THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEGOTIATING TECHNIQUES, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND NURSES' EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN INPATIENT HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the relationships between the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, the organisational environment, and emotional well-being among nurses working in inpatient healthcare institutions. A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted using an anonymous questionnaire, developed on the basis of previous scientific literature and validated theoretical models. Convenience sampling was applied. A total of 510 questionnaires were distributed, of which 384 were returned completed (the response rate was 75.3%). Respondents evaluated the questionnaire's statements using a five-point Likert scale. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, while descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank correlation, the Kruskal-Wallis test, and multiple linear regression analysis were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. The study demonstrated the excellent internal consistency of the questionnaire (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.943$). Statistically significant positive associations were identified between negotiating techniques, conflict management, organisational environment and emotional well-being. The strongest relationship was observed between conflict management and the organisational environment ($r = 0.523$; $p < 0.001$). Multiple regression analysis showed that conflict management and the organisational environment were independently associated with nurses' emotional well-being, whereas negotiating techniques did not reach statistical significance. The findings suggest that supportive organisational environments, constructive conflict management and respectful communication are associated with better emotional well-being among nurses. Considering that the study was based on a convenience sample and self-reported data collected in inpatient healthcare institutions in western Lithuania, the findings should be interpreted within these methodological limitations.

KEY WORDS: *conflict management, negotiating techniques, emotional well-being, nurses, organisational environment*.

JEL CODES: I10, I19, J28, M12, M54.
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Introduction

The healthcare sector is recognised as one of the most demanding professional environments, where employees are continuously exposed to high emotional demands, intense communication, responsibility-related pressure, and the need for rapid decision-making. In such settings, interpersonal conflicts are an inevitable component of everyday professional practice, arising from differences in workload, professional perspectives, communication, and organisational processes. Previous research has demonstrated that poorly managed conflicts are associated with lower emotional well-being, reduced psychological safety, impaired teamwork, and a less favourable organisational climate. Consequently, constructive negotiating techniques and effective conflict management have received increasing attention, as important organisational resources for supporting healthcare professionals and improving workplace functioning.

Employees' emotional well-being has become an important concern for healthcare systems worldwide. Nurses are particularly vulnerable, because their professional responsibilities require continuous interaction

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with patients, relatives and multidisciplinary teams, while simultaneously coping with substantial emotional and organisational demands. Previous studies have suggested that emotional well-being is associated not only with employees' quality of life, but also with patient safety, quality of care, organisational commitment and staff retention. Likewise, ineffective communication and unresolved workplace conflicts have been associated with increased emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and weaker organisational commitment.

These challenges have become increasingly relevant in Lithuania, as healthcare institutions continue to experience workforce shortages, increasing workloads and growing emotional demands. Although international literature has extensively examined occupational stress, burnout and working conditions among nurses, considerably less attention has been devoted to the role of negotiating techniques as part of conflict management, and their relationship with emotional well-being. Furthermore, evidence regarding these relationships in the Lithuanian healthcare context remains limited. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how negotiating techniques, conflict management and organisational environment are associated with nurses' emotional well-being in inpatient healthcare institutions.

Against this background, the present study sought to examine the relationships between the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, organisational environment and nurses' emotional well-being. Specifically, the study evaluated nurses' perceptions of these constructs, explored their interrelationships, assessed differences according to selected demographic characteristics, and identified factors independently associated with emotional well-being. Based on previous theoretical and empirical evidence, it was expected that more favourable evaluations of negotiating techniques, conflict management and organisational environment would be associated with better emotional well-being among nurses.

The findings of this study may contribute to a better understanding of organisational factors associated with nurses' emotional well-being, and provide evidence for the development of interventions aimed at strengthening communication, conflict management competencies and supportive organisational environments in healthcare institutions. The following section presents the theoretical background underlying the study.

