Work-Life Balance among Female Nurses Working in the Public Hospitals of Punjab, Pakistan

Rabia Ashfaq

rabialecturersw@gmail.com

Assistant Professor Social Work, Govt. Graduate College for Women, Baghbanpura, Lahore

Prof. Dr. Uzma Ashiq

uzma.dsw@pu.edu.pk

Chairperson Social Work Department, University of the Punjab

Corresponding Author: * Rabia Ashfaq rabialecturersw@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Balancing the work-life for working women is a phenomenon. Especially, for the working women, it is very difficult to manage the work life along with family life, if there are disturbing factors on both sides. Similarly, female nurses are also face lots of problems, hurdles and difficulties during the performance of their duties. In the situation of imbalance of work-life phenomenon, there are numerous issues for the organization and family life. This study intends to investigate disturbing factors for work-life balance among women nurses who are serving in public hospitals. The main objective of the article is to explain the relationship between work life balance, workload, family and organizational support, and job performance with the arbitrating role of a family-work conflict and work-family conflict among female nurses at public hospitals. Currently, the ratio of women in the healthcare field has been enhanced due to the male and female working force. By exploitation of narrative review analysis, the article intends to highlight the key issues of family-work conflict, work-family conflict and job performance in public hospitals. It has proposed aboriginal consideration to the healthcare policymaker toward marginalized public hospitals regarding female nurses, so that reliable policies and practices for female nurses may be functioned to help them achieve work life balance and unconventional performance.

Key Words: Work life balance, family-work conflict, work-family conflict, job performance, female nurses.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The article focuses on workload, family and organizational support, and job performance with refereeing role of family work conflict and work family conflict. Job performance maintenance is very tough for workers in the healthcare organization environment (Sa et al., 2023).

Work-life balance is a tough work for both male and especially for female workers. In current modern world, achieving a harmonious balance between work and personal life has emerged as a paramount concern, particularly for individuals navigating demanding professions such as nursing. Within the healthcare sector, where the demands of patient care often extend beyond traditional working hours, the issue of work-life balance assumes even greater significance (Wijaya & Suwandana 2022). This narrative review aims to look into the intricate dynamics of work-life balance among female nurses employed in public hospitals of Lahore-Pakistan. By focusing specifically on the experiences of female nurses during the performance of their duties, this research seeks to shed light on the unique challenges and coping mechanisms that shape their professional and personal lives. Through a comprehensive investigation encompassing this review endeavors to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing work-life balance among female nurses in Lahore, thereby contributing to the development of targeted strategies

aimed at enhancing their overall well-being and job satisfaction (Maiya, 2015). Healthcare workers are facing work-life issues in the hspitals which promptly need to encounter it. Family support and social life are key factors toward job performance in the healthcare services organization. If not well handled, the combination of personal and social obligations may lead to family work conflict in the healthcare organization (Zulkarnain et al., 2024).

According to statistics (Primary and Secondary Health Department), Punjab, with a population of 110 million, has 0.83 physicians and 0.56 nurses per 1,000 population, which translates into 94179 doctors and 64846 nurses. These are supported by 44452 lady health workers and 1799 lady health supervisors in the province. The percentage of female staff serving in the health sector in Punjab shows the significance of female staff in the health sector. Therefore, for the workplace and family life balance as well as the satisfaction of these female staff, efficient service delivery is very much necessary.

