

Work-Family Challenges of Nurses Working in Selected Hospitals in Mangalore City



Social Science

KEYWORDS : work and family; family commitments; work-family challenges

Dr. Paul G . Aquinas

Department of Post graduate studies and Research in Social work, Mangalore University, Mangala Gangotri. 574119

Dr. Theresa L. Mendonca

Department of Paediatric Nursing , Laxmi Memorial College of Nursing, A. J Towers, Balmatta, Mangalore – 575 002, India

ABSTRACT

Female participation in the workplace has grown dramatically over the past couple of decades. This growth has been especially noticeable in traditionally feminine professions like nursing. The barriers to women's career to a large extent are the work-family challenges that women employees experience because of their strong commitment to family responsibilities. Work-life balance is seen more as women's issue due to the traditional mindset, where the women are considered primarily responsible for the smooth running of the family irrespective of her job responsibilities.

The primary objective of this study is to understand the challenges of family responsibilities the nursing professionals (women) face and the type of work-life support they would require from their employers to balance their work and family in a better manner.

The following are some of the major findings of the study:

- Majority of the nurses are committed to their family responsibilities. Family responsibilities especially children's responsibilities hinder their commitment to their careers. They are of the opinion that they are not able to utilise their full potential and have to make career trade-offs because of their family responsibilities.
- The research reveals that the nursing professionals expect the support from their organisations to help them achieve better work-life balance. Majority of the Nurses require Crèche facilities near the place of work and flexible working hours.
- Most of them agree that they would require family-friendly provisions to balance their responsibilities.
- Most of the respondents disagree that "putting career ahead of family brings strong disapproval from husband and family". This shows that women have accepted the role of taking care of their families irrespective of the fact that they hold a professional position in the organization.
- Majority of the nurses agree that their challenge is to make the "patients" "superiors" and "colleagues" happy.

"What restricts the use of the word 'lady' among the courteous is that it is intended to set a women apart from ordinary humanity, and in the working world that is not a help, as women discovered in many bitter ways" – Judith S Marin

Introduction: The global trend of increased female labour force participation, coupled with the prevalence of dual-earner families has precipitated considerable research interest in how members of these emergent family forms manage their work and family responsibilities. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define work-family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. Pleck's (1977) research suggests that family-to-work spill-over is stronger from women. In every working woman's life, the job, family and society are key stakeholders. If, the balance is not maintained, there is conflict in various relationships. Conflict makes women increasingly less efficient in every sphere of her life. Work-life imbalance usually arises out of a lack of adequate time and/ or support to manage work commitments as well as personal and family responsibilities. Meeting competing demands of work and family is not only tiring but can be stressful and inevitably affects productivity. Organisations, aware of the positive implication of balanced life, have begun considering family experiences as part of what workers bring to their workplace to enrich their contributions to work and organisations (Gallos, 1989). To do a demanding job and managing family and social life simultaneously is notoriously difficult. It is generally women who take the primary responsibility for childcare and who, in situations of conflict, adjust their working life's to accommodate family pressures (Flakenberg and Monachello, 1990). Data show that women professionals still assume the primary responsibility of home and child-care activities (Googins and Burden 1987). Balancing both career and family is an arduous task for working women especially when they have small children. Women often suffer from the guilt-complex of not spending enough time during the tender age of their children and being forced to leave their children in the hands of others whom they have little faith. Women employees thus face a dual burden – work and family – which creates a lot of stress and strain and role conflict. A study by warren, Fox and Pascall (2009) reveals that combining paid

work and motherhood remains a major source of difficulties for women. Women are still responsible for domestic labour and child care (Tang and Cousins, 2005).

Objectives of the Study:

- To determine the work family challenges of female nurses.
- To determine the effect of family responsibilities of nurses on their profession.
- To assess the organisation support system for achieving better work life balance

Materials and Methods: Descriptive survey approach was used. The study was conducted with a total of 75 female nurses of multi-specialty teaching hospitals in Mangalore. The samples were collected through purposive sampling method.

A structured questionnaire was developed by the investigators. The questionnaire had three parts – 'personal characteristics', 'family responsibilities', and 'organizational support systems' The respondents were asked to respond to the statement through a five point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'.

Results of the Study:

The demographic data showed that highest percentages of the nurses were in the age group of 30-39 years (61.3) and least (6.7%) were about 50 years of age. Majority (78%) of them were married, 68% of them had one child and 25% of them did not have any. Majority (73.3%) had 1-5 years of experience; among the selected sample 72% of them were working as ward-in-charges and 28% of them were staff nurses. Highest percentage (60%) of them were working in the surgical wards and 12% in the emergency ward

- The mean percentage score was highest for the factor 'personal characteristics' (74.43%) followed by 'organizational support system' (70.24%) and the 'family responsibility' score was 64.10%.
- Data in table 1 shows that among the personal characteristics factors the highest mean score was for the item 'Avoiding comprise on personal /family life' (4.42) while the least

mean score was 'convincing the supervisors that cannot perform the duties' (2.91).

Regarding family responsibilities, they were committed to family responsibility (4.24) while the score was least for the item "putting career ahead of family brings strong disapproval from husband and family" (3.02). This shows that women have accepted the role of taking care of their families irrespective of the fact that they hold a professional position in the organization.

