



**'Flexible Working Hours and Its Impact on Work-Life Balance of Nurses
with Special Reference to Private Hospitals in Bangalore'**

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Abstract:

The concept of flexible working hours is considered vital in today's competitive market world. Currently, many organizations provide flexible working options to their employees for the benefit of both employees and management. Hence, the present study is conducted to understand the FWHs and their impact on the work-life balance of nurses in private hospitals in Bangalore.

Aims: The primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between flexible working hours and the work-life balance of nurses. And another major objective is to examine the various flexible work-hour practices that prime to healthy work-life among nurses.

Research Design: Structured questionnaire method was used to collect the data and the nominal scale and ordinal scale were used to measure the items within the questionnaire. The sample size of the study was 70 nurses who are working in private hospitals. IBM SPSS 20 version was used to analyze the data by adopting various statistical tools to test the hypothesis, such as Pearson correlation analysis, reliability test, and frequency table analysis.

Results: The study outcomes revealed that there is a positive relationship between flexible

working hours and the work-life balance of nurses. Also, the study proved that flexible work-hour practices lead to healthy and friendly work-family life among nurses.

Keywords: Flexible Working Hours, Work-Life Balance, Flexible Work Hour Practices, Nurses

Introduction:

The healthcare sector has become one of India's major and most vital sectors in terms of revenue and employment. The healthcare industry also grows faster due to its best services to the general public and investments made by Government and Private players. Currently, people are very conscious about their health and other health diseases, which has created an awareness of providing good health, safety, security, and services to patients. To give the best services to the patients taking care of healthcare professionals by providing them with good working facilities is also important. Considering these aspects present study mainly focuses on nurses in private hospitals.

Flexible Work Hours:

Nowadays the concept of flexible working hours has got more attention in all sectors. Because these practices in the organization creates a healthier environment which results in improved performance of the employees. Presently it is the trend that many organizations adopting family-friendly policies in the workplace for their employees. Many of the studies and earlier researchers said that flexible work practices are leads to good work and family life among employees in the organization. Based on that the present study examines whether the flexible working hours and Flexible work hour practices adopted in private hospitals influence the work-life balance of nurses. Flexible working hours include many aspects such as providing flexibility in starting and ending the work, flexibility in scheduling work timings, supervisor support in adopting FWBs, and supervisor support in changing scheduled work, etc. These flexible practices in work may result in more happiness among employees both in work and personal life.

Earlier studies have found that the implementation of flexible human resource strategies, working hours, and supervisor support strategies such as child and dependent care, and family and parental leaves are popular work-concept which are perceived by employees as beneficial in increasing work-life balance (Grover & Crooker, 2005)

Work-Life Balance:

Work-life balance is described as fulfilling the expectation of employees related to duties and responsibilities both in their personal life and work. Many previous studies have found that a lack of balance in the work and personal life of employees causes conflicts in work and life responsibilities. So, organizations must focus on various flexible work practices which may help in work-life balance. The present study investigates the different approaches to work-life balance such as flexible working hours, Flexible work hour practices, and supervisor support impacts on the healthy family and work life of nurses in private hospitals

“(Wöhrmann et al., 2021) define that flexible working time arrangements are important to improve the work-life balance of employees. Management should provide autonomy to the employees in case of any emergencies to change in their schedules and the supervisors should support.”

Review of Literature:

“(Mousa, 2018) the researcher conducted a study on Inspiring Work-Life Balance: Responsible Leadership among Female Pharmacists in the Egyptian Health Sector. The objective of the study was to find out the impact of responsible leadership on the work-life balance of pharmacists. The quantitative study was conducted using 230 samples and the study outcome revealed that the model of leaders' roles and their values significantly effects on work-life of pharmacists.”

“(Mufassara M. W1, Sareena Umma M.A. G2, Sithy Safeena M. G. H3 2021) researchers have conducted a study to identify the impact of flexible work time on the work-life balance of nursing officers in the Ampara district, Sri Lanka. The study included 128 samples and conducted a Pearson correlation test and regression analysis test and the result revealed that there is a positive correlation between flexible work time and work-life balance provided to the nursing officers.”

“(Mosadeghrad et al., 2011)The study examines the relationship between work stress, quality of working life, and the intention to leave a job among hospital employees in Isfahan hospitals, Iran. Job stress is caused by many aspects such as inequality at work, inadequate pay, lack of promotional opportunities, lack of job security, time pressure many other things in the hospitals

that may directly affect the quality of care for the patients. The study found QWL was negatively associated with the turnover intentions of employees and job stress was positively related with employees' intentions to leave the job.”

“(Dousin et al., 2019)The study investigates the WLB practices' impact on employee performance, and also the study examines the mediating effects of job satisfaction in the relationship between work-life balance practices and employee performance. This study was conducted on doctors and nurses in East Malaysia. The study outcome revealed that flexible working hours and supportive supervision significantly affect nurses' performance. Work life balance practices are positively related with job satisfactions it may result in improved nurses' performance in the hospitals.”