Only 10 percent of non-agricultural workers in the private formal sector are women. On the other side, at 20 percent, Pakistan's workforce participation rate for women is one of the lowest both in South Asia and globally and there are many factors responsible for this, like low education, social taboos and political issues (World Bank, 2022).
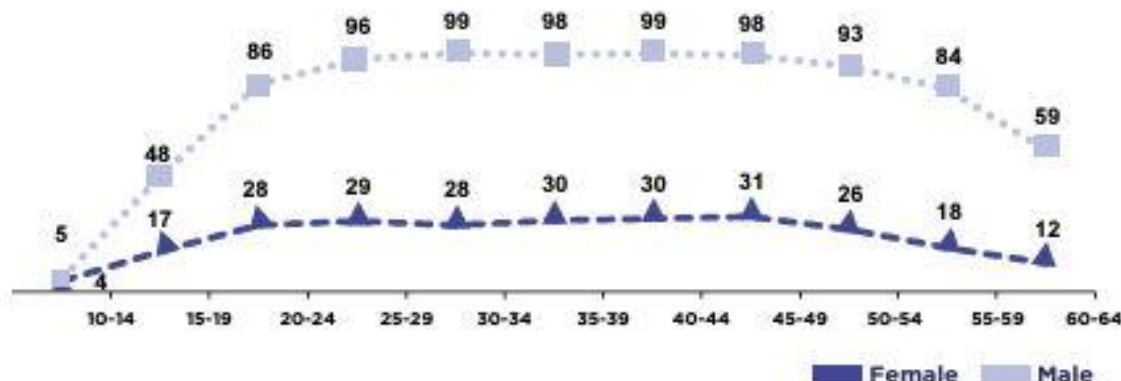
Graph showing the women worker's participation according to province.
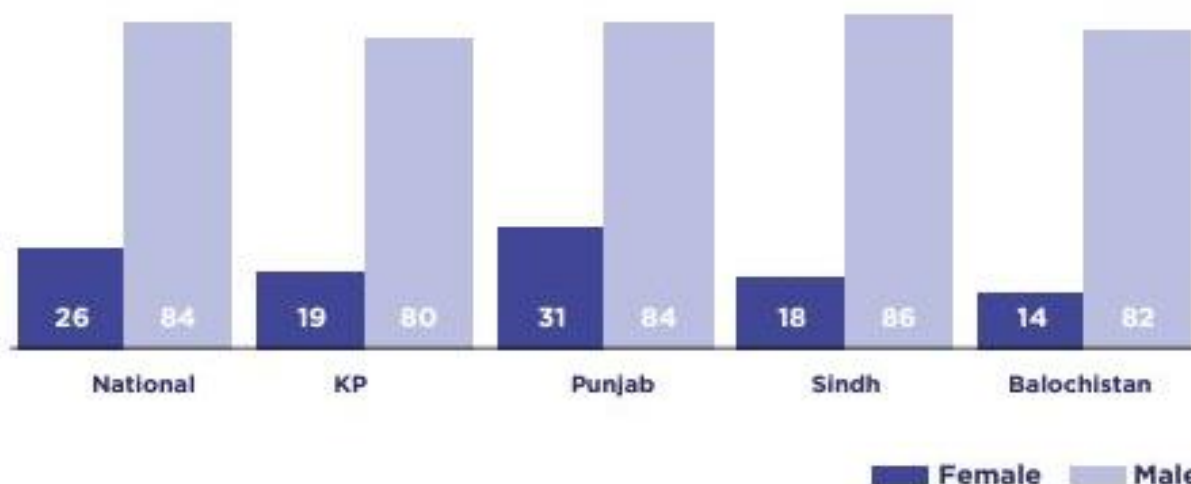
Source: UN Report on Status of Women in Pakistan 2023

Graph showing female workers ratio in Labor market of Pakistan

Graph showing female workers ratio in Labor market of Pakistan according to the age group.

Source: UN Report on Status of Women in Pakistan 2023

The most commonly cited literature highlighted the issue of family work conflict and its influence on job performance. Such as, the study concluded that ensuring job performance maintenance poses significant challenges for personnel in the healthcare organizational setting (Sa et al., 2023). Healthcare professionals are now grappling with work-life challenges at hospitals that need immediate attention. Family support and social life significantly influence work performance in the healthcare services organization. Improper management of personal and social responsibilities might result in a conflict between family and work commitments within the healthcare organization (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). For instance, Norful et al. (2024) proposed that the family environment disrupts the social lives of healthcare staff and might sometimes have an adverse effect on their job performance. Consequently, Schnettler et al. (2024) showed that work-family conflict arises from insufficient financial support for the family and its impact on job satisfaction. This is because healthcare practitioners must successfully explain their failures in order to retain their employment and work performance (Plescia et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The nursing profession is well-known for its rigorous demands, which include extended work hours, inconsistent schedules, and significant emotional labor. Female nurses, who make up a substantial majority of the nursing workforce, often have distinct obstacles in attaining better job performance in their personal lives as a result of the overlap between their professional and caregiving duties. Research has emphasized that personal and professional life maintenance is a very difficult job for nurses, such as a higher likelihood of experiencing burnout, exhaustion, and intent to leave their jobs. Comprehending the distinct difficulties encountered by female nurses employed in public hospitals is crucial for formulating focused treatments to enhance their job performance (Al Rabaani et al., 2024).