Literature review

Negotiating and conflict management are recognised as essential organisational processes that contribute to effective communication, teamwork, and employees' emotional well-being. Negotiating is understood as a purposeful communication process through which individuals seek to reconcile different interests and achieve mutually acceptable solutions (Pérez-Yus et al., 2020). In organisations, negotiations occur not only during formal decision-making, but also in everyday professional interactions involving workload distribution, responsibilities and interpersonal communication. Interest-based and integrative negotiation approaches emphasise cooperation, trust and long-term relationships, whereas positional negotiations primarily focus on defending individual interests (Elgoibar et al., 2021). Previous studies indicate that constructive negotiating strategies, supported by active listening, empathy, emotional regulation and respectful communication, are associated with better teamwork, stronger psychological safety and higher job satisfaction (Iqbal et al., 2025; Mogård et al., 2022; Sakhi, Magana, 2024). Conversely, aggressive communication, manipulation and emotional pressure are associated with increased interpersonal conflict, emotional exhaustion and a less favourable organisational climate (Belgasm et al., 2025).

Conflict is considered an inevitable component of organisational life, arising from differences in interests, values, goals and resource allocation (Ronquillo et al., 2023). Although conflicts may facilitate innovation and improve decision-making when managed constructively, ineffective conflict management is associated with emotional tension, impaired collaboration and reduced organisational effectiveness. The Thomas-Kilmann model identifies five conflict management styles, of which collaboration is regarded as the most constructive, because it seeks mutually beneficial long-term solutions (Pennington, 2024). Collaborative conflict management has been associated with better teamwork, greater job satisfaction and a more positive organisational environment (Yin et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence and psychological safety further facilitate constructive conflict resolution, by encouraging open communication, trust and collaborative problem-solving (Paredes-Saavedra et al., 2024), whereas unresolved conflicts are associated with burnout, emotional exhaustion and lower job satisfaction (Maslach, Leiter, 2016).

The application of negotiating techniques represents an important component of effective conflict management, because workplace conflicts frequently arise from differences in communication, responsibilities and professional expectations (Tabassum, 2020). Constructive negotiations emphasise problem-solving rather than confrontation, and rely on active listening, empathy, emotional regulation and collaboration, to facilitate mutually acceptable solutions (Babatunde et al., 2023). The organisational culture and managerial communication also influence conflict resolution, as supportive leadership and employee involvement promote constructive dialogue, whereas authoritarian communication contributes to organisational distrust and emotional exhaustion (Khaw et al., 2022). Furthermore, communication and conflict management training has been associated with improved collaboration and a more positive organisational climate (Nikitara et al., 2024).

Employees' emotional well-being is closely related to their ability to cope with workplace demands and maintain positive interpersonal relationships (Sarkar et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that prolonged interpersonal conflicts are associated with increased stress, burnout, reduced organisational commitment, impaired teamwork, and greater emotional labour (Seyffert et al., 2024; Mwakyusa, Mcharo, 2024). These associations appear particularly relevant in healthcare professions, where employees are continuously exposed to emotional demands, intense communication and multidisciplinary teamwork (Ahmad, 2022).

Healthcare organisations represent particularly complex working environments, in which communication quality and conflict management may influence both employees' experiences and organisational functioning. Previous research suggests that communication failures and unresolved conflicts are associated with lower psychological well-being, and may adversely affect teamwork and quality of care (Jelinčić et al., 2025). Nurses are particularly vulnerable to emotional exhaustion, because of sustained emotional labour, high workloads and continuous interpersonal interactions (Zhang et al., 2025). At the same time, psychological safety, emotional intelligence, supportive leadership and constructive conflict management have been associated with better emotional well-being and more effective collaboration among healthcare professionals (Fukami, 2025). Collectively, the existing evidence suggests that negotiating techniques, conflict management and the organisational environment are closely interconnected factors that may be associated with nurses' emotional well-being, providing the theoretical basis for the present study.