“(Pattnaik et al., 2022) define the different dynamics of work-life balance during the pandemic and conducted the study based on the review of the literature. Many of the studies revealed that healthcare professionals are undergoing job and emotional stress due to many reasons in the workplace such as emotional exhaustion, longer working "duration, workload, lack of monetary and non-monetary benefits, unhealthy work environment, etc.”

Statement of the problem:

The study holds the statement 'Flexible Working Hours and Its Impact on Work-Life Balance of Nurses with Special Reference to Private Hospitals in Bangalore'. The healthcare sector is considered the most significant because the health of the people depends upon the quality of services provided by the healthcare professionals in the hospitals. And it is the challenge of private hospitals to get quality performance and balance employees' personal and work life. Also, it is tough for employees to prioritize their careers and personal life due to their busy schedules may cause poor work-life balance. Thus, the researcher decided to conduct a study on nurses to investigate the requirements and study the various dimensions which help in work-life balance such as flexible working hours, flexible supervisor support, and flexible work-hour practices in private hospitals in Bangalore.

Significance of the Study:

Important insights from the study results are expected to adopt by the management and development of personnel policies aimed at improving nurses' healthy work and family life. The findings of the study are expected to be used by private healthcare managers and policymakers in the private hospitals in Bangalore for developing and implementing successful policies to improve performance through perfectly balancing the work and personal life of nurses.

Objectives:

- ❖ To examine the impact of flexible working hours on the work-life balance of nurses.
- ❖ To investigate the relationship between flexible working hours and the work-life balance of nurses in private hospitals in Bangalore.
- ❖ To analyse the various flexible work-hour practices that lead to healthy work-life among nurses.

Hypothesis:

1. There is a significant relationship between Flexible working hours and the work-life balance.
1. There is no significant relationship between Flexible working hours and the work-life balance.
2. Flexible work-hour practices are positively related to the healthy work-life of nurses.
2. Flexible work-hour practices are not positively related to the healthy work-life of nurses.

Research Methodology:

The study's main objective is to investigate the relationship between flexible working hours and work-life balance among nurses in private hospitals in Bangalore. This research adopted a quantitative method and a survey questionnaire method for data collection. The questionnaire was designed with three major sections, Part A was relevant to the demographic information, Part B was Flexible Working Hours and Work-Life Balance, and Part C was relevant to Flexible Work-Hour Practices and Healthy Work-Family Life.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

This research study used IBM SPSS version 20 for data analysis. The data of this study are self-reported and were obtained by using a single method of a 5-point Likert scale i.e., a. Strongly disagree, b. Disagree, c. Neither agree nor disagree, d. Agree, and e. Strongly agree.

Table 1. Frequency Table:

Age of the Respondents					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	18-30	53	75.7	75.7	75.7
	31-50	15	21.4	21.4	97.1
	51 & above	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

(Primary Source)

Interpretation: Table 1 shows the results of the Frequency table analysis. The respondents have been categorised into three major groups based on their age, which is 18-30, 31-50, and 51 years and above. From the above table it is observed that out of a total of 70 respondents, 75.7% of the respondents belong to the 18-30 age group, 21.4% of the respondents belong to the 31-50 age group, and 2.9% of the respondents belongs to 51 years and above age group in this study.

Table 2. Frequency Table:

Educational Qualification					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	Diploma in Nursing	10	14.3	14.3	14.3
	Bachelor Degree in Nursing	54	77.1	77.1	91.4
	Master Degree in Nursing	6	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

(Primary Source)

Interpretation: The above table reveals the educational qualification of the respondents, it was

found that more prominently the number of bachelor's degrees in nursing are working and a greater number of Diploma in nursing followed by less number of Master degree holders working in hospitals.

Table 3. Frequency Table:

Work Experience					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	0-5Years	54	77.1	77.1	77.1
	6-10Years	7	10.0	10.0	87.1
Valid	11-20Years	8	11.4	11.4	98.6
	21Years and above	1	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

(Primary Source)

Interpretation: The above table reveals that 77.1% of the respondents are having between 0-5years of work experience, whereas 10% of respondents are having between 6-10years of experience, 11.4% of them have between 11-20years and the rest 1.4% of respondents are having more than 21years of total experience in the hospital sector.

Table 4. Frequency Table:

Gender of the Respondents					
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
	Male	27	38.6	38.6	38.6
Valid	Female	43	61.4	61.4	100.0
	Total	70	100.0	100.0	

(Primary Source)

Interpretation: The above table reveals that 38.6% of the respondents are male and 61.4% of the respondents are female nurses. Thus, it indicates that a greater number of nurses are female than male nurses in this study.

