

## Work-life balance & burnout among nurses in the inpatient ward of Goeteng Taroenadibrata General Hospital, Purbalingga

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### Abstract

**Background:** Nursing is one of the most stressful professions, and nurses need to have a balance between their work and personal lives (work-life balance). Work-life balance plays an important role in preventing burnout and improving the professional performance of nurses. This study aims to determine the relationship between work-life balance and burnout among nurses.

**Method:** This study is a correlational descriptive study with a cross-sectional approach. The sampling technique used total sampling of 124 nurses. The research instruments were the Work-Life Balance (WLB) Scale questionnaire consisting of 15 questions and the burnout questionnaire using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS) consisting of 22 statements regarding emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal achievement. Bivariate analysis used the Spearman rank statistical test.

**Results:** Nurses' work-life balance was mostly in the low category (67.7%). The majority of nurses' burnout was in the moderate category (54%). There was a negative relationship between nurses' work-life balance and burnout; the higher the nurses' work-life balance, the lower their burnout ( $r=-0.448$ ,  $p$  value=0.001).

**Conclusion:** These findings underscore the importance of integrating work-life balance-oriented strategies into hospital management practices. Such approaches may serve as effective measures to reduce nurse burnout and sustain performance in inpatient care settings.

**Keywords:** Work-life balance; burnout; nurse

### INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, nursing is the largest health profession (compared to general practitioners, specialists, midwives, pharmacists, and dentists) with 296,876 people (49%) in 2016 (1). Nurses are at the forefront of patient care. Nurses are required to have the individual ability to work in an intense physical and emotional dynamic in the workplace. Work-related factors cause burnout and require professional attention to reduce the impact of burnout on nursing staff (2). Nurses must be able to adapt to high work stressors and avoid making mistakes, which requires concentration and physical, mental, and emotional readiness in providing services. High stressors are often experienced by nurses in situations such as saving patients, work routines, uncomfortable workspaces, and large numbers of patients, as well as having to act quickly in responding to patient needs. Symptoms of burnout can

arise as a result of these factors if they are not addressed immediately (3).

Burnout syndrome is a sustained psychological response to chronic work stress, characterized by emotional exhaustion, negative attitudes and feelings toward service recipients (depersonalization), and feelings of low achievement or professional failure (lack of personal achievement). Nurses who experience burnout will experience a decrease in energy. This decrease in energy manifests as emotional exhaustion, lack of joy, and feelings of dissatisfaction, and can reduce work efficacy. Burnout symptoms can arise due to high stressors. For example, several factors that are predictors of burnout are low/inadequate number of nursing staff, shifts longer than 12 hours, low schedule flexibility, time pressure, high job and psychological demands, low task variety, role conflict, low autonomy, negative nurse-doctor

relationships, poor supervisor or leader support, poor leadership, negative team relationships, and job insecurity (4).

Nurses who lack a sense of personal accomplishment while performing their duties can be an early indicator of burnout syndrome. A lack of appreciation from the hospital or team can lead to negative feelings toward the job and a lack of motivation to perform at a high level. As a result, nurses eventually feel exhausted, which reduces the quality of their work (5),(6) states that nurse burnout, low personal success rates, and fatigue are caused by a lack of social support and a good work-life balance. The concept of work-life balance relates to a series of individual and structural factors that shape how individuals balance their work tasks with personal activities, aligning this balance with their unique values, goals, and ambitions. Previous research shows that employees who achieve a balance between their professional and personal lives typically report reduced stress and increased job satisfaction, which in turn promotes better mental health outcomes. Other research shows that work-life balance is directly proportional to job satisfaction and inversely proportional to psychological distress. Individuals who are adept at balancing their obligations with their personal lives are more likely to have optimal mental health and well-being (7).

Nurses need a balance between work and life for several reasons. First, the physical, emotional, and mental demands of this profession require setting boundaries and emphasizing self-care. Second, a sustainable work-life balance can lead to increased efficiency, innovation, and overall health. Third, without a healthy work-life balance, nurses are at risk of burnout, depression, and poor patient outcomes. Fourth, a balanced lifestyle is conducive to staying motivated and moving forward, which can improve patient care and client satisfaction (8).

Nurses who successfully maintain a balance between their work and personal lives tend not to experience burnout and are more likely to report higher job satisfaction and better mental health. Healthcare professionals with a better work-life balance

will be more resilient and able to manage the pressures of their role without compromising their mental health (9). Nurses who successfully balance their personal and professional lives experience less stress, have more free time, spend more time with their families, reduce burnout, and pay more attention to their own personal health (10).

A healthy work-life balance gives nurses the time and energy to recover from the demands of their job, thereby reducing the risk of burnout and improving overall well-being. This balance is important in nursing, where the demands of the profession are high and the risk of burnout is significant. Work-life balance can significantly reduce the impact of job demands on burnout (11).

Previous studies have mentioned that research involving participants working in healthcare, banking, insurance, and logistics, as well as orthopedic training participants, shows a relationship between work-life balance and burnout (12). The better the balance between work and personal life, the lower the risk of burnout (13).

The preliminary survey results showed that there were 124 nurses working in the inpatient ward of Goeteng Tarunadibrata Regional General Hospital. Based on interviews with 10 nurses, some nurses complained about long working hours and the constant flow of patients every day, both those with minor and serious illnesses. The limited number of nurses is also a factor that causes nurses to be extremely tired because they are sometimes called in to cover shifts even when they are supposed to be off. They are also tired because they sometimes deal with many patients from different backgrounds and often experience aggressive behavior from patients, which adds to the burden and stress they feel at work. Based on the above description, the issue to be examined is whether there is a relationship between work-life balance and nurse burnout. The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between work-life balance and nurse burnout in the inpatient ward of Goeteng Taroenadibrata Purbalingga Regional General Hospital.

**METHOD**

This type of research is quantitative observational research. The research approach used is cross-sectional. The population in this study was all 124 nurses in the inpatient ward at Goeteng Taroenadibrata Purbalingga Regional General Hospital. The patient sampling technique used in this study was total sