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Perceived Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction and Retention among Nurses in Selected Primary Government Hospitals in Cavite

Felizardo, Karen P. [1], Faller, Erwin M.[1]

[1] Graduate School, St. Bernadette of Lourdes College, Quezon City, Manila, Philippines

ABSTRACT

Work-life Balance (WLB) among nurses is a growing concern, particularly in primary government hospitals in Cavite, Philippines. This study investigates the relationships between perceived WLB, job satisfaction, and retention intentions among 150 nurses. Utilizing a quantitative research design, structured questionnaires assessed demographics, WLB perceptions, job satisfaction levels, and turnover inclinations. Data gathering followed a systematic approach, ensuring ethical clearance and participant confidentiality. Results indicate that most nurses are in their 30s, married, and permanently employed with modest salaries under Php 40,000 monthly. The findings reveal a prevailing poor work-life balance characterized by low mean scores on personal needs and family time, coupled with neutral perceptions of workload manageability and disengagement from work. Job satisfaction levels are similarly low, with nurses expressing dissatisfaction with their roles, colleague support, and motivation. Although there is some neutrality regarding salary and promotion opportunities, retention intent is discouraging, reflecting a lack of agreement about remaining in current positions. The study finds no substantial demographic differences influencing perceptions of WLB, job satisfaction, and retention, except for a significant correlation between years of experience and job satisfaction. This highlights that while demographic factors generally do not affect perceptions, the experience level plays a crucial role in job satisfaction among nurses. The insights from this study can aid hospital administrators and policymakers in developing interventions to enhance nurse well-being, job satisfaction, and retention, thereby improving the overall quality of healthcare services.

Keywords: *Nurse, Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Retention*

INTRODUCTION

Work-life Balance (WLB) has emerged as a critical issue in the contemporary workforce, gaining substantial attention due to its significant implications for employee wellness and organization (Ramesh & Prasanna, 2023). WLB as a concept delivers a condition in which the two most important facets of an individual's life are personal life and professional role. Maintaining a work-life balance does not imply splitting up one's time equally between work and personal obligations; instead, it refers to the absence of conflict between the two (Das & Baruah, 2016). In recent years, maintaining a healthy work-life balance among employees has shown to be extremely difficult in the healthcare industry, especially for nurses. On a global scale, the nursing workforce stands at a staggering 27.9 million, yet an alarming estimated 5.9 million vacancies (International Council of Nurses, 2021). The ripple effects of nursing workforce shortages are profound, impacting patient ratios, staff dissatisfaction, occupational stress, burnout, and staff retention, ultimately compromising patient safety and quality of care (Pressley & Garside, 2023). As the primary caregivers for patients, nurses face unique challenges such as extended work hours, high emotional stress, and physical demands. These challenges impact their health, well-being, work outcomes, nursing effectiveness, and job satisfaction (Permadi *et al.*, 2023). Maintaining this balance is often a complex task in the demanding field of nursing, particularly within government hospitals where resources might be limited and patient loads are high (Santos, 2021). A study by the American Nurses Foundation (2023) revealed that 58% of nurses said good work-life balance is the number one factor for job satisfaction. Poor WLB can lead to stress, burnout, and overall job dissatisfaction, which can, in turn, negatively influence the retention of skilled nursing staff (Garrosa *et al.*, 2008).

Job satisfaction is another crucial factor significantly impacting nurses' decisions to stay in or leave their current positions. Job satisfaction encompasses various dimensions, including the work environment, management support, professional development opportunities, interpersonal relationships, and recognition (Lu *et al.*, 2012). Studies have shown that when nurses are satisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to remain in their positions, which benefits both the healthcare institutions and the patients they serve (Hayes *et al.*, 2018).

