

Kerala's Nightingale Dilemma: Work Life Balance of Female Nurses in Government Health Care Sector

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Abstract

Work-life balance is an important aspect in both professional business practice and academic research. The concept plays a very important role in an organization's success. It is perceived in different ways in different societies. Indian health industry scenario is growing very fast. The literature shows that work-life balance is a central issue affecting wellbeing - as family and work are the most important elements of one's life. This study explored the crucial role of work-life balance in the wellbeing of female nurses working in private hospitals across Kerala. Recognizing the potential conflict between work and family demands, the research investigated the impact of this imbalance on personal life satisfaction, work satisfaction, and psychological distress.

Using self-administered questionnaires, the study identified positive associations between various socio-economic and demographic factors with the level of work-life balance impact. This suggests that individual circumstances significantly influence how nurses experience this balance. Overall, the research found a strong positive impact of achieving work-life balance on the personal lives of these women, highlighting its importance for both individual wellbeing and potentially, the healthcare sector's success.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Female Staff Nurse, Govt. Medical Colleges, Personal Life, Demographical Variable

Introduction

Health Care Sector is one of the largest and important sectors in India. Health Care Industry is growing at a very high pace because of its share in terms of revenue and employment in the national economy. It is providing the best service and is increasing expenditure by both public and private authorities. Present day, people in general are conscious about their health and are aware about the best service providing to the patients. In this regard, nurses play an important role in health care industry.

Work Life Balance of Women nurses has become an important subject since women are equally sharing the earning responsibility for the betterment of their family. Early centuries, women were mostly confined to their kitchens. At present, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than decades ago, especially both in the urban and rural areas. Women are getting into jobs and they continue to work even after marriage. A married woman has more responsibility than a man in taking care of young children and family. The working women efficiently overcome difficult situations through their commitment and diligence. The participation of women in income generation activities lends them to satisfy their home needs to a greater extent. Women nurses may struggle with work-life balance because of the nature

of the job, long hours and shift work commitments. Nurses should pay extra attention to managing work-life balance to ensure they derive maximum satisfaction from their work while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. In order to achieve a balanced work-life, women nurses have to prioritize their work demands in professional, personal and family life. Evidence shows that balanced work life creates accord in both professional and personal life; an imbalance can create a negative impact on Personal life.

Due to high work pressure in private sector jobs, it has also become difficult for women to maintain a healthy family life. Hence, it is assumed that work –life balance can help in bringing a huge transformation in an individual’s life. This will further help the individuals in realising their dreams also. For implementing the work life balance practices, it is essential for the employers to understand its importance. For supporting work-life balance, the employers may have to incur additional costs in implementing such policies. Work life balance helps in describing a balance between person’s person and working life. The term work life balance is given preference as it includes the experiences of working mothers and helps in exploring new ways of working and living for them. Managing a balance between family and work life is the biggest challenge for both working people and the organisation. Particularly for nurses, it has become more difficult to strike a balance between the two. They will be able to give their best only when clinics and hospitals have work life balance policies for them. Work life balance policies and programs will help them in balancing their personal and professional schedules. This will ultimately give them the feeling of satisfaction. The key areas that are affected by work-life balance are namely retention of employees, increase in motivation and employee productivity, decrease in healthcare costs, reduced absenteeism and stress-related illness etc. Work life balance is associated with quality of life when there is substantial time, involvement, or satisfaction to distribute across roles (Greenhaus et al, 2003).

Review of Literature

Grady et al. (2008, p.3) state that the term ‘work-life balance’ is more comprehensive and includes “family, community, recreation and personal time”. As stated by Grady et al. (2008) WLB in its broad sense captures all aspects of employees’ personal and work life; this suggests that WLB should be focused on individuals, families, workplaces, communities, and society as a whole. However, due to word count and time limits, this study excluded community and societal aspects, and focused on individuals, families and workplaces.

Clark (2000) explains that focus on the domains of work and family is essential, as family and work are the most important elements of everyone’s life. Any competing demands of work and family life will cause conflict and negatively affect the wellbeing of workers (Clark, 2000; Frone, 2000). Clarke et al. (2004) and Clark (2000) agree that measurable aspects of WLB are satisfaction, lack of role conflict and an overall sense of harmony.

Greenhaus et al. (2003) believes that balance between family and work domains also involves time balance, involvement balance, and satisfaction balance. Frone (2003) states that the measurable four aspects of the balance between work and family roles are: (a) work-family conflict, (b) family-work conflict, (c) work-family enhancement, and (d) family-work enhancement. As these components have bi-directional effects on work and family domains, participation in the work role may interfere or enhance the performance in the family role, and vice versa, participation in the family role may interfere or enhance performance in the work role (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Marks,

2000; Frone et al., 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Tomazevic, Kozjek, and Stare, (2014)⁴ has discussed both positive and negative consequences as a result of both work-life balance and work-life imbalance. If there is balance in work-life, employees get motivation and job satisfaction increases while imbalance creates dissatisfaction among employees. Work-life balance has a positive consequence; imbalance in work-life has numerous negative consequences for both employees and employers.

