



Determinants of Work–Life Balance and Its Effect on Job Satisfaction Among Nurse Mothers in Private Hospitals: A Study from Kerala.

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the factors affecting work-life balance and how it impacts job satisfaction for nurse mothers working in private hospitals in Kerala. We collected primary data using a structured questionnaire. We used descriptive statistics and reliability tests to understand the characteristics of respondents and to confirm the scales. Factor analysis helped us identify the main components of work-life balance. We conducted correlation and multiple regression analyses to explore the link between work-life balance and job satisfaction. The results show that rotational shifts, heavy workload, and overtime have a negative impact on work-life balance. Organizational support and flexible scheduling help employees manage their family and work roles. A significant positive relationship exists between work-life balance and job satisfaction. The study highlights that supportive workplace practices improve employee well-being and retention. Better work-life balance also leads to improved healthcare service quality. The research underscores the need for family-friendly policies in private hospitals.

Keywords: Work–life balance, job satisfaction, nurse mothers, private hospitals, organisational support, healthcare workforce.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector relies heavily on the continuous availability and commitment of nursing professionals. They play a critical role in patient care and hospital services. In recent years, more married women and mothers have joined the nursing workforce. This shift has highlighted the challenge of balancing work responsibilities with family obligations. Nurse mothers often deal with irregular hours, rotating shifts, night duties, and heavy workloads. These factors make it tough to handle childcare and household duties effectively. This role conflict can lead to stress, decreased motivation, and lower job satisfaction. It ultimately impacts employee retention and the quality of patient care. At the same time, support measures like flexible scheduling, maternity-related provisions, and supportive supervision can help employees maintain a good balance between work and family life. In this context, this study looks at the factors affecting work-life balance among nurse mothers in private

hospitals. It also analyzes how work-life balance affects their job satisfaction, aiming to provide insights for better workforce management and healthcare services.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the main work-related factors and institutional support affecting the work-life balance of nurse mothers in private hospitals.
2. To examine the job satisfaction level of nurse mothers and understand how work-life balance influences their satisfaction at the workplace.
3. To analyse the relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction using statistical methods.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study is important because it focuses on a critical but under-studied topic in the private healthcare industry that is the work life balance of nurse mothers and how it affects job satisfaction. The nurses are the core of the hospital service delivery, and the occurrence of role conflict between the professional and maternal role can negatively influence the lives of the employees and patient care quality. The study will offer empirical evidence in relation to the influence of working conditions, shift schedules and institutional support systems on job satisfaction and retention among nursing employees by determining the occupational and organisational determinants of work-life balance. The results will aid hospital administrators and policymakers in the formulation of the supportive workplace policies including flexible scheduling, maternity support policies, and employee welfare policies. Finally, the study is relevant to the healthcare management and planning of the population health because improving work-life balance can lead to increased workforce stability, turnover, and increased healthcare service outcomes.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to nurse mothers who work in the allopathic hospitals in the state of Kerala, in particular, their employment conditions and family roles. The occupational factors that are studied will be the choice of the selected occupational factors which will consist of the shift work, workload, overtime, and night duties as well as the organisational support systems such as maternity leave provisions, supervisory support and flexible scheduling arrangements. It examines the effect of these factors on the work-life balance of nurse mothers (and vice versa) and the impact of work life balance on their degree of job satisfaction. The study is narrowed down to primary data of respondents in the targeted healthcare institutions and will not apply to nurses in government hospitals, other healthcare systems, or unmarried nurses who do not have children. Although the results give valuable information on how employment and people management in the private hospitals are conducted, the findings are mostly applicable in the same health facilities, and in the same socio-economic environment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) were able to conceptualise the idea of work-family conflict in terms of the incompatibility of work and family role demands. They singled out time-based, strain based and behaviour based conflicts. Such conflicts may be compounded by long hours and emotional labour in nursing especially among nurse mothers and hence well-being and job satisfaction.

The work-family border theory was developed by **Clark (2000)**, and it describes the way people handle the work-professional and private life boundaries. The paper has highlighted the importance of flexible schedules and supportive bosses in ensuring that employees have a balance. This balance is undermined by the use of stringent shifts and night shifts in hospitals, which affects nurse mothers.

Aiken et al. (2012) discovered that workload, excessive working hours and shortage of staffs greatly diminish job satisfaction of nurses and results in increased burnout. Positive management and sufficient staffing were linked with increased satisfaction and better quality care of patients.

According to **Noor (2011)**, workfamily conflict has a negative impact on job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing of female workers. The paper has brought out that organisational support, including flexible work schedules and maternity benefits, enhances the attitude of employees towards their job.