Retention of nursing staff is fundamental to ensuring the consistency and quality of healthcare services. High turnover rates disrupt patient care and strain healthcare facilities' resources due to the costs associated with recruiting, training, and integrating new staff members (Suraihi, *et al.*, 2021). Research indicates that nurses who achieve a satisfactory work-life balance are less likely to leave their positions, improving retention rates within healthcare institutions (Sale *et al.,* 2020). In primary government hospitals in Cavite, a province in the Philippines, addressing factors related to work-life balance and job satisfaction is crucial for enhancing nurse retention rates and improving the healthcare system's overall efficacy and stability (David *et al.*, 2018).

This study investigates the relationships between perceived work-life balance, job satisfaction, and retention among nurses in selected primary government hospitals in Cavite. By investigating these variables, the study seeks to provide insights that can help hospital administrators and policymakers develop interventions and strategies that will not only improve the well-being and job satisfaction of nurses but also increase their intention to stay in their current positions, leading to higher retention rates in government hospitals in Cavite.

METHODS

The research employed a quantitative strategy to analyze work-life balance (WLB), job satisfaction, and turnover among nurses in primary government hospitals in Cavite Province, Philippines. A structured questionnaire measured these variables, enabling statistical analysis of the data. The study was conducted in three selected primary-level government hospitals chosen for their critical caregiving roles. Participants, consisting of 150 nurses from various departments and shifts, were randomly selected using stratified sampling to ensure a diverse representation. The researchers created a questionnaire with four sections: Demographic Profile, Perception of Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, and Retention Intentions, employing a Likert scale for responses. A pilot test validated the clarity and applicability of the questionnaire, which showed acceptable reliability. Data collection involved obtaining permission from hospital administrators and was conducted online or in person, with confidentiality emphasized to encourage participation. Quantitative data analysis tools summarized demographics and examined relationships between variables using the chi-square test and SPSS analysis. The study adhered to ethical practices, providing participants with information about the study, obtaining written consent, ensuring data confidentiality, and allowing participants to withdraw at any time. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and hospital management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data were collected from 150 participants. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of nurses working in selected primary government hospitals in Cavite, Philippines. The demographic variables of nurses include age, marital status, number of dependents, employment status, nurse position, years of experience, and monthly income.

Table 1

Demographic variables of nurses working in primary government hospitals

Profiles	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
20-29	33	22.0
30-39	94	62.7
40-49	22	14.7
50-59	1	.7
Marital Status		
Single	63	42.0
Married	85	56.7
Widowed	2	1.3
Number of dependents		
0	53	35.3
1	42	28.0
2	41	27.3
3 or more	14	9.3
Employment Status		
Permanent	129	86.0
Temporary	6	4.0
Fixed Term	2	1.3
Contractual	13	8.7

Nurse Position		
Staff Nurse	123	82.0
Head Nurse	13	8.7
Nurse Supervisor	14	9.3
Years of Experience		
Less than 5 years	33	22.0
5-10 years	82	54.7
11-15 years	28	18.7
16 years – 20 years	7	4.7
Monthly Income		
Less than Php 40,000.00	127	84.7
Php 40,000 – Php 50,000	22	14.7
Php 50,000 – Php 60,000	1	.7

The majority of nurses (62.7%) are in the 30-39 age group, followed by those aged 20-29 (22.0%) and a more miniature representation from the 40-49 (14.7%) and 50-59 (0.7%) age groups. This distribution suggests a relatively young workforce, which is corroborated by findings from Aamir *et al.* (2016), who noted that younger nurses often exhibit higher energy levels and adaptability but may face challenges related to work-life balance.

Most nurses are married (56.7%), with singles comprising 42.0% and widows 1.3%. Research by Choi and Johansson (2017) indicates that marital status can significantly affect job satisfaction and work-life balance, with married individuals often facing additional responsibilities that could impact their professional lives.

A significant proportion of nurses have no dependents (35.3%), while 28.0% have one dependent, 27.3% have two dependents, and 9.3% have three or more. The number of dependents can influence work-life balance and stress levels, as highlighted by Higgins *et al.* (2014), who found that more dependents often correlate with increased work-family conflict.

