciation and team culture
Regular feedback sessions and a culture of recognition.
Team events, supervision, and psychological support.
Leadership training to promote empathic leadership.
Work-life balance
Co-creation of shift schedules, flexible shift models, preferred shifts.
Support with childcare or care for relatives.
Sabbaticals or health leave.
Career and development prospects
Specialist career paths (e.g., practical instruction, wound management, ward management).
Cooperations with technical colleges and universities.
Promotion of part-time study programs and further development.
Meaningfulness and employer image
Emphasis on the social importance of care work.
Employee participation in decision-making processes.
Positive portrayal of nursing in public and media.

Source: own illustration

Furthermore, common success factors for both industries can also be identified:

Table 5: Recommendations for action in the nursing sector

Area	measure	Effect
Employer Branding	Building a clear, authentic employer brand	Increase visibility and attractiveness
Digitization	Digital tools in recruiting (e.g., application apps, video interviews)	Lowering entry barriers
flexibility	Hybrid work models, individual working time solutions	Adapting to life phases
participation	Participation in innovative projects or idea competitions	Motivation through participation
Health & Wellbeing	Workplace health promotion, psychological support	Sustainable performance
Diversity & Inclusion	Promoting diverse lifestyles and backgrounds	Larger talent base and greater attractiveness

Source: own illustration

In summary, banks need to modernize their employer brand and emphasize purpose and development opportunities. Care providers, on the other hand, need to improve working conditions, promote recognition, and highlight the sense of purpose. Regardless of the sector, motivation arises when work is perceived as meaningful, valued, and conducive to personal growth.

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