The research delves into the impact of workload, social relationships, family dynamics, and organizational support on job performance, considering the mediating effects of family work conflict and work-family conflict. The maintenance of job performance in the healthcare organizational setting presents significant challenges. Healthcare professionals are currently grappling with work-life challenges within hospital settings that demand immediate attention. Family support and social life significantly influence work performance in the healthcare services organization. Mismanagement of personal and social responsibilities can lead to a conflict between family and work commitments within healthcare organizations. For instance, Norful et al. (2024) proposed that the family environment disrupts the social lives of healthcare staff and might sometimes have an adverse effect on their job performance.

Consequently, Schnettler et al. (2024) showed that work-family conflict arises from insufficient financial support for the family and its impact on job satisfaction. This is because healthcare practitioners must successfully explain their failures in order to keep their employment and work performance (Plescia et al., 2024).

Jeyapaul and ST (2024) found that understanding between work and personal life has become a persistent concern, particularly for those working in healthcare. In the healthcare sector, patient care often demands more attention, making regular working hours crucial for maintaining job performance. The issue is difficult to define since nurses play a crucial role in healthcare delivery, which requires them to fulfill the demands of their profession. The crucial factor for work success is the presence of healthcare personnel who demonstrate devotion, compassion, and resilience (Zandian et al., 2020). While job performance maintenance is a recognized concern, it is important to emphasize its relationship with family work conflict and work-family conflict, taking into account the separate variables of workload and social and organizational support in healthcare organizations. In this context, the primary focus is on attaining a high level of job performance in healthcare nursing. This is especially important for female nurses who must balance the demands of their employment with personal obligations and strive to minimize conflicts between work and home life. Within public hospitals, nurses typically encounter demanding work schedules, extended hours, and mental stress due to the overwhelming demand for healthcare services that exceeds the available resources. Therefore, having a flexible perspective may pose more risks to the social and professional lives of female nurses in both the healthcare context and their professional careers (Begum et al., 2024).

The predominant literature emphasized the topic of family work conflict and its impact on job performance. The research found that individuals in the healthcare organizational environment have considerable obstacles in maintaining job performance (Sa et al., 2023). Healthcare personnel are now facing significant work-life difficulties in hospitals that need urgent attention. Work performance in the healthcare services organization is substantially influenced by family support and social life. Inadequate handling of individual and societal obligations might lead to a clash between familial and professional duties inside the healthcare institution (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). The study of Norful et al. (2024) claimed that the family environment may interfere with the social life of healthcare workers and have a negative impact on their job performance. Therefore, Schnettler et al. (2024) show that work-family conflict stems from inadequate financial assistance for the family and its influence on job satisfaction. The reason for this is that healthcare professionals are required to effectively articulate their shortcomings in order to maintain their job security and professional competence (Plescia et al., 2024).

Social Exchange and CognitiveAappraisal Theories

According to Ap (1992), social exchange theory emphasizes on give-and-take relationships between individuals and their social environments. The basic assumption of the theory is that individuals are motivated to maintain relationships that provide rewards and minimize costs. In the context of work life balance, work family conflict family work conflict as well job performance of female nurses in public hospitals may seek support from their families and organizations in exchange and commitment relationship which motivate them to perform well. The provision of support from both family members and the organization can enhance job performance by fostering positive exchanges and reducing perceived costs associated with managing work and family responsibilities. Moreover, this research can also be supported with cognitive appraisal theory. A cognitive appraisal is our interpretation of the eliciting event and of our bodily reactions to the eliciting event (Scherer, 1997). According to cognitive psychology, feelings result from emotions emerging from the mental processing of information associated with events and CAT provides a framework for understanding how emotions are formed (Ren & Ma,

2023; Shoukat & Ramkissoon, 2022; Watson & Spence, 2007). These theoretical underpinning can be a best contribution to improve job performance with exchange and appraisal relationship.

DISCUSSION

In today's contemporary society, attaining a good equilibrium between professional and personal life has become a crucial issue, especially for persons who are pursuing their jobs in healthcare centres. In the healthcare industry, where patient care sometimes requires more attention and regular working hours become even more important to retain job performance (Jeyapaul & ST, 2024). Such as, Norful et al. (2024) suggested that family environment disturbs the social life of healthcare personnel and sometimes has a negative impact on their job performance. As a result, Schnettler et al. (2024) proven that work-family conflict is due to low family financial support and its relationship with job satisfaction. This is due to the fact that healthcare practitioners need to communicate their failure effectively to maintain their employment and job performance (Plescia et al., 2024).