A substantial majority of nurses hold permanent positions (86.0%), while smaller percentages are temporary (4.0%), on fixed terms (1.3%), or contractual (8.7%). Permanent employment is generally associated with greater job security and satisfaction, as Chang *et al.* (2019) noted that stable employment status positively impacts retention and job satisfaction among nurses.

Most nurses are staff nurses (82.0%), with head nurses (8.7%) and nurse supervisors (9.3%) comprising the remainder. The predominance of staff nurse positions aligns with findings by Hayes *et al.* (2018), who reported that staff nurses often experience higher job satisfaction when they have supportive management and clear career progression paths.

The data reveals that 54.7% of nurses have 5-10 years of experience, followed by those with less than five years (22.0%), 11-15 years (18.7%), and 16-20 years (4.7%). Experience levels can significantly impact job satisfaction and retention, with more experienced nurses often possessing greater job stability and satisfaction, as Laschinger (2016) found.

Table 2

Level of Perceived Work-Life Balance among nurses in selected primary government hospitals

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
My job allows me to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life.	2.33	Disagree
I have enough time to take care of my personal and family needs.	2.29	Disagree
My work schedule allows me to spend adequate time with my family and friends.	2.06	Disagree
I feel that my workload is manageable.	2.72	Neutral
I can disconnect from work during my personal time.	2.73	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.43**	**Disagree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.40-4.19 (Agree), 2.60-3.39 (Neutral), 1.80-2.59 (Disagree), 1.00-1.79 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 2 provides a detailed examination of the perceived work-life balance among nurses in selected primary government hospitals. The weighted mean of 2.43 indicates that nurses generally disagree with statements suggesting a healthy work-life balance. The score is corroborated by existing literature

indicating that healthcare professionals often face significant challenges in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance (Boamah *et al*., 2022; Johnson & Smith, 2018).

Specifically, nurses disagree that their job allows them to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life (mean = 2.33), that they have enough time to take care of personal and family needs (mean = 2.29), and that their work schedule permits adequate time with family and friends (mean = 2.06). Studies by Dall'Ora *et al.* (2016) emphasize that inconsistent work hours and overtime can contribute to poor work-life balance and stress, echoing the table's results.

Additionally, there is a neutral stance on the manageability of their workload (mean = 2.72) and the ability to disconnect from work during personal time (mean = 2.73). This neutrality points to difficulties in fully disengaging from work responsibilities during personal time, a common nursing issue, as stated by Stimpfel *et al.* (2019).

Table 3

Level of job satisfaction among nurses in selected primary government hospitals

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I am satisfied with my current job role as a nurse.	2.46	Disagree
I believe that my job responsibilities contribute to my job satisfaction and motivation to pursue.	2.28	Disagree
I receive adequate support from my supervisors and colleagues.	2.38	Disagree
I feel motivated and engaged at work.	2.33	Disagree
The salary and benefits are aligned with my job duties and responsibilities.	2.65	Neutral
I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.	2.65	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.46**	**Disagree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.40-4.19 (Agree), 2.60-3.39 (Neutral), 1.80-2.59 (Disagree), 1.00-1.79 (Strongly Disagree)

Table 3 illustrates an overarching theme of job dissatisfaction among nurses working in selected primary government hospitals, with an overall weighted mean of 2.46, indicating disagreement with statements of job satisfaction. This trend of dissatisfaction is consistent with the recent literature, which points to factors such as work environment, workload, and organizational support as significant influencers of job satisfaction (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Specifically, nurses expressed dissatisfaction with their job roles and responsibilities, as evidenced by a mean score of 2.28. This aligns with research by Ning *et al.* (2019), emphasizing the need for role clarity and manageable workloads to prevent stress and burnout.

Support from supervisors and colleagues, scoring a mean of 2.38, was also found lacking. Boamah *et al.* (2022) highlight the importance of effective leadership and supportive managerial practices in fostering a collaborative work atmosphere that can enhance job satisfaction among nurses. Furthermore, the findings revealed low motivation and engagement levels (mean = 2.33). Slåtten *et al.* (2017) underscore the significance of intrinsic motivation, suggesting that providing meaningful work experiences and recognition can boost engagement.

