



IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE, MENTAL HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY AMONG TEACHING FACULTY IN NURSING AND PARAMEDICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: India and many other countries are in a complete or partial lockdown due to the COVID-19 global health crisis. As of July 2021, the number of new cases increased slightly, while the number of new deaths continued to decrease, with over 2.6 million new cases and just under 54 000 new deaths reported globally. The cumulative number of cases reported globally now exceeds 183 million and the number of deaths is almost 4 million (WHO, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the nature of work and employees from different industries are forced to work from home. Higher education institutes are not an exception and a rapid transition towards online education has considerably affected almost all key stakeholders including faculty members. While this fast and huge change in education delivery has happened in most institutions, faculty members are still struggling with new ways of teaching, engaging students, assessment, research and managing related task due to various reasons.

Objective: To explore the Impact of covid 19 on work-life balance, mental health and productivity among teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions. **Materials And Methods:** It was an online survey conducted using Google Forms and link was sent using Whatsapp and email. A 32-item self-designed questionnaire was used for the study. The questionnaire took around 5 min to complete. **Results:** More than half of the subjects (62.3%) were satisfied with the use of technology provided by their institution during the lockdown and 53.6% were satisfied with the facilities and support provided by the institution for online education. 81.2% of the participants experienced technical issues while arranging/taking online classes sometimes. Nearly all of them (97.1%) preferred physical classroom more than online education. More than half the subjects were using various technologies for delivering lessons online including zoom(58%), google meet(53.6 %), moodle (50.7%) and google classroom(55.1%). Also, more than half of them (50.7%) felt that they are comfortable with new ways of education deliveries. Nearly half of the subjects (42%) spend 2 to 4 hrs on online searching for materials that are aligned with the learning objectives of lessons and one third (33.3%) spent 4 hrs to 6 hrs on online searching for teaching materials. The challenges experienced by the subjects in making a good work-life balance while working online varied including lack of face to face engagement (71%), technical/internet difficulty (69.6%), tiring and demanding(34.8%). 47.8% felt that it uncomfortable to sit constantly behind their computer/laptop and loss of movements while working. The findings show that 52.2% perceived to become less productive than before and 31.9% heeded that their productivity is not being affected by the current situation.

Conclusion: Faculty members are part of the core team of any higher education institution's workforce and their work-life balance, well-being and productivity is very important to higher education institutions, especially in the current, unparalleled times. The administrative authority must make a concerted effort to understand the needs of quality of life among their faculty members

KEYWORDS

Covid 19, work-life balance, mental health and productivity, teaching faculty, nursing and paramedical education institutions

INTRODUCTION

COVID 19 made its appearance in the news at the dawn of 2020. Quickly it spread across the globe, and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020)¹. Due to the unprecedented nature and lack of readiness to face this problem, communities and nations implemented measures to prevent/manage the spread of the disease. As the intensity of the public health crisis escalated, governments everywhere developed strategies to minimize social and economic disruption while maintaining human rights. Nonessential services and schools were closed for regular business; colleges and universities across the nation/globe were forced to change the way students are educated with a sudden transition from face to face instruction to remote access synchronous / online instruction.

Faculty and students had to adapt quickly to innovative strategies to provide effective instruction using technology so that students can graduate on time and be practice ready. Clinical coursework was accomplished in virtual simulation or practicum alternatives. Everyone adapted to new ways of living, learning, and teaching. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are undeniably severe. Due to the recent pandemic, many schools and universities transitioned from face-to-face learning to remote classrooms. Other learning alternatives were created to assist graduate level nurses to achieve practicum goals.

Among the hardest hit areas of the corona virus outbreak is academics. Students across the globe were forced to turn their home into a virtual classroom. Some adjust better than others, but the fallout is the same: normalcy is postponed. Of course, students aren't the only ones impacted. Faculties and staffs have altered their curriculums to tailor to the new online format. 90 million school teachers world over and 6 million in India have been at the frontlines of damage-control of Covid -19 pandemic by ensuring that learning reaches their learners

seamlessly during the lockdown. When schools switched to online learning mode, it fell upon most teachers, stranded at home under lockdown conditions, to pick up technical skills without the benefit of any formal training.

Teachers are also responsible of taking care of their learner's mental well-being who are struggling under the impact of social distancing, lack of routine, absence of friends during the lockdown. It's not easy to teach a classfull of dejected, distracted and disinterested adolescents through a computer screen, who would prefer to connect with you socially and emotionally and share their feelings rather than learn from textbooks. Counselling learners and their parents too is emotionally demanding on teachers who are themselves struggling with similar issues. The impact of covid 19 among student population has been given importance and many studies are being carried out. Faculty haven't received the same attention.

