

A Study of the Challenges in the Work-life Balance Among Healthcare Professionals and Strategies for Improvement in Today's Health Environment in Eastern Bicol Medical Center

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed the issues in terms of work-life balance faced by health care workers in Eastern Bicol Medical Center, Virac, Catanduanes, particularly concerning issues such as workload/scheduling, organizational culture, psychological/emotional stress, and family/personal life demands. With the use of the quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, information was gathered from licensed health care professionals through the validated researcher-made questionnaire, which utilized the stratified random sampling. As shown by the findings, the participants experienced moderate work-life balance issues and the strategies used by them turned out to be highly effective in contributing to their well-being and job satisfaction. Moreover, the selected demographic variables had a significant relationship with work-life balance issues of health care professionals. Therefore, the study concludes that the personal and professional characteristics have an impact on work-life balance of health care professionals. With the help of the findings, an evidence-based intervention program was proposed. Thus, the study is an important addition to the body of knowledge in work-life balance in the regional public health care setting and can contribute to the development of sustainable strategies that would improve the well-being and job satisfaction of employees in this field.

Keywords: *health care workers, licensed health care professionals, work-life balance*

INTRODUCTION

Balancing work and personal life continues to be a big problem among healthcare professionals because of the challenging nature of the job, characterized by factors such as working overtime, shift work, having a large workload, understaffing, and emotional stress, and there is little information on the subject of work-life balance from regional government hospitals in the Philippines. Based on Abdellah's Twenty-One Nursing Problems Theory, Roy's Adaptation Model, and Rogers' Science of Unitary Human Beings, this research aims to explore the work-life balance issues that the healthcare professionals have at Eastern Bicol Medical Center, the coping mechanisms that they utilize, and the correlation between work-life balance issues and their demographics.

Statement of the Problem-

This study sought to determine the demographic profile of healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center in terms of age, sex, civil status, years of service, and department. It also examines the work-life balance challenges they encounter, the strategies they employ to

address these challenges, and the effectiveness of these strategies in improving their overall well-being and job satisfaction across workload and scheduling, organizational culture, emotional and psychological stress, and family and personal life demands. Furthermore, the study investigates whether a significant relationship exists between the respondents' demographic characteristics and the work-life balance challenges they experience. Finally, based on the findings, the study aims to propose appropriate programs and interventions to strengthen work-life balance among healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center.

Scope and Delimitation-

This study focused on the work-life balance challenges experienced by healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center in Virac, Catanduanes, particularly those related to workload and scheduling, organizational culture, emotional and psychological stress, and family and personal responsibilities, as well as the strategies they use to manage these challenges and improve their well-being and job satisfaction. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study examines the relationship between the respondents' demographic profile and their work-life balance challenges. The investigation is limited to healthcare professionals employed at Eastern Bicol Medical Center; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other healthcare institutions. Moreover, the study relies on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias, and considers only selected factors affecting work-life balance, excluding other variables that may also influence the respondents' experiences.

Theoretical Framework-

Abdellah's Twenty-One Nursing Problems Theory emphasizes that healthcare professionals must maintain optimal physical, psychological, and emotional functioning to deliver safe, effective, and high-quality patient care. In the context of this study, excessive workload, extended work hours, staffing shortages, and competing professional responsibilities may compromise healthcare professionals' capacity to perform effectively, making work-life balance an essential component of quality healthcare delivery.

Roy's Adaptation Model explains how individuals respond to internal and external stressors through adaptive coping mechanisms. Healthcare professionals continuously encounter occupational demands, emotional pressures, and personal responsibilities that require effective adaptation. Their ability to utilize coping strategies, including time management, stress management, social support, and self-care practices, determines their capacity to maintain work-life balance and sustain personal and professional well-being.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the work-life balance of healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center, with the descriptive component used to determine the respondents' demographic profile and assess the challenges they experienced, the strategies they employed, and the perceived effectiveness of these strategies in maintaining work-life balance. The correlational component examined the significant relationships between the respondents' demographic characteristics (age, sex, civil status, years of service, and department) and the work-life balance challenges

they encountered, making this design appropriate for describing existing conditions and statistically analyzing the relationships among the study variables without manipulating the research environment.

Research Design-

This study utilized a quantitative descriptive–correlational research design to examine the work-life balance of healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center. Quantitative research is appropriate because the study aims to collect numerical data and statistically analyze the relationships among variables related to work-life balance.

Research Steps

The study commenced with a comprehensive review of local and international literature, established nursing theories, and evidence-based research to develop a strong theoretical and empirical foundation on work-life balance among healthcare professionals and the factors influencing their well-being. The insights gained from this review guided the development of the conceptual framework, refined the research objectives, and served as the basis for designing the researcher-made questionnaire, with emphasis on workload and scheduling, organizational culture, emotional and psychological stress, family and personal life demands, and organizational support. Furthermore, the literature review identified existing research gaps, reinforcing the need to investigate work-life balance challenges and appropriate intervention strategies for healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center.