The nurses stand at the forefront of healthcare delivery which is the demand of the healthcare to perform their job. Healthcare professionals embodying dedication, compassion, and resilience are the key to job performance (Alghamdi et al., 2023). Although job performance maintenance is a known issue, it must be highlighted in the context of family work conflict and work-family conflict with independent factors of workload and social and organizational support in healthcare organizations. Within this context, achieving a good job performance is a critical concern for healthcare nursing, particularly for female nurses juggling the responsibilities of their careers with personal commitments and reducing family-work conflict. In public hospitals, where the demand for healthcare services often surpasses available resources, nurses frequently find themselves navigating challenging work schedules, prolonged shifts, and emotional strain. As such, dynamic understanding can be more hazardous for the female nurses' social and professional life in the healthcare setting as well as in professional job (Begum et al., 2024; Salonsalmi et al., 2024).

The review has drawn a comprehensive association between workload, family and organizational support for the betterment of job performance. The control of the family work conflict and work-family conflict can improve the job performance of female nurses in healthcare organizations.

This review examined the impact of social and organizational support on job performance with the dynamic nature of family work conflict and work-family conflict on female nurses in public hospitals in Lahore, Pakistan. It provided insight into the distinct difficulties of workload and coping strategies for professional and personal life maintenance in their healthcare organization. Similarly, it explained the valuable factors that influence family work conflict and work-family conflict among female nurses in Lahore.

From the above latest critical debate, it was revealed that work life balance is a burning issue, and it is related with job performance especially for female nurses in the current social and professional job-oriented environment. For female nurses, work-family conflict and family-work conflict are both crucial factors to affect their job performance. Furthermore, family environment, family morale and financial support are key predictors of workplace performance in healthcare organizations. It is because the workload and the organization's negative support can influence their job performance in the healthcare organization. On the other side, female nurses have their family responsibilities as women at home, which is also disturbed due to maintaining job performance. There are a number of ways in which female nurse job performance can improve. Also, the issues of social, family and organizational support can be the best approached to sustain their home environment, the care of home, children and other social responsibilities in their daily routine.

This study is a step to pinpoint the issue of work life balance and its direct association with family work conflict, work-family conflict and job performance among female nurses working in the public hospitals of Lahore-Pakistan, which is a noteworthy dilemma and needs to be discussed and tackled properly, in order to prevent it from becoming a dilemma in the future. Moreover, Pakistan, like many other countries, grapples with gender roles and expectations within families and workplaces. Understanding how female nurses navigate their familial responsibilities alongside their professional commitments is crucial for societal progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Similarly, with an increasing number of women entering the workforce in Pakistan, it's essential to examine the challenges they face regarding their familial roles with their professional aspirations. The review has enlightened the dynamics between family financial support, organizational support, home environment and the workload of women can be a big hurdle for the HR practices and policies at hospitals in Lahore.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a practice-oriented profession, achieving work-life balance for working women is a significant phenomenon. In contemporary culture, balancing professional and personal life has become a considerable concern, particularly for individuals in high-pressure occupations such as nursing. This review analyzed work-life balance among female nurses in the public hospitals of Punjab Pakistan. Women struggle to strike a balance between their obligations to their families and their careers. In an imbalanced work situation, various issues are highlighted, mainly the work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict, which are critical areas of this research. It has significant ramifications for corporate behavior and the well-being of female employees.

It mainly focuses on workload, family financial support and organizational support, and job performance, with family-work and work-family conflict serving as mediators. Employees in the healthcare organization context have significant challenges in maintaining job performance.

There is a significant negative correlation between work-life balance and work-family conflict. (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). Time and effort in the work-life balance between professional and personal life responsibilities is important, as is giving appropriate time and distribution in each aspect of life. (Schnettler et al. 2024). Work-family conflict and family-work conflict both negatively impact job performance, professional well-being, and job satisfaction. (Zulkarnain et al., 2024). Lack of organizational support and family financial support negatively impact the work-life balance of females. (Rafique & Waqas, 2021). The workload and excessive work hours upset work-life balance among female nurses. (Bagnasco et al. 2019).