The researchers have noted that the irregular work schedules, working overtime, and the lack of rest time cause stress and dissatisfaction among the nurses in the private hospitals **Kaur and Kumar,(2019)**. Nurse mothers and married nurses had higher role conflict thus the need of policies aimed at friendly workplaces in the organization.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research is founded on a primary data taken out of nurse mothers who work in private allopathic Kerala hospitals with the help of a structured questionnaire. The statistical software was used to code and analyse the data. The first phase of analysis was the usage of descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, the percentage, the mean and the standard deviation used to summarise the socio-economic features of respondents and to see the overall trends of working conditions and family roles. In order to investigate the underlying dimensions of work-life balance, the exploratory factor analysis was adopted so as to cluster the similar variables (workload, shift duty, overtime and organisational support) into measurable constructs.. Pearson correlation test was used to determine the nature and magnitude of correlation between work-life balance and job satisfaction. Moreover, the analysis through multiple regression was employed as the major econometric model to predict the effect of the chosen occupational and organisational factors on the work-life balance, and then the influence of the work-life balance on job satisfaction.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Age Distribution of Nurse Mothers (n = 120)

Age Group (years)	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25	18	15.0
25–30	46	38.3
31–35	34	28.3
Above 35	22	18.4
Total	120	100

Interpretation

However, most of the respondents (38.3) are between the age of 25 and 30 years meaning that most nurse mothers are in the early years of their career and at the same time have childcare roles. This implies that there is a greater likelihood of role conflict as professional stabilisation and motherhood will be experienced simultaneously.

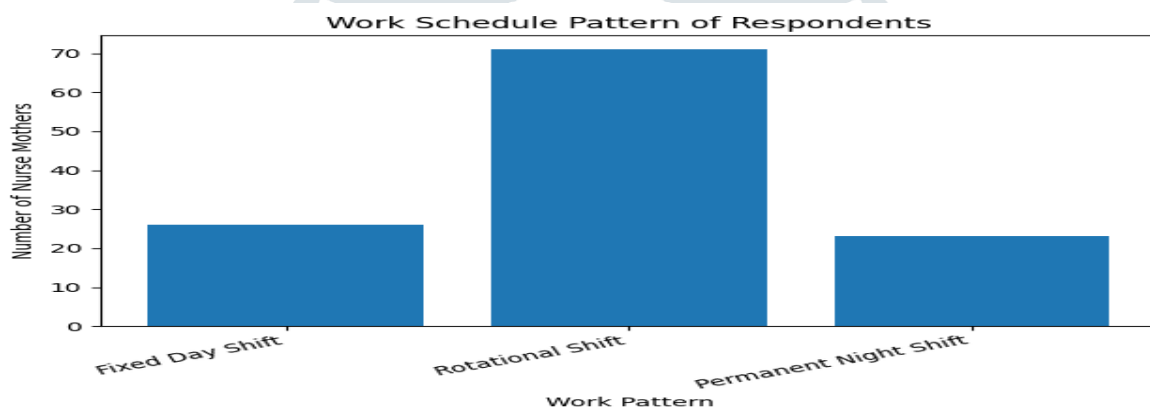
2. Working Conditions

Table 2: Work Schedule Pattern

Work Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
Fixed Day Shift	26	21.7
Rotational Shift	71	59.2
Permanent Night Shift	23	19.1
Total	120	100

Interpretation

Almost half of the nurses operate on rotational duty. Rotating affects biological rhythm and family habit, which is one of the key causes of work-life imbalance among nurse mothers..



3. Work–Life Balance Index

A composite Work–Life Balance (WLB) score was constructed using factor analysis.

Table 3: Reliability Test

Scale	Cronbach’s Alpha
Work–Life Balance Scale	0.84
Job Satisfaction Scale	0.81

Interpretation

Since Cronbach’s alpha values exceed 0.70, the scales are reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

4. Factor Analysis (Determinants of Work–Life Balance)

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix (Extract)

Variables	Factor Loading
Night duty frequency	0.78
Overtime hours	0.74
Workload pressure	0.71

Variables	Factor Loading
Lack of childcare support	0.69
Supervisor support	-0.65

Interpretation

There are high positive loadings on night duty, overtime and workload and this means that they have a huge impact on work-life conflict. Supervisor support is also negative and the supportive management increases the work-life balance.

5. Correlation Analysis

Table 5: Correlation between Work–Life Balance and Job Satisfaction

Variables	Correlation (r)	Significance (p)
Work–Life Balance & Job Satisfaction	0.62	0.000

Interpretation

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$) indicates a strong positive relationship. As work–life balance improves, job satisfaction also increases. The p -value < 0.05 confirms statistical significance.

6. Econometric Model – Multiple Regression

Model Specification

$$JS = \beta_0 + \beta_1(WLB) + \beta_2(\text{Shift}) + \beta_3(\text{Workload}) + \beta_4(\text{Overtime}) + \beta_5(\text{Organisational Support})$$

Where:

- JS = Job Satisfaction (dependent variable)
- WLB = Work–Life Balance
- ε = Error term

Table 6: Multiple Regression Results

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Significance
Work–Life Balance	0.58	7.92	0.000
Shift Duty	-0.31	-3.45	0.001
Workload	-0.27	-2.98	0.004
Overtime	-0.22	-2.54	0.012
Organisational Support	0.41	5.13	0.000
$R^2 = 0.64$			

Interpretation

The regression model explains **64% variation in job satisfaction**, indicating good model fit.

