

## Research Article

# Work-life Balance among Nurses in a Medical Institute of National Importance: Exploring Relevant Work and Family Factors

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This study explores what factors at work and home/family influence work-life balance among nurses at a tertiary care medical institute of national importance. **Methodology:** A preliminary focused group discussion was done with a representative sample to identify what work and family factors are considered significant by nurses. From these, six themes in work environment and six themes in Home/Family environment emerged. Using these themes, a questionnaire was developed for the final study. It contained questions to evaluate respondents' opinions on each of the themes and they were asked to rank each factor on a 5-point Likert scale. This questionnaire was circulated among the sample that was selected by purposive sampling method. To understand if any relationship exists between these Work and Home-Family factors and Work-Life balance step-wise regression was done with the collected data. **Results:** The results revealed that both Work and Home-Family factors affected work-life balance. Among the work factors, it was observed that designation, work station, shift, and workdays were relevant. Similarly, in the Home-Family environment factors such as time spent in household chores, number of children, presence of specially-abled child/elderly dependent, spouse employment status, and responsibility of household chores at home had an influence on work-life balance of the respondents. **Conclusion:** Both work and home/family factors had an influence on the work-life balance of the nurses. Designation, work station, shift and workdays were relevant work factors while time spent in household chores, number of children, presence of specially-abled child/elderly dependent, spouse employment status and responsibility of household chores at home were important in the home family front.

**Keywords:** Job satisfaction, Work satisfaction, Work-family balance, Work-life balance

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## Introduction

Work-life balance for nurses, is the modern terminology that is used to describe a state of equilibrium between home

and work that must be achieved by them to be satisfied professionally and also remain healthy.<sup>[1]</sup> Healthcare professionals have to put their patient's needs before theirs and thus end up spending the whole work time exposed to the emotional strain of dealing with patients who are sick and dying as well as put up with other stresses that are inherent to the healthcare environment.<sup>[2]</sup> Nurses are no exception and they often end up compromising on their work-life balance. This is, especially important in the Indian context where the social culture considers that it is the predominant responsibility of women to take care of the house and family needs.<sup>[3]</sup> Conflict between work and family is believed to negatively affect job performance and this is extremely important in healthcar.<sup>[4]</sup> Moreover work-family conflict also negatively influences job satisfaction.<sup>[5]</sup> Thus, it is absolutely important that nurses, who are the primary

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medium for healthcare delivery in this country, experience adequate balance between their professional and personal lives. Many studies have emphasized that work-life balance is a necessity in healthcare. This study dives little further into the topic and attempts to explore what factors related to work environment and home-family environment are relevant in influencing work-life balance among nurses working in an Institute of national importance in Southern India.

**Methodology**

After a thorough review of relevant literature, it was evident that work and family factors both had an impact on the work-life balance among nurses. To identify what factors of work and family are actually important and are felt to influence work-life balance, a group discussion among a representative sample was undertaken. The themes that emerged from these group discussions are mentioned in Table 1. A questionnaire was created based on these themes. The first part included demographics, the second part questions on the work factors, the third part had questions on the family factors, and the final part had questions on the perceived work-life balance among the participants. The questions were asked to the participants to rate the response on a 5-point Likert scale. Purposive sampling technique was followed and the questionnaire was distributed among nurses from all cadres. The responses were analyzed using descriptive and analytic statistics with the help of appropriate statistical software.

**Results and Analysis**

The study was undertaken for 30 days and 100 responses were received from nurses from various levels. Ninety of the respondents were female and only ten were male. Among the respondents sixty were staff nurses, twenty were supervisors, ten were in mid-level nursing administration and ten were in senior nursing administration. There were 27 respondents in the age group of 25–29 years, 30 within

30–34 years, 20 within 35–39 years, 13 within 40–44 years, 4 within 45–49 years, 3 within 50–55 years, and another three respondents in the age group of 55–59 years. It was observed that only 13% of the respondents strongly agreed that proper work-life balance increased productivity, whereas 57% were agreed, 20% were undecided, and 10 % were disagreed [Figure 1].

A step-wise regression was run to see which work and family factors had influence over work-life balance.

Model summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.766 <sup>a</sup>	0.587	0.583	0.17254
2	0.844 <sup>b</sup>	0.712	0.706	0.14491
3	0.871 <sup>c</sup>	0.758	0.750	0.13354
4	0.877 <sup>d</sup>	0.768	0.759	0.13127

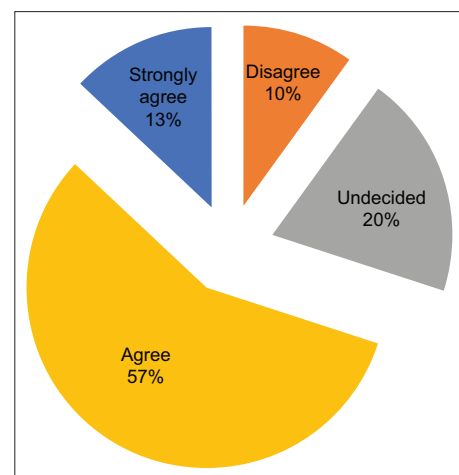
<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1. <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2. <sup>c</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2, W3. <sup>d</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2, W3, W5

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.153	1	4.153	139.488	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2.918	98	0.030		
	Total	7.070	99			
2	Regression	5.033	2	2.517	119.849	0.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	2.037	97	0.021		
	Total	7.070	99			
3	Regression	5.358	3	1.786	100.152	0.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	1.712	96	0.018		
	Total	7.070	99			
4	Regression	5.433	4	1.358	78.825	0.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	1.637	95	0.017		
	Total	7.070	99			