Amstad et al. (2011) a stressful environment can create an imbalance in work-life. Another reason for an imbalance work-life is the lack of support of the managers.

Lakshmi and Gopinath (2013) conducted a study to examine the effect of work life balance on women's performance and to identify the factors that influenced work life balance among women. Questionnaires were used for collecting data from faculty of SRM University in Kattankulathur, Tamil Nadu. The sample size was 50 and descriptive research design was used for conducting the study. Factor analysis was used for ascertaining the strength of various factors. From the study it was found that it was mainly the married women whose work life balance was severely distorted. The number of dependents was found to be inversely related to work life balance problem of married women.

Nadeem and Abbas (2009) conducted a study to explore the relationship between work life conflict and job satisfaction in Pakistan. A sample size of 157 managers was used for the final analysis. Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis tools were used for analysing the data. The study revealed that job satisfaction was significantly correlated to with work to family interference and family to work interference. Job satisfaction was also found to be negatively correlated with stress. Further, job autonomy and work load were found to be positively associated with job satisfaction.

Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) conducted a study to explore coping strategies devised by executive women in family relationships to maintain career/family balance. Several categories of career advancement and career/family balance strategies emerged from the analysis which included values and beliefs relating to career and family in place of one's life, personal social support, professional social support and life course strategies.

Abraham (2002) observed that working women had to perform variety of roles acting as super moms and striking a balance between their modernity and tradition. Flexible work arrangements helped the working women to comply with their household requirements without compromising their career (Tolhurst et al, 2004).

Morgan and Milliken (1992) also suggested that provision of career's arrangement, alternative work arrangements and offsite working arrangements would help the employees in balancing their personal and official lives. Similarly, three categories of work-life policies like parental leave, alternative work arrangements and employer supported child care were also identified (Glass and Finley, 2002). Carlson and Peewee's (1999) approach was utilised for developing work-family conflict model so that the relationship between the organisation's support and work life issues could be tested.

Objectives

1. To analyse the impact of demographic variable on the work life balance of female staff nurses of Govt. Medical College

2. To evaluate the factors that lead to work-life balance of nurses of Govt. Medical College,

Research Methodology

Well-designed questionnaire was used for getting the responses of women nurses working in Govt. Medical colleges from Kerala. 134 sample of nurses taken from Govt. Medical colleges from Kerala. This study was performed to determine the Work-life balance of women nurses working in Govt. Medical colleges from Kerala. For this study data were collected from self-administered questionnaires and send through e-mail to obtain information from women nurses. Questionnaires consisting Socioeconomic and demographic profile of the women nurses and the second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions related to Impact of Work-life balance on personal life. Women nurses' work-life balance and its impact on personal life were assessed. In order to find the association between the Impact of Work-life balance on personal with a number of socioeconomic and demographic control variables including Age, Marital status, education, job status, no of child, and family income. Relevant null hypothesis was formed and analysed by applying the Chi-Square test. Percentage analysis also used to evaluate the factors leads to WLB of nurses. random sampling method were used for this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section analyses the influence of demographic control variables, that is, years of service, qualification and marital status on Work Life Balance among employees.

H_{1a}: The mean Score of Work Life Balance among the employees is the same for the different years of service

In this case, years of service was considered to be the independent variable, which included three different years of service (a) 16-20 years, (b) 21-25 years (c) 26-30 years. So ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different years of service and the result is exhibited in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviation and F value for Years of Service

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Years of service</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Standard Deviation</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p value</i> |
|----------------------|-------------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Quality of work life | 16-20 | 32 | 101.22 | 3.54 | 1.725 | 0.184 |
| | 21-25 | 50 | 101.56 | 3.63 | | |
| | 26-30 | 18 | 103.06 | 3.49 | | |

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 1 reveals that a statistical value of p is more than 0.05 the variable Quality of work life. So we conclude that the mean score of Work Life Balance does not differ with years of service. Hence, we accept the hypothesis H_{1a}.

Next consider the qualification of the respondents and test the hypothesis

H_{2a}: The mean Score of Work Life Balance among the employees is the same for the different educational qualifications

In this case, Qualification was considered to be the independent variable, which included four different qualifications (a) SSLC, (b) ITI (c) Pre degree (d) Degree. So, ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of different qualifications and the result is exhibited in Table 2.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and F Value for Qualification

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Qualification</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Standard Deviation</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p value</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|----------------|
| Quality of work life | SSLC | 30 | 101.70 | 3.72 | 0.346 | 0.792 |
| | ITI | 39 | 101.95 | 3.25 | | |
| | Pre degree | 24 | 101.17 | 4.00 | | |
| | Degree | 7 | 102.43 | 1.90 | | |

The results of the ANOVA test depicted in Table 2 reveals that a statistical value of p is more than 0.05 the variable Quality of work life. So we conclude that the mean score of Work Life Balance does not differ with qualifications. Hence, we accept the hypothesis H2a.