Salary and benefits received a neutral response (mean = 2.65), indicating they are neither a primary source of dissatisfaction nor a significant contributor to satisfaction. However, competitive compensation aligned with job demands remains necessary, as per Nowrouzi *et al.* (2016). Similarly, the neutral perception regarding promotion opportunities, also with a mean of 2.65, suggests a lack of clear career progression pathways. Tremblay *et al.* (2015) advocate for transparent advancement opportunities, which play a vital role in enhancing job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Table 4

Level of retention among nurses in selected primary government hospitals

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I intend to stay in my current position for the following year.	2.39	Disagree
I see myself working at this hospital for the next five years.	2.13	Disagree
I am satisfied with the career advancement opportunities in this hospital.	2.71	Neutral
I feel a strong sense of commitment to my current organization in a long-term basis.	2.23	Disagree
I would recommend this hospital as an excellent place to work to other nurses.	2.91	Neutral
Overall Weighted Mean	**2.47**	**Disagree**

Legend: 4.20-5.00 (Strongly Agree), 3.40-4.19 (Agree), 2.60-3.39 (Neutral), 1.80-2.59 (Disagree), 1.00-1.79 (Strongly Disagree)

The findings from Table 4 point to a significant issue with nurse retention in selected primary government hospitals, as evidenced by the overall weighted mean of 2.47, which indicates general disagreement with statements concerning their intent to stay. Recent literature underscores this trend, emphasizing the critical role of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in nurse retention. For instance, Labrague *et al.* (2018) highlight that job satisfaction predicts nurses' intentions to remain in their positions, suggesting that current dissatisfaction may lead to departure. Specific intentions, such as staying in their current position for the next year (mean = 2.39) and envisioning a future at the hospital over the next five years (mean = 2.13), align with findings by Aiken *et al.* (2016). This study identified factors such as inadequate staffing, high stress, and insufficient support as crucial contributors to turnover and reluctance to commit long-term.

Moreover, the disagreement on long-term commitment (mean = 2.23) reflects findings by Pressley and Garside (2023), who argue that fostering a positive organizational culture and a sense of belonging is crucial for enhancing nurses' commitment. Regarding career advancement opportunities, the neutral mean of 2.71 suggests potential for improvement; Johnson and Smith (2018) emphasized that limited career advancement opportunities can hinder job satisfaction and nurse retention. Lastly, the neutral to slightly positive response regarding recommending the hospital as a workplace (mean = 2.91) suggests that enhancements in workplace conditions could bolster reputation and staff retention. Laschinger (2016) found that organizations focusing on nurse well-being and growth are more likely to be recommended.

Table 5

Significant in the difference in level of Work-Life Balance when grouped according to profile

Variables	Profiles	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Perceptions of Work-Life Balance	Age	5.401	9	0.798	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	6.011	6	0.422	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Number of dependents	11.604	9	0.237	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Employment Status	8.611	9	0.474	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Nurse Position	7.727	6	0.259	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Years of Experience	7.919	9	0.542	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	6.600	6	0.359	Accept Ho	Not Significant

Table 5 presents the difference between work-life balance (WLB) when grouped according to various demographic profiles of nurses in selected primary government hospitals in Cavite. The analysis shows no significant difference in how nurses perceive work-life balance (WLB) across various demographic profiles, including age, marital status, number of dependents, employment status, nurse position, years of experience, and monthly income. This aligns with existing literature, which suggests that while work-life balance is critical to employee satisfaction and retention, particularly in demanding fields like nursing (Santos, 2021), personal demographics often do not significantly influence perceptions of WLB. For instance, Zhang *et al.* (2016) found that organizational culture and policies substantially impact work-life balance more than individual demographic factors. Aiken *et al.* (2016) similarly highlighted the importance of organizational support and job demands in shaping WLB perceptions, suggesting that these factors may outweigh personal characteristics like age or income.