Research methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted using an anonymous self-administered questionnaire to examine the relationships between negotiating techniques, conflict management, the organisational environment, and nurses' emotional well-being. The study was carried out in inpatient healthcare institutions in western Lithuania, with registered nurses selected as the target population, because of their continuous involvement in teamwork, intense communication and conflict situations.

The questionnaire was developed by the author based on previous scientific literature and established theoretical models, including the Rahim Organisational Conflict Inventory, the Thomas-Kilmann conflict management model, principles of interest-based negotiation, theories of emotional well-being and burnout, and the concept of psychological safety (Long, Long, 2022; Tomaszewska et al., 2024; Belgasm et al., 2025; Jelinčić et al., 2025; Iqbal et al., 2025; Sakhi, Magana, 2024; Pennington, 2024; Mogård et al., 2022). The instrument consisted of 40 items grouped into four domains: negotiating techniques, conflict management, emotional well-being, and organisational environment, together with respondents' demographic characteristics. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example statements included: 'Conflicts in my workplace are usually resolved through constructive dialogue' and 'I feel emotionally supported in my work environment.'

A pilot study involving 25 nurses was conducted to assess the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. Based on participants' feedback, minor linguistic revisions were made before the main survey. The final questionnaire demonstrated good internal consistency, which was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

A convenience sampling method was applied. A total of 510 questionnaires were distributed to eligible nurses, and 384 completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 75.3%. Only registered nurses employed in inpatient healthcare institutions who agreed voluntarily to participate were included

in the study. Questionnaires containing substantial missing data were excluded from the analysis. Because the study employed convenience sampling and included nurses from inpatient healthcare institutions in western Lithuania only, the findings should be interpreted within these methodological limitations.

Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha coefficients, Spearman's rank correlation, the Kruskal-Wallis test, and multiple linear regression analysis were applied. Statistical significance was established at $p < 0.05$.

The study complied with the principles of voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and data protection. Participants received information about the purpose of the study, and provided informed consent by completing the anonymous questionnaire. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

Results

The questionnaire demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.943$) (Table 1).

Table 1. Internal consistency results of individual questionnaire blocks

Questionnaire Block	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Application of negotiating techniques	10	0.884
Conflict management experiences	10	0.910
Emotional well-being	10	0.922
Organisational environment and the role of managers	10	0.911
Entire questionnaire	40	0.943

The study involved 384 nurses working in inpatient healthcare institutions in western Lithuania. In order to describe the study sample, respondents' demographic and professional characteristics were analysed: age, work experience and education (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic and professional characteristics of the respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Age (in years)	<25	38	9.9
	25–35	91	23.7
	36–45	113	29.4
	46–55	88	22.9
	≥56	54	14.1
Work experience (in years)	<1	29	7.6
	1–10	110	28.6
	11–20	132	34.4
	>20	113	29.4
Education	Higher non-university (college)	221	57.6
	University (Bachelor's/Master's)	156	40.7
	Other	7	1.7

In order to evaluate respondents' attitudes toward the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, emotional well-being and the organisational environment, means and standard deviations were calculated for each questionnaire scale (Table 3).

Table 3. Means and standard deviations of questionnaire scales

Scale	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
Application of negotiating techniques	3.62	0.56
Conflict management	3.33	0.65
Emotional well-being	3.17	0.69
Organisational environment	3.28	0.65

The application of negotiating techniques received the highest mean score (M = 3.62; SD = 0.56), whereas emotional well-being received the lowest mean score (M = 3.17; SD = 0.69).

Table 4. Relationships between the main research variables

Variables	Application of negotiating techniques	Conflict management	Emotional well-being	Organisational environment
Application of negotiating techniques	–			
Conflict management	0.373**	–		
Emotional well-being	0.229**	0.456**	–	
Organisational environment	0.398**	0.523**	0.456**	–

** – correlation is statistically significant when $p < 0.001$

Statistically significant positive correlations were identified between all study variables ($p < 0.001$). The strongest correlation was observed between conflict management and the organisational environment ($r = 0.523$), whereas the weakest correlation was found between negotiating techniques and emotional well-being ($r = 0.229$).