Next consider the marital status of the respondents and test the hypothesis

H_{3a}: The mean Score of Work Life Balance among the employees is the same for both married and unmarried respondents

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviation and z Value for Marital Status

| <i>Variable</i> | <i>Marital Status</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> | <i>z</i> | <i>p value</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|----------|----------------|
| Quality of work life | Married | 92 | 101.80 | 3.46 | 0.818 | 0.415 |
| | Unmarried | 8 | 100.75 | 3.92 | | |

An independent sample Z test is often used to compare the mean scores of variables for two different groups, that is, married and unmarried respondents. Hence a Z test was conducted, and the results are shown in Table 3. The result shows that no significant difference exists between married and unmarried respondents for the variables as the p value in this case is more than 0.05. So, we accept the hypothesis H_{3c}.

Result of the Impact of Other Demographical Variables on Work Life Balance

Age and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life

In order to analyse the association between the age of the respondents and the level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life a null hypothesis “There is no association between age and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life” was framed.

Inference: Positive Association of women nurses in the age group up to 25 at low and medium levels, women nurses in the age group between 26-35 at low level, women nurses in the age group between 35-45 at two extreme levels of both Low and High, women nurses in the age group above 45 at medium level positive impact of work-life balance on personal life. Remaining things are in this group found to be a negative impact of work-life balance on personal life.

No of Children and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life

In order to analyse the association between the No of Children of the respondents and the level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life a null hypothesis “There is no association between No of Children and Level of Impact of Work- Life Balance on Personal Life” was framed.

Inference: Positive Association in the women nurses not having children at this stage

at medium level, women nurses having one child are at low and medium level, women nurses having two children are at low and medium level, women nurses having three children are at low and medium level impact of work-life balance on personal life.

Family Income and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life

In order to analyse the association between the Family Income of the respondents and the level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life a null hypothesis "There is no association between Family Income and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life "was framed.

Inference: Positive Association in the Family Income of women nurses less than 20, 000 Rupees are at low and medium level, family income of women nurses from 20, 000 to 40, 000 at medium level, family income of women nurses from 41, 000 to 60, 000 and 61, 000 to 80, 000 Rupees are at low and high level and family income of women nurses above 80, 000 Rupees are at medium and high level of positive impact of work-life balance on personal life. Remaining things are in this group found to be a negative impact of work-life balance on personal life.

Table 4: Factors Leads to the Work-Life Balance of Nurses

| | Statements | Nurses and lady doctors | |
|---|---|-------------------------|----------|
| | | Yes(%age) | No(%age) |
| 1 | During working hours women feel more pressurized due to family responsibilities | 32 | 68 |
| 2 | Women's career development has slowed down due to family responsibilities | 58 | 42 |
| 3 | Job leaves less time for her kids | 75 | 25 |
| 4 | Job leaves less time for her husband | 63 | 37 |
| 5 | Women executive with small kids find it difficult to manage their household and office work | 67 | 23 |
| 6 | In case of conflict between household work and office work, preference is given to household work | 44 | 56 |
| 7 | Provision of childcare facilities at workplace will help women executives to do their work properly | 81 | 19 |
| 8 | Flexible work arrangements should be there for women employees | 81 | 19 |
| 9 | Post-maternity leave should be given to women employees | 94 | 6 |

32% lady doctors and nurses realized that they were more pressurized due to family responsibilities. 58% of nurses and lady doctors realized that their career development has slowed down due to family responsibilities. Majority of our respondents were of the view that their job leaves less time for their kids and husband. 67% of lady doctors and nurses found it difficult to manage their household and office work. In case of conflict between household work and office work, 44% of lady doctors and nurses give preference to household work. 81% of lady doctors and nurses were in the favor of flexible work arrangements that should be provided to every working woman to manage their household and office responsibilities. They also wanted the organization to provide them child care facilities. Further, 94% of lady doctors and nurses also wanted that post-maternity leave should be given to them.

Findings

The mean score of Work Life Balance does not differ with years of service. the mean score of Work Life Balance does not differ with qualifications. There is no significant difference exists between married and unmarried respondents. There is no association between age and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life. There is no

association between No of Children and Level of Impact of Work- Life Balance on Personal Life. There is no association between Family Income and Level of Impact of Work-Life Balance on Personal Life. 94% of lady doctors and nurses also wanted that post-maternity leave should be given to them.

Conclusion

It is essential for every organization to acknowledge the dual responsibilities of women executives and to develop a system where they can establish a balance and best utilize their potential.

The purpose of the study was to identify the association between Socio-economical, demographic variables and Level of Impact of work-life balance on Personal life of women nurses working in Gov. Medical colleges at Kerala

The finding of the study concludes that there is a Positive association between Socio-economical, demographic variables and the Level of Impact of work-life balance on Personal life of women nurses. Hence, the null hypotheses were rejected showing that Level of Impact of work-life balance on Personal life of women nurses has a strong impact on work-life balance on personal life of women nurses Socio-economical, demographic profile.

Impact of Work-life balance on personal life positively associated with a number of socioeconomic and demographic control variables including Age, Marital status, education, no of children and family income.

More than 85% of working women agreed that post maternity leave and child care facilities at workplace should be given to them so that they don't have to face any problem in maintaining their household and professional roles.

Moreover, the organization should also make efforts for making the environment family-friendly. It is very important to understand that married working women with children will be able to show best performance only if they have full organizational support.

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