Key findings:

- Work–life balance has a strong positive effect on job satisfaction.
- Shift duty, workload, and overtime negatively affect satisfaction.
- Organisational support significantly improves job satisfaction.

Thus, improving working conditions and institutional support directly enhances nurse retention and performance.

Overall Conclusion from Analysis

The statistical and econometric findings have made it clear that the work life balance is a major indicator of job satisfaction by nurse mothers. Role conflict is due to occupational factors in form of rotational shifts, night duty and overtime, but organisational support mechanisms are protective factors. Consequently, the hospital management policies regarding flexible scheduling, childcare facilities and supportive supervision can significantly enhance employee satisfaction and retention, as well as help to offer better healthcare services delivery.

Hypotheses Formulation and Testing

Based on the objectives and econometric model, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 5 per cent level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Work–life balance has no significant effect on job satisfaction among nurse mothers.

H₁₁: Work–life balance has a significant effect on job satisfaction among nurse mothers.

Test Used: Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Work–Life Balance	0.58	7.92	0.000

Decision Rule:

If p-value < 0.05 → Reject the null hypothesis.

Result & Interpretation:

The p-value (0.000) is smaller than 0.05 thus the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, work life balance is statistically significant in terms of its positive impact on job satisfaction. This means that when there is an increase in the balance between the professional and family roles, the level of satisfaction increases among the nurse mothers.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: Shift duty does not significantly influence work–life balance among nurse mothers.

H₁₂: Shift duty significantly influences work–life balance among nurse mothers.

Test Used: Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Shift Duty	-0.31	-3.45	0.001

Result & Interpretation:

The p-value (0.001) is not equal to or below 0.05 therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The issue of work–life balance is influenced by shift duty. The coefficient is negative, which shows that the effect of rotational and night shifts is the deterioration of the work-life balance.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: Organisational support has no significant effect on job satisfaction.

H₁₃: Organisational support has a significant effect on job satisfaction.

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Organisational Support	0.41	5.13	0.000

Result & Interpretation:

The null hypothesis is rejected because the p-value is less than 0.05. Job satisfaction is greatly enhanced through organisational support. The nurse mothers can juggle between their family and career duties with the help of supportive supervisors, maternity provisions and flexible schedules.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. The main cause of working life imbalance was rotational and night shifts among nurse mothers because irregular working schedules would disrupt family routine and childcare duties.
2. The workload and frequent overtime were also major contributors to role conflict and stress, which led to a decreased possibility of respondents to balance their professional and personal roles.
3. Nurse professional contentment and commitment to the workplace were positively correlated with work life balance meaning that the more nurses had better balance, the higher their job satisfaction.
4. The work-life balance was also improved through organisational support systems, including flexible working schedules and support provided by the supervisor to the employees, which increased morale and decreased stress at the workplace.
5. The reason is that a poor work-life balance resulted in reduced motivation and the desire to quit the job, which is why the imbalance is a contributing factor to absenteeism and turnover among the employees in the private hospitals.
6. Better work engagement and perceived quality of patient care were related to improved work-life balance, which proves that the welfare of employees directly affects healthcare service performance.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The researchers find that work-life balance is an important factor of job satisfaction among nurse mothers, who work in a private hospital. The results show that the reasons behind the significant role conflict between professional and maternal roles are the nature of the work conditions, especially rotational shifts, night shifts, workload, and overtime. This lack of balance has the negative impact of negatively influencing motivation, commitment and intention to remain in employment. Nonetheless, organisational support mechanisms, such as flexible working schedules, maternity related benefits, and supportive supervision, have a significant positive effect on the ability of the employees to balance their work-family responsibilities. The econometric findings also support the argument that the work-life balance is a relevant mediator between the working conditions and employee satisfaction, which demonstrates that the welfare of employees is directly related to

the performance of the institution. Thus, family-friendly workplace policies would be necessary not only to improve the well-being of nurse mothers but also to reduce turnover rates and improve the general quality of healthcare services provision in the private hospitals.

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Implement flexible duty hours: The private hospitals should adopt flexible scheduling of shifts and reduce the number of rotational duties to allow the nurse mothers to be more accommodating to childcare and family hours.
2. Reduce overtime and workload: Adequate workforce must be ensured to decrease the number of overtime hours and patient overload, and hence decrease occupational stress and enhance work-life balance.
3. Offer childcare support amenities: Hospitals can create crèche or day care centres at the workplace or close to the workplace to help the nurse mothers balance work and parenting obligations.
4. Enhance the benefits surrounding maternity issues: Maternity leave, nursing breaks and post-maternity rejoining benefits should be well implemented to help in a smooth re-employment process.
5. Improve supervisory and organisational support: The management of the hospital needs to support leadership practices, counselling services, and frequent communication with employees to resolve personal and professional issues.
6. Establish employee welfare policies: The institutions should develop official work-life balance policy and regular employee training programme such as stress management and well-being to enhance job satisfaction and employee retention.

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