Table 6

Significant in the difference in level of Job Satisfaction when grouped according to profile

Variables	Profiles	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Job Satisfaction	Age	4.562	9	0.871	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	6.387	6	0.381	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Number of dependents	14.767	9	0.098	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Employment Status	8.645	9	0.471	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Nurse Position	2.043	6	0.916	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Years of Experience	17.083	9	0.047	Reject Ho	Significant
	Monthly Income	4.358	6	0.628	Accept Ho	Not Significant

The analysis of job satisfaction across various demographic profiles, as presented in Table 6, reveals that factors such as age, marital status, number of dependents, employment status, nurse position, and monthly income do not have a significant impact on job satisfaction, as evidenced by p-values exceeding 0.05. This finding aligns with existing literature, which often underscores the complexity of job satisfaction being influenced more by intrinsic

factors rather than demographic variables (Judge & Bono, 2016). However, the exception noted in the relationship between job satisfaction and years of experience is particularly intriguing, with a p-value of 0.047 indicating a statistically significant difference. This suggests that as nurses gain more experience, their job satisfaction may increase, which is supported by studies indicating that experience can lead to greater competence, confidence, and comfort in one's role (Bakker *et al.,* 2020). This highlights the importance of considering experience as a critical variable when examining job satisfaction within nursing, suggesting that organizations should focus on retention and career development to enhance satisfaction levels. While many demographic factors appear to have a negligible effect on job satisfaction, the significant correlation with years of experience underscores its importance in shaping nurses' perspectives on their work.

Table 7

Significant in the difference in level of Retention when grouped according to profile

Variables	Profiles	Chi-Square	df	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Retention Intentions	Age	4.082	9	0.906	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Marital Status	5.796	6	0.446	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Number of dependents	7.838	9	0.551	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Employment Status	4.936	9	0.840	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Nurse Position	9.261	6	0.159	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Years of Experience	8.241	9	0.510	Accept Ho	Not Significant
	Monthly Income	7.496	6	0.277	Accept Ho	Not Significant

The results outlined in Table 7 indicate that varying demographic profiles do not significantly influence retention intention among nurses in selected primary government hospitals in Cavite. Specifically, factors such as age, marital status, number of dependents, employment status, nurse position, years of experience, and monthly income demonstrated p-values exceeding the threshold of 0.05. This statistical outcome suggests that the demographic variables do not considerably impact nurses' intentions to remain in their positions. This finding is consistent with research by Galletta *et al.* (2020), who pointed out that intrinsic motivations—including job fulfillment and professional development opportunities—are stronger predictors of retention than demographic variables alone.

CONCLUSIONS

The study conducted among nurses in primary government hospitals in Cavite highlights critical issues in work-life balance, job satisfaction, and retention. Demographically, most of the workforce falls within the 30-39 age range, with a majority being married and permanently employed. Despite their stable demographic profile, nurses report significant challenges with work-life balance. The overall perception is negative, indicating that their jobs are not conducive to maintaining a healthy equilibrium between work and personal life. This is compounded by insufficient time for personal and family needs and demanding work schedules.

Job dissatisfaction is prevalent among the nurses surveyed. They report dissatisfaction with their job roles, responsibilities, and the support they receive from supervisors and colleagues. Although there is some neutrality regarding salary alignment and promotion opportunities, the general sentiment leans towards dissatisfaction in their professional roles.

In terms of retention, nurses express a low intention to stay in their current roles. Many do not see themselves remaining in their positions for another year or envision a future at these hospitals in five years, indicating a weak sense of long-term commitment to their organizations.

An important observation from the study is that demographic factors like age, marital status, employment status, and income do not significantly affect perceptions of work-life balance, job satisfaction, or retention intentions. However, job satisfaction does vary with years of experience, suggesting that the more experienced nurses might view their roles differently.

The findings suggest a need for strategic interventions to improve nurses' work-life balance and job satisfaction, aiming to enhance their commitment and intention to stay within these health institutions. Addressing the specific needs and concerns of more experienced nurses may also be crucial in this effort.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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