Data Collection and Sample Selection-

This study was conducted at Eastern Bicol Medical Center (EBMC) in Virac, Catanduanes, involving licensed healthcare professionals selected through stratified random sampling, with the sample size determined using Slovin's formula and an estimated 50 respondents meeting the established inclusion and exclusion criteria. Prior to data collection, approval will be secured from the research adviser, the Ethics Review Board, and the hospital administration, while eligible participants will be informed of the study's purpose and ethical considerations before providing written informed consent. All data collected through the research questionnaire will be coded, securely stored, and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the participants.

Data Analysis Methods –

Data were organized, coded, and processed using a statistical software package, with descriptive analysis, frequency, and percentage distribution used to characterize respondents' demographic profile. Weighted mean and standard deviation will then determine the extent of work-life balance difficulties among healthcare professionals, along with the coping strategies employed and their effectiveness in promoting well-being and job satisfaction. Finally, inferential analysis through independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA will assess whether significant differences in these difficulties exist across demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, years of service, and department.

Research Hypotheses and Validation –

This research investigated the work-life balance challenges faced by healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center, focusing on workload and scheduling, organizational culture, stress, and family/personal life issues. It further examines the coping mechanisms employed to address these challenges and evaluates their effectiveness in enhancing employees' well-being and job satisfaction. Additionally, the study tests the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between respondents' demographic characteristics and the work-life balance problems they experience.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations-

The research project abided by the ethical requirements set for human participant research by securing clearance from the concerned Ethics Review Board and permission from the Eastern Bicol Medical Center. Prior to data gathering, where the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were guaranteed through the omission of identifying details, coding of completed questionnaires, and the safekeeping of all gathered data in compliance with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012. It must be noted that all data collected in the project were done for academic research purposes only, with respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, integrity, and confidentiality strictly maintained during the entire study period.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SOP 1. What are the demographic profiles of healthcare professionals at Eastern Bicol Medical Center?

The findings show a predominantly female, nurse-heavy workforce with a mix of age groups and service years (over half with more than seven years of service) and nearly equal married and single respondents, highlighting the need for targeted interventions such as flexible arrangements, workload management for long-serving staff, and support programs for new hires.

SOP 2. What challenges do healthcare professionals in maintaining work-life balance experience?

Weighted mean results showed Organizational Culture as the top concern (3.43), followed by Workload and Scheduling (3.25), Emotional and Psychological Stress (3.13), and Family and Personal Life Demands (2.93)—all in the Neutral-to-Agree range—revealing a fatigued but team-supported workforce facing moderate, multidimensional strain, and pointing to the need for targeted interventions in overtime, staffing, and family-friendly scheduling while preserving the supervisor and peer support already present as an organizational strength.

SOP 3. What strategies are currently employed by healthcare professionals to manage their work-life balance?

Findings reveal that healthcare workers only occasionally apply coping strategies across workload, organizational, stress, and family-related domains—relying most consistently on advance planning for family matters while using workplace-related approaches like schedule

adjustments, wellness programs, and stress management less regularly—highlighting professional demands that hinder consistent practice and underscoring the need for healthcare organizations to strengthen policies supporting flexible work arrangements and employee well-being.

SOP 4. How effective are these strategies in improving the overall well-being and job satisfaction of healthcare professionals?

Respondents generally viewed the strategies for improving work-life balance as effective, with high ratings across workload management, organizational culture, stress management, and family-related measures. Practices such as task planning, supervisor support, relaxation techniques, and shared household responsibilities were all seen as contributing positively to employees' well-being and job satisfaction. Overall, the findings suggest that health care professionals value both personal coping mechanisms and organizational support in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

SUMMARY

This study examined work-life balance challenges spanning workload/scheduling, organizational culture, emotional/psychological stress, and family/personal demands along with the coping mechanisms used by licensed healthcare practitioners at Eastern Bicol Medical Center, selected via stratified random sampling and surveyed through a researcher-made questionnaire in a descriptive-correlational quantitative design. Findings revealed that respondents faced moderate work-life balance challenges overall, employed generally effective coping strategies to sustain wellness and job satisfaction, and showed certain demographic variables significantly linked to these challenges. These results offer a foundation for developing evidence-based programs and policies to strengthen employee wellness and work-life balance.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research has shown that there are work-life balance problems among healthcare workers in Eastern Bicol Medical Center, which are caused by workload and schedule, organizational culture, emotional and psychological pressure, as well as family and personal life issues. In spite of the effectiveness of the current measures taken by the participants, it can be said that there is a necessity for more effective intervention of institutions to solve the problem of work-life balance. Moreover, the analysis showed that certain demographic factors affect the problem of work-life balance among healthcare workers, which underlines the necessity of creating responsive programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, Eastern Bicol Medical Center is encouraged to strengthen employee support programs through interventions such as flexible work arrangements, adequate staffing, and mental health initiatives, tailored to staff needs based on demographics, years of service, and family circumstances. These interventions should be implemented, monitored, and evaluated to ensure they effectively enhance both employee well-being and the quality of healthcare delivery. Hospital managers, policymakers, and future researchers are

likewise encouraged to apply these findings to improve institutional policies and to replicate similar studies in other settings to validate and build upon these results.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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