Female nurses often face many difficulties in balancing their professional work with personal and family obligations owimg night shifts, long working hours, and emotional instability and fatigue (Smith et al., 2020). These obstacles are intense by cultural demand that women manage family tasks in conjunction with their professional oblige (Goyal & Gupta, 2018). The incapable work-life balance in female nurses leads to increased stress, burnout, and lessened job satisfaction, yet vulnerable to the quality of patient care (Dall'Ora et al., 2019).

Likewise, findings from this study can inform policymakers about the need for supportive policies and practices in government or public hospitals to facilitate better job performance and minimize work-family conflict and family work-family. This can include measures such as flexible working hours, childcare support, and family-friendly policies that can enhance women's participation and maintain their job performance in the healthcare workforce. This study will be beneficial for nursing women and organizations in the context of health, social and professional life.

Moreover, other aspects of job performance, such as marital life management (family welfare), female nurses' well-being (women welfare), patient welfare and workplace management (MSSPs), and factors between these, are major areas of concern for social work. Therefore, the current study has an unconditional linkage with the social work discipline and its fields.

REFERENCES

Al Rabaani, E., Al Yahyaei, A., Alkasbi, R., Alhashmi, Y., & Al Hatmi, I. (2024). Examining the Influence of Shift length on Nurse Fatigue, Patient Care, Quality of Life, and Work-Life Dynamics in a Tertiary Hospital in Oman: Comparative Study. *Research Square*. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4003959/v1

Alghamdi, N. S. A., Malibari, A. W. M., Radin, R. A. M. A., Qurban, A. H. S., Alsulami, S. A. H., Alnmees, M. D. R., Alshammry, B. S., Majrashi, A. Y. S., Suhaim, S. M. B., & Al Sagoor, N. A. N. (2023). Unsung Heroes: The Essential Work Of Medical Nurses In Healthcare. *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture*, *39*(Special Issue 1), 40-50. https://doi.org/10.59670/d2vh6c75

Alharbi, M. M. H. (2023). Effect Of Work-Life Balance On Performance: An Empirical Study Of Jordanian And Indian Hospitals. *Manar Elsharq Journal for Management and Commerce Studies*, *1*(1), 1-17.

Ap, J. (1992). Residents' perceptions on tourism impacts. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *19*(4), 665-690. https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(92)90060-3

Begum, M. R., Banu, R. A., Parvin, M. T., Mst, S. K., & Mittra, C. R. (2024). Night Shift Duty of Nurses and its Effects on Family and Social Lives. *International Journal of Medical Science and Clinical Research Studies*, *4*(02), 250-254. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmscrs/v4-i02-15

Doğru, Ç. (2019). *What is Organizational Support*. IGI. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-5225-6301-3.ch001

Jeyapaul, P. P., & ST, J. C. (2024). Doctors' Employment Status and Its Implications on Their Quality of Professional and Personal Life Ranked Using TOPSIS. *Northern Economic Review*, *15*(1), 129-145. https://nerj.org/uploads/archives/50da3a7f-6457-4d27-ae6c-f1131d7ef096.pdf

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work–family conflict and family–work conflict scales. *Journal of applied psychology*, *81*(4), 400.

Norful, A. A., Brewer, K. C., Cahir, K. M., & Dierkes, A. (2024). Individual and organizational factors influencing well-being or burnout among healthcare assistants: A systematic review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies Advances*, *6*, 100187. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnsa.2024.100187

Plescia, F., Malta, G., Zerbo, S., Verso, M. G., Matera, S., Skerjanc, A., & Cannizzaro, E. (2024). Work and environmental factors on job burnout: A cross-sectional study among doctors for sustainable work. *Environmental and Occupational Health*. https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202403.0003.v1

Powell, G. N., Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2020). *The family and the work-family interface: A review and directions for future research*. Journal of Management, *46*(1), 1–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206318818719

Rafique, A., & Waqas, A. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on the work-life balance of healthcare professionals in Lahore. *Journal of Health and Social Sciences,* *6*(1), 10-21. https://doi.org/10.19204/2021/ctnc3

Ren, L., & Ma, C. (2023). Planning the unplannable—How blind box tourism boosts purchase intentions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*. https://doi.org/10.1177/13567667231168643

Sa, B., SF, E.-S., & NM, A. (2023). Work ability and work-family conflict among a university hospital healthcare workers: The effect on work-life balance. *Egyptian Journal of Occupational Medicine*, *47*(3), 83-100. https://doi.org/10.21608/ejom.2023.196757.1306