In March 2020, Yale centre for emotional intelligence did a survey to unpack the emotional lives of teachers during the COVID-19 crisis. The teachers were asked to describe, in their own words, the three most frequent emotions they felt each day. The five most-mentioned feelings among all teachers were: anxious, fearful, worried, overwhelmed and sad. Anxiety, by far, was the most frequently mentioned emotion. The reason educators gave for these stress-related feelings could be divided into two buckets. The first is mostly personal, including a general fear that they or someone in their family would contract COVID-19, the new corona virus. The second pertains to their stress around managing their own and their families' needs while simultaneously working full-time from home and adapting to new technologies for teaching.

As there was a paucity of studies dealing with work life balance, mental health and productivity among nursing and paramedical faculty

groups, this study addresses a significance.

Statement Of The Problem

Impact of covid 19 on work-life balance, mental health and productivity among teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the impact of Covid 19 on work-life balance among teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions
2. To explore the impact of Covid 19 on mental health among teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions
3. To explore the impact of Covid 19 on productivity among teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study approach- Quantitative approach

Study design- cross sectional survey

Variable – Impact of Covid 19 on work-life balance, mental health and productivity

Setting - Electronic platform

Research population- Teaching faculty

Sample- Teaching faculty in nursing and paramedical education institutions

Sample size: 276

Sampling Technique- non-randomized referral sampling (snowball sampling) method

Tools & Technique

Section I- Sociopersonal variables

Section II- Questionnaire on impact of Covid 19 among teaching faculty

Formal permission was obtained from institutional research and ethics committees. Informed consent was obtained from each participant. The data was collected in a completely anonymous fashion without recording any personal identifiers.

Using a non-randomized referral sampling (snowball sampling) method, participants were contacted using electronic communication channels including posts on social media platforms, direct digital messaging, and personal and professional email lists. The purpose of the study was explained digitally and got informed consent from the participants.

RESULTS

Table 1 Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Subject Characteristics N=276

SNo	Characteristics/variables	F	%
1	Age		
	26-35 years	172	62.3
	36-45yrs	80	29
	46-55years	24	8.7
2	Marital status		
	Single	12	4.3
	Married	260	94.2
	Separated/widowed	4	1.4
3	Educational qualification		
	Graduate	48	17.4
	Post graduate	204	73.9
	Phd	24	8.7

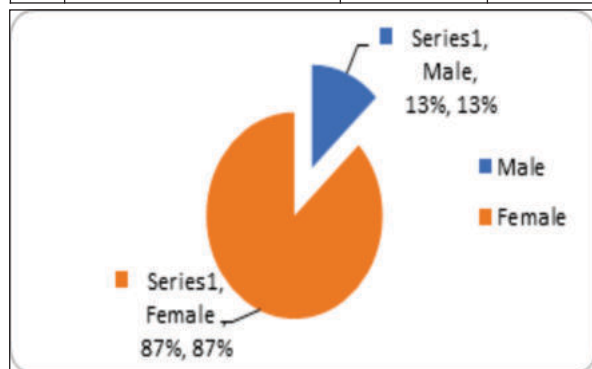


Fig 1: Gender distribution

More than half of the subjects belonged to the age group of 26-35 years and majority (87%) were females. 94.2% of the subjects were married and nearly two third (73.9%) were post graduates.

87% of the subjects (240) had children and among them, 116 has single child, 96 has 2 children, 24 has 3 children and 4 of them has 4 children respectively. Among the children (396), 62.6% were less than 10 years of age and 30% were in the age group of 10-20 years. 87% of the children were living with the parents and remaining were staying with grand parents or other relatives. Majority (86.8%) were working in the public sector and 3/4 th of them were working in nursing colleges and a quarter of them working in Paramedical institutions.

Nearly half of the participants were working as assistant professors, 36% as lecturers and the responsibility of 69.2% of them were only teaching whereas 27.5% had both teach teaching and administrator roles.

Experience Of Online Technology

More than half of the subjects (62.3%) were satisfied with the use of technology provided by their institution during the lockdown and 53.6% were satisfied with the facilities and support provided by the institution for online education. 81.2% of the participants experienced technical issues while arranging/taking online classes sometimes. Nearly all of them (97.1%) preferred physical classroom more than online education.

More than half the subjects were using various technologies for delivering lessons online including zoom (58%), google meet (53.6%), moodle (50.7%) and google classroom (55.1%). Also, more than half of them (50.7%) felt that they are comfortable with new ways of education deliveries.

Work-life Balance In The New Situation

Nearly half of the subjects (42%) spend 2 to 4 hours on online searching for materials that are aligned with the learning objectives of lessons and one third (33.3%) spent 4 hrs to 6 hrs on online searching for teaching materials.

According to 63.8% of the participants, the time spent online to search for teaching materials were more compared to class room teaching. More than half of the subjects (58%) were spending 2 to 4 hours for creating lecture videos. Nearly half (43.5) were working 2 to 4 hours and a quarter of them (23.2%) were working 4-6 hours compared to giving lessons in physical classrooms and 71% felt that it is more time compared to class room teaching.