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: WLB. <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1. <sup>c</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2. <sup>d</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2, W3. <sup>e</sup>Predictors: (Constant), W1, W2, W3, W5

**Table 1:** Themes on work environment, family environment, and work-life balance

Work environment factors	Family environment factors	Work-life balance factors
Designation (W1)	Support System for Children (F1)	Regularly Feeling Tired/Depressed
Work Station (W2)	Time Spent in Household Chores (F2)	Reduced Family Time
Shift Allocated (W3)	Responsibility of Household Chores (F3)	Worried About Work Beyond Duty Hours
Travel Time to Work (W4)	Number of Children (F4)	Feeling Stressed
Work Days/Week (W5)	Specially-abled Child/ Elderly Dependent(F5)	Disturbed Sleep
Hours of work/day (W6)	Spouse Employment (F6)	Habits Amount of Personal Time



**Figure 1:** Whether good work-life balance increases productivity

Model summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.862 <sup>a</sup>	0.744	0.741	0.13600
2	0.886 <sup>b</sup>	0.785	0.780	0.12523
3	0.899 <sup>c</sup>	0.808	0.802	0.11906
4	0.906 <sup>d</sup>	0.821	0.813	0.11548
5	0.916 <sup>e</sup>	0.839	0.831	0.10989
6	0.923 <sup>f</sup>	0.851	0.842	0.10627

<sup>a</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1. <sup>b</sup> Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2. <sup>c</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4. <sup>d</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5. <sup>e</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5, F6. <sup>f</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5, F6, F3

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.258	1	5.258	284.265	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1.813	98	0.018		
	Total	7.070	99			
2	Regression	5.549	2	2.775	176.933	0.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	1.521	97	0.016		
	Total	7.070	99			
3	Regression	5.710	3	1.903	134.261	0.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	1.361	96	0.014		
	Total	7.070	99			
4	Regression	5.804	4	1.451	108.798	0.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	1.267	95	0.013		
	Total	7.070	99			
5	Regression	5.935	5	1.187	98.296	0.000 <sup>f</sup>
	Residual	1.135	94	0.012		
	Total	7.070	99			
6	Regression	6.020	6	1.003	88.852	0.000 <sup>g</sup>
	Residual	1.050	93	0.011		
	Total	7.070	99			

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: WLB. <sup>b</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1. <sup>c</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2. <sup>d</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4. <sup>e</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5. <sup>f</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5, F6. <sup>g</sup>Predictors: (Constant), F1, F2, F4, F5, F6, F3

For the work environment factors, four models were formed among which the fourth model was accepted as it showed maximum R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.76. Hence, the regression model was significant F (4,95) = 78.8, P < 0.001, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.76. This shows that among the work environment factors mentioned only designation, work location, shift allocated and work days/week influence work-life balance among nurses in this institute. Similarly, the regression model for the family environment factors formed six models for which the sixth model was accepted as it showed maximum R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.84. Thus, the regression model was statistically significant F (6,93) = 88.8, P < 0.001, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.84. Therefore, it can be inferred that all the family environment factors mentioned, i.e. support system for children, time spent in household chores, number of children, presence of a specially-abled child/elderly dependent, employment status of spouse and responsibility of household chores were influencing work-life balance for nurses in this institute.

## Discussion

This study has yet again demonstrated that the work environment influences the work-life balance in nurses. A study by Hamid *et al.* (2014) has mentioned that work support such as supervisor support, coworker support, and management support are essential for the quality of work-family life.<sup>[6]</sup> A report based upon the 2013 work-life balance survey conducted by Dr. Steve French, Keele University in England clearly states the negative impact of work time and work-life balance.<sup>[7]</sup> From this study also it has emerged that factors such as workdays/week and hours of work/day influence work-life balance. Lee *et al.* in a study conducted among nurses in Taiwan state that experience in an organization and the period worked in a particular designation are critical factors that affect work-life balance among nurses.<sup>[8]</sup> This study also observes a similar theme among Indian nurses as designation or position of work as a nurse has emerged as a work factor influencing work-life balance. Smeltzer *et al.* also bring out a similar observation in their study where they mention that higher academic rank, higher tenure, older age, and years in education are factors that affect work-life balance among nurses.<sup>[9]</sup> In this study also, it is observed that workdays per week and hours of work per day are factors that influence work-life balance. Askari *et al.* in their study on the relationship between work-life balance and quality of life among hospital workers also mention that those workers who spent higher time at work rated lower on quality of life.<sup>[10]</sup> A study by Andrea Gagnano *et al.* notes that parental status moderated the effect of work-life balance on job satisfaction.<sup>[11]</sup> A similar observation is also seen in this study where number of children and support system for children available at home are emerging as factors that influence work-life balance of nurses. In another study where Kowitlawkul *et al.* investigates the quality of life and work-life balance among nurses in Singapore, stated that social support from family, friends, colleagues, and supervisors were the strongest determinants of nurses' quality of life.<sup>[12]</sup> Sharing of responsibility of household chores, employment status of spouse, and family support for taking care of children are also mentioned as factors influencing work-life balance among nurses in this study. Jamieson *et al.* in their study on the work-life balance of Generation-Y nurses mentions that the new generation nurses want their rosters and work shifts in such a manner that it allows them to have time and enjoy this personal life.<sup>[13]</sup> This study also observes that shift allocated to nurses affects their work-life balance.

## Conclusion

Both work and home/family factors influence the work-life balance of the nurses. Designation, work station, shift and workdays were identified as relevant work factors

while time spent in household chores, number of children, presence of specially-abled child/elderly dependent, spouse employment status and responsibility of household chores at home were important in the home family front.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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Nil.

### Ethical Issues

Informed consent obtained from all the respondents prior to participation in the study.

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Not Applicable.

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