Table 5: Pearson correlation analysis and Cronbach alphas:

		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6
FWHs & WLB	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	1					
HR/Management provides Flexible Work Options	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.450** .000	1				
Satisfaction with FWHs	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.843** .000	.588** .000	1			
Autonomy to choose start and end work timings	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.756** .000	.579** .000	.946** .000	1		
Supervisor support to change work schedule	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.962** .000	.455** .000	.846** .000	.766** .000	1	

Supervisor supports in FWHs	Pearson Correlation	.774**	.497**	.886**	.894**	.756**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

(Source: Primary data)

Interpretation: Hypothesis 1 predicted flexible working hours would show a significant relationship with the work-life balance of nurses in private hospitals. As indicated in Table 5, all the items of flexible working hours tested positive with a Pearson correlation value of .45 and above for each item as shown above in the table which means that there is a positive relationship and the significance level of the study is .000 which is <0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be accepted. That means, the outcome of the testing results showed that flexible working hours are significantly and positively correlated with the work-life balance of nurses.

Reliability Analysis for FWHs and WLB

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.937	6

(Primary source)

Interpretation: Reliability is the measure of the internal consistency of the constructs in the study. A construct is reliable if the Alpha value is greater than .70 (Hair et al.,2013). Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha(α). The results revealed that the flexible working hours with 6 items i.e., flexible work hours and work-life balance, HR/Management provides Flexible Work Options, Satisfaction with FWHs, Autonomy to choose the start and end work timings, Supervisor support to change work schedule, and Supervisor supports in FWHs ($\alpha=.937$) were found reliable. Reliability test results are summarised in Table 5.

Table 6:
Pearson correlation analysis and Reliability Test:

		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Flexible work-hour practices reduces work stress and	Pearson Correlation	1	.902**	.916**	.900**	.976**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000

improves the happiness in family						
Co-workers' support in adopting FWHs	Pearson Correlation	.902**	1	.855**	.948**	.918**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
Job type helps to adopt FWHs	Pearson Correlation	.916**	.855**	1	.867**	.920**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
Organizational work practices help to adopt FWHs	Pearson Correlation	.900**	.948**	.867**	1	.922**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
FWHs help to spend quality time with family	Pearson Correlation	.976**	.918**	.920**	.922**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Primary source)

Interpretation: A correlation analysis study was conducted by the researcher to examine the relationship between flexible work-hour practices and the healthy work-life of nurses. As indicated in table 6, the outcome of testing the direct effects, the result showed that flexible work-hour practices are significantly correlated with the healthy work-life of nurses. It is observed from the above table that the coefficient of Pearson correlations value r is .85 and above for each item which means there is a highly positive relationship. And the significance level of the study is .000 tested for each item which is < 0.05 . Hence the null hypothesis failed to be accepted and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. That means there is a positive relationship between flexible work-hour practices and the healthy work and life of nurses in private hospitals. The study used different items to test the relationship which is shown in the above table 6.

Reliability Analysis for flexible work hour practices and healthy work-family life:

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.977	5

Interpretation: Cronbach's Alpha analysis is used to measure the reliability of the instrument. When Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient value is above 0.700 is that considered an acceptable instrument (based on the decision attributes of reliability analysis by George and Mallery 2003). According to this Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient acceptable value researcher can conclude that the items used to gather the data are a fairly reliable measure of examining the relationship between flexible work hour practices and healthy work and the life of nurses in private hospitals. The results revealed that the flexible work hour practices with 5 items ($\alpha=.977$) were found reliable. The study results are clearly analysed in the above test table.

Summary of Findings:

The findings of the study indicate that the implementation of Flexible working hours and family-friendly flexible practices was subject to improving the work-life balance of nurses in private hospitals. The study findings show that flexible working hours significantly affect the work-life balance of nurses in private hospitals. The research also found that flexible work-hour practices such as flexibility in the type of job, flexibility in organizational practices, and flexible co-worker support also positively affect the happy work and personal life of nurses.

Recommendations:

This research offers a few suggestions to enhance nurses' quality of care for patients in private hospitals. This study provides knowledge about the various dimensions of flexible working hours and flexible work hour practices which helps to improve nurses' work and personal life. Balancing both professional and family life is most significant because it is directly connected with performance. Therefore, the management should ensure strict monitoring and assessing the use of flexibility for nurses which successively increases their performance and provides happy and friendly work and family environment.

Limitations and Future Study:

The present study is conducted on only nurses who are working in Private Hospitals in Bangalore.

Hence future researchers can conduct studies on other healthcare professionals and can focus on both private and public hospitals, and other geographical locations. The present study examined FWHs and WLB, flexible work hour practices and healthy work-life of nurses in private hospitals. Thus, future researchers can adopt other variables to examine the work-life balance of nurses.

Conclusion:

The healthcare system in India needs to promote improved patient care and safety for the patients. For this, the management and employers of the health system should appreciate the power of running the healthcare system as flexible. This research measured the relationship between flexible working hours and the work-life balance, and flexible work hour practices and healthy work-family life of nurses in private hospitals. The study concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between FWHs and WLB, and flexible work hour practices and healthy work and personal life of nurses.

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