To determine whether respondents' attitudes towards the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, emotional well-being and the organisational environment differed according to demographic indicators, a group comparison analysis was performed (Table 5).

Table 5. A comparison of scale scores according to the respondents' age

Scale	χ^2	p
Application of negotiating techniques	4.281	0.369
Conflict management	5.104	0.277
Emotional well-being	6.882	0.142
Organisational environment	3.964	0.411

The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between different age groups ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that respondents of different ages evaluated similarly the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, emotional well-being and the organisational environment.

Table 6. Comparison of scale scores according to respondents' education

Scale	χ^2	p
Application of negotiating techniques	3.917	0.418
Conflict management	4.762	0.312
Emotional well-being	5.004	0.287
Organisational environment	4.118	0.390

No statistically significant differences according to respondents' education were observed ($p > 0.05$).

Table 7. A comparison of scale scores according to work experience

Scale	χ^2	p
Application of negotiating techniques	6.118	0.191
Conflict management	7.004	0.136
Emotional well-being	11.284	0.024*
Organisational environment	5.774	0.217

* – the difference is statistically significant when $p < 0.05$.

The analysis of differences according to work experience revealed that emotional well-being scale scores differed statistically significantly between respondents with different levels of work experience ($p = 0.024$). Respondents with longer work experience evaluated their emotional well-being more favourably than nurses with shorter work experience.

No statistically significant differences according to work experience were identified for the remaining questionnaire scales ($p > 0.05$).

In order to determine which factors were associated with respondents' emotional well-being, a multiple linear regression analysis was performed (Table 8).

Table 8. Regression analysis results of emotional well-being

Independent variables	β	t	p
Application of negotiating techniques	0.118	1.942	0.053
Conflict management	0.315	5.881	<0.001*
Organisational environment	0.318	5.994	<0.001*

* – the difference is statistically significant when $p < 0.05$

The coefficient of determination indicated that the model explained 27.2% of the variance in emotional well-being ($R^2 = 0.272$), while the adjusted coefficient of determination reached 0.266 (Adj. $R^2 = 0.266$).

Regression analysis demonstrated that conflict management was independently associated with emotional well-being ($\beta = 0.315$; $p < 0.001$). The organisational environment was also independently associated with emotional well-being ($\beta = 0.318$; $p < 0.001$). Although negotiating techniques did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.053$), a positive association was observed.

Discussion

The findings of the present study showed that nurses evaluated the application of negotiating techniques and conflict management relatively positively, whereas emotional well-being received lower ratings. These findings are consistent with recent international evidence indicating that constructive conflict management and supportive organisational environments are associated with better psychological well-being among healthcare professionals. Long and Long (2022) reported that collaboration-based conflict management strategies were associated with improved teamwork, lower emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction. Similarly, the present study identified a moderate positive association between conflict management and emotional well-being ($r = 0.456$).

The strongest relationship observed in this study was between conflict management and organisational environment ($r = 0.523$). Comparable findings were reported by Bamforth et al. (2023), who demonstrated that greater psychological safety and managerial support were associated with better employee well-being and lower burnout. Likewise, conflict management and organisational environment were independently associated with emotional well-being in the present study ($\beta = 0.315$ and $\beta = 0.318$ respectively). Similar associations between collaborative conflict management, psychological safety and lower psychological distress have also been reported by de Lisser et al. (2024).

Emotional well-being demonstrated the lowest mean score among the evaluated domains ($M = 3.17$; $SD = 0.69$), which is consistent with previous evidence indicating high levels of stress, anxiety, emotional exhaustion and burnout among nurses (Tomaszewska et al., 2024). Although negotiating techniques were positively associated with emotional well-being, this relationship did not reach statistical significance in the regression model ($p = 0.053$). Öztürk Eyimaya et al. (2026) similarly suggest that communication and emotional intelligence training may improve communication competencies, whereas improvements in emotional well-being appear to depend on broader organisational conditions, including psychological safety and constructive conflict management.