42% of the subjects commented that they were able to manage home schooling for their children and preparing lectures for their students but 39.1% felt unsure of the task. The challenges experienced by the subjects in making a good work-life balance while working online varied including lack of face to face engagement (71%), technical/internet difficulty (69.6%), tiring and demanding (34.8%). On the positive note, 29% felt that online teaching increased flexibility and 21% felt that it was interesting and provide diverse and enriching experience to teach online in making a good work-life balance. 44.9% felt that their social life is affected by the new ways of education delivery and 37.7% felt that it is not. Financial stability for 34.8% were very much affected by the current remote working situation.

Obligatory Online Working And Mental Health

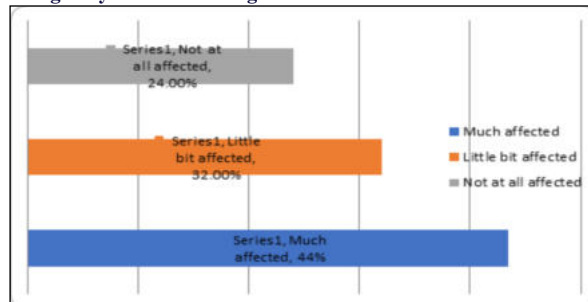


Fig 2: Moods and motivations- Mental health and online working

More than half (59.4%) of the subjects could easily distinguish between weekdays and weekends even though the routine class room

teaching is interrupted due to the pandemic. 47.8% felt that it uncomfortable to sit constantly behind their computer/laptop and loss of movements while working.

53.6 % of the subjects opined that they were able to spend less time in conducting and publishing research work compared to the time they had before covid pandemic and lockdown and 29% felt that they are able to spend more time for conducting and publishing research work than before.

The Impact Of Obligatory Online Working On Productivity

Nearly half of the subjects (49.3%) have spent 2 to 4 hrs daily on producing new materials for virtual classrooms. more than half of them (60.9%) perceived that they could spend less time for being in contact with the students compared to their normal classroom.

52.2% perceived that they have become less productive than before and 31.9% said that their productivity is not being affected by the current situation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study have provided important insights into the influence of Covid 19 pandemic on faculty members' personal and professional lives in HEIs. The survey results are presented under three different headings: work life balance, mental health and productivity.

The findings of the study was in congruence with study conducted by Parham, S., & Rauf, M. A. et al(2020) which revealed that that faculty members working in different countries are experiencing both positive and negative sides of obligatory remote working during covid 19 pandemic. Participants in this study refer to flexibility/freedom as the main positive side of remote working while the negative factors include but are not limited to time management and scheduling issues, separating work from private life, interruptions by children and family members, no clear difference between week days and weekends, limited working space/infrastructure at home, distractions and noises coming from the surroundings.

It is also in congruence with the survey conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education which revealed that 74 percent of all women faculty surveyed responded that work life balance had deteriorated, compared with 63 percent of men. Eighty-two percent of women professors said their workloads increased, compared with 70 percent of men.

Well-being

In the present study, the moods and motivations were much affected by new methods of education for 43.5% and the moods and motivations of 23.5% of the subjects were not at all affected by new methods of education. More than half (59.4%) of the subjects could easily distinguish between weekdays and weekends even though the routine class room teaching is interrupted due to the pandemic.

The study findings are in accordance with survey findings university of Aberdeen(UK) which showed that a proportion of staff were experiencing increased workload, often related to the online pivot (teaching). Staff also expressed feelings of unfairness in relation to workload allocation. A large number of staff raised the issue of excessive workloads impacting mental health and well-being. This was worsened by feelings of social isolation and linked to increased stress and anxiety.

This section presents the view of respondents on the effects of obligatory remote working on their well-being. The study participants mainly believe that sitting behind their computers for a long time affects their physical health in a negative way. Some also refer to the lack of social interactions with colleagues and students as a cause for unhappiness in their current working condition. Some faculty members believe that remote working has negatively affected their mood and motivation due to lack of social interactions with their peers and students, while some others argue that the current situation has not affected their moods and motivations much.

Productivity

The findings show that 52.2% perceived to become less productive than before and 31.9% heeded that their productivity is not being affected by the current situation. The findings are consistent with the study findings of R.K Delaney et al on Experiences of a Health System's Faculty, Staff, and Trainees' Career Development, Work

Culture, and Childcare Needs During the COVID-19 Pandemic which revealed that faculty (55%) and trainees (60%) perceived decreased productivity during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Participants of the study generally agree that "lack of interaction with students and colleagues" is a negative factor that affects productivity to different degrees.

CONCLUSION

Role issues related to work and family-role while working from home as an after effect of covid pandemic are established phenomena at present. The current trend of remote working is unlikely to fade away quickly. Many higher education institutions think that they have to keep to it either partially or fully even after the pandemic is over. Faculty members are part of the core team of any higher education institution's workforce and their work-life balance, well-being and productivity is very important to higher education institutions, especially in the current, unparalleled times. The administrative authority must make a concerted effort to understand the needs of quality of life among their faculty members.

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