Organization support system is necessary for employees to manage their work family challenges. It is the responsibility of the employer to provide conducive support system to help their employees achieve better work-family balance. Most of the respondents agreed that they would certainly want their employers to have family friendly provisions to help them balance their dual responsibilities.

- The mean score was highest for the item "need for provision of child care facilities" (3.86) and also for the item need for flexible hours of work (3.86). The employers could therefore considered providing "child care facilities" as an important prerequisite for nurses with young children and also provide flexible timings to help their employees balance their work and family commitments. The mean score was average for the item providing employees with better skills in dealing with personal responsibilities (3.6). The respondents agreed that mentoring services was provided, the mean score was low (2.97)
- Data in table 2 shows that there was no significant difference in the work-family life challenges between GNM and B. Sc nurses. This shows that professional qualification may not be a factor for the work-family balance.

Conclusion:

Work-family friendly policies enable nurses to attend to dependent care responsibilities, household activities or to pursue higher studies. Flexible working hours are a great advantage to nurses with small children. It is found in the study that support from the husband and family is crucial in being able to balance work and family. It would also be very important to know how family structure impacts their work life concerns and subsequently influences their career decisions. One must also need to understand that the burden of managing career and family that nurse's face may result in negative mental and physiological health outcome. In order to have a better work life balance the organization must be sensitive to the work-life issues that will contribute to the organizational effectiveness.

Table - 1: Item wise analysis of the factors of work-family challenges

Factor	Number of items	Highest Mean score	Average mean score	Lowest mean score
Personal Characteristics	6	Avoid comprising personal / family life (4.42)	Avoid argument with colleagues and superiors when on duty (3.58)	Convincing the supervisors that cannot perform the duties (2.91)
Family responsibilities	10	Committed to family responsibility (4.24)	Not being able to grow to the fullest career potential because of family responsibility (3.02)	Putting career ahead of family brings strong disapproval from husband and family (3.02)
Organisational support system	10	Needs provision of childcare facilities near the work place (3.86) Flexible working hours required to take care of children (3.86)	Need to providing employees with better skills with dealing personal responsibility (3.6)	Lack of mentoring services to the employees (2.93)

Table 2 Significant difference in the work family life challenges between GNM and B. Sc (Nursing)Nurses

	Professional Qualification	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t
Personal characteristics	GNM	30	22.53	3.04	.47200
	B. Sc Nursing	45	22.20	2.97	p=0. 639 ns
Family responsibilities	GNM	30	32.43	6.85	0.42
	B. Sc Nursing	45	31.80	6.04	p=0. 675 ns
Organisational support system	GNM	30	35.60	5.67	0.6
	B.Sc Nursing	45	34.80	5.58	p=0. 547 ns

REFERENCE

- Frone, M. R. (2003) Work-family balance. In J.C Quick and L.E Tetrick (Eds.) Handbook of occupational health psychology. American Psychological Association, Washington DC Page 143 - 162 | | Frone, M. R., Russell M., and Cooper M.L (1992) Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: Testing a model of the work-family interface. Journal of Applied Psychology 77 Page 65 – 75. | | Ghalawat, Suman and Dahiya, Promila (2010) Work-life balance and organisation practice – A study of selected Banks in Sirsa" KAIM Journal of management and research, vol3, No.1 Page 94 – 101. | | Greenhaus, J. H and Parasuraman S (1999) Research on work, family and gender: Current status and future directions. In G.N Powell (Eds) Handbook of gender and work. Sage, Thousand Oaks, C. S Page 391 – 412. | | Harrington B., and Hall D. T (2007) Career Management and worklife integration. Using self assessment to navigate contemporary careers, Sage Publication, Thousand Oaks CA | Judge T.A., Locke E.A., Durham C.C., and Kluger A. N (1998) Dispositional effects on job and life satisfaction. The role of core evaluations. Journal of Applied Psychology 83 Page 17 – 34. | | Kapoor, J., Bhardwaj, G., & Pestonjee, D.M., (1999). An enquiry into the various facets of women's careers. Ahmedabad, India: Indian Institute of Management. (working paper, no. 99-08-02, August (1999). | | Kossek E. E., and Ozeki C. (1998) Work-family conflict policies and the job-life satisfaction relationship: A review and directions for future organizational behaviour – human resource research. Journal of Applied Psychology, 83, page 139 – 149. | | Meyer J. P., Allen N.J and Smith C.A (1993) Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. Journal of Applied Psychology 78, Page 538 – 551. | | Parasuraman, S and Greenhaus, J. H (2002). Toward reducing some critical gaps in work-family research. Human Resource Management Review, 12 Page 299 – 312. | | Parik, I. J., (1998). Paradigms of gender issues in Indian organisations. Ahmedabad India: Indian Institute of Management. (Working paper, no.98-05-02, May 1998) | | Singh, Shyodan and Chowdhury, Aheli (2007) Understanding Work-life balance: An Empirical Study of IT sector. Global Journal of Business Management Vol.1 No.1 Page 1 – 9. | | Thomas L. T. and Ganster D.C (1995) Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. Journal of Applied Psychology, 80 Pages 6 – 15. | |