No statistically significant differences were identified according to respondents' age or education, whereas emotional well-being differed according to work experience. Similar observations were reported by Babapour et al. (2022), who found that nurses with longer professional experience tended to report better emotional adaptation and lower levels of burnout.

Overall, the present findings are consistent with recent international literature, suggesting that conflict management, organisational environment and psychological safety are closely associated with nurses' emotional well-being. These findings support the importance of strengthening communication, conflict management competencies and supportive organisational environments in healthcare settings.

Conclusions

The results of the study showed that nurses evaluated the application of negotiating techniques and conflict management in healthcare organisations relatively favourably, whereas emotional well-being received the lowest mean score among the evaluated domains. The application of negotiating techniques received the highest mean score among all evaluated domains.

Statistically significant positive relationships were identified between the application of negotiating techniques, conflict management, the organisational environment and emotional well-being. The strongest relationship was observed between conflict management and the organisational environment, while regression analysis demonstrated that conflict management and the organisational environment were independently associated with emotional well-being.

The findings suggest that constructive conflict management, respectful communication, psychological safety and a collaborative organisational culture are associated with better emotional well-being among nurses.

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DERYBŲ TECHNIKŲ TAIKYMO, KONFLIKTŲ VALDYMO IR SLAUGYTOJŲ EMOCINĖS GEROVĖS SĄSAJOS STACIONARINĖSE ASMENS SVEIKATOS PRIEŽIŪROS ĮSTAIGOSE

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos slaugytojų, dirbančių stacionarinėse asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose, derybų technikų taikymo, konfliktų valdymo, organizacinės aplinkos ir emocinės gerovės sąsajos. Tyrimui taikytas kiekybinis skerspjūvio tyrimo dizainas, naudojant anoniminę anketą, parengtą remiantis moksline literatūra ir pripažintais teoriniais modeliais. Taikyta patogioji (angl. *convenience*) atranka. Iš viso buvo išdalinta 510 anketų, iš kurių užpildytos grąžintos 384 (atsako dažnis – 75,3 %). Respondentai teiginius vertino pagal penkių balų Likerto skalę. Klausimyno vidinis suderinamumas buvo įvertintas Cronbacho alfa koeficientu, o duomenų analizei naudota aprašomoji statistika, Spearmano ranginė koreliacija, Kruskalio-Walliso testas ir daugialypė tiesinė regresinė analizė, atlikta naudojant IBM SPSS Statistics 29 programą. Tyrimas parodė labai gerą klausimyno vidinį suderinamumą (Cronbacho $\alpha = 0{,}943$). Nustatytos statistiškai reikšmingos teigiamos derybų technikų taikymo, konfliktų valdymo, organizacinės aplinkos ir emocinės gerovės tarpusavio sąsajos. Stipriausias nustatytas konfliktų valdymo ir organizacinės aplinkos tarpusavio ryšys ($r = 0{,}523$; $p < 0{,}001$). Daugialypė regresinė analizė atskleidė, kad konfliktų valdymas ir organizacinė aplinka buvo nepriklausomai susijusi su slaugytojų emocine gerove, o derybų technikų taikymas statistinio reikšmingumo nepasiekė. Tyrimo rezultatai leidžia teigti, kad palanki organizacinė aplinka, konstruktyvus konfliktų valdymas ir pagarbi komunikacija lemia geresnę slaugytojų emocinę gerovę. Kadangi tyrimas buvo atliktas taikant patogiąją atranką ir remiantis pačių respondentų pateiktais duomenimis, kurie surinkti stacionarinėse asmens sveikatos priežiūros įstaigose Vakarų Lietuvoje, gauti rezultatai turėtų būti interpretuojami atsižvelgiant į šiuos metodologinius ribotumus.

RAKTINIAI ŽODŽIAI: *konfliktų valdymas, derybų technikos, emocinė gerovė, slaugytojai, organizacinė aplinka.*

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