Salonsalmi, A., Kouvonen, A., Rahkonen, O., Lahelma, E., & Lallukka, T. (2024). Work–family conflicts and sickness absence—a register-linked cohort study among young and early midlife employees. *European Journal of Public Health*, 32-51. https://doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckae012/7603863

Scherer, K. R. (1997). The role of culture in emotion-antecedent appraisal. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *73*(5), 902-922. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.5.902

Schmeer, K. K. (2012). Family structure and obesity in early childhood. *Social Science Research*, *41*(4), 820-832. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.01.007

Schnettler, B., Miranda-Zapata, E., Orellana, L., Saracostti, M., Poblete, H., Lobos, G., Adasme-Berríos, C., Lapo, M., Beroiza, K., & Concha-Salgado, A. (2024). Intra-and Inter-Individual Associations of Family-to-Work Conflict, Psychological Distress, and Job Satisfaction: Gender Differences in Dual-Earner Parents during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Behavioral Sciences*, *14*(1), 56. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14010056

Shahbaz, S., Naveed, A., & Waqar, S. (2021). The mental and emotional toll of COVID-19 on frontline healthcare workers in Lahore. *Journal of Public Health, 43*(1), 45-52.

Schweizer, V. J. (2019). *FP-19-28 30 Years of Change in Men's Entry into Fatherhood, 1987-2017* [Grant]. College of Arts and Sciences. https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article

Smith, J., Roberts, M., & Hughes, T. (2020). Financial stability, family support, and work-life balance in nursing. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 34(5), 202-210. https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.2020.128034o

Shoukat, M. H., & Ramkissoon, H. (2022). Customer delight, engagement, experience, value co-creation, place identity, and revisit intention: a new conceptual framework. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, *31*(6), 757-775. https://doi.org/10.1080/19368623.2022.2062692

Watson, L., & Spence, M. T. (2007). Causes and consequences of emotions on consumer behaviour: A review and integrative cognitive appraisal theory. *European Journal of Marketing*, *41*(5/6), 487-511. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710737570

Welsh, D. H., Kim, G., Memili, E., & Kaciak, E. (2014). The influence of family moral support and personal problems on firm performance: The case of Korean female entrepreneurs. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, *19*(03), 1450018.

Zulkarnain, Z., Ginting, E. D., Adnans, A. A., & Sianturi, M. M. (2024). Organisational justice and work-family conflict: Impact to quality of work life. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, *22*, 2393. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v22i0.2393

Alenezi, A. M., et al. (2018). Work-related stress and coping strategies among Saudi nurses: An integrative review. *Nursing Forum*, 53(1), 35-44.

Bagnasco, A., Timmins, F., & McCabe, C. (2019). Workload and work-life balance among female nurses: A systematic review. *International Nursing Review*, 66(2), 110-118. https://doi.org/10.1111/inr.12511

Byun, J., Lee, S., & Kim, Y. (2021). The impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance in nursing. *International Nursing Review*, 68(2), 250-258. https://doi.org/10.1111/inr.12629

Dall'Ora, C., Ball, J., Reinius, M., & Griffiths, P. (2019). *Work-life balance and its impact on the well-being of healthcare staff: A systematic review. Journal Name, Volume*(Issue), page numbers. https://doi.org/xxxxx

Geiger-Brown, J., & Trinkoff, A. (2010). Is it time to pull the plug on 12-hour shifts? *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 40(3), 100-102.

Goyal, A., & Gupta, B. (2018). Work-life balance: A conceptual review and future directions. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), page numbers. https://doi.org/xxxxx

Hayes, B., Bonner, A., & Pryor, J. (2020). Work-family conflict in nursing: The influence of workload on work-life balance. Journal of Nursing Management, 28(1), 82-90. https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12735

Lee, E.-J., Yu, H.-S., & Na, T.-K. (2022). The mediating effects of work–life balance (WLB) and ease of using WLB programs in the relationship between WLB organizational culture and turnover intention. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(6), 3482.

McVicar, A. (2016). Scoping the common antecedents of job stress and job satisfaction for nurses (2000–2013) using the job demands-resources model of stress. Journal of Nursing Management, 24(2), E112–E136. https://doi.org/10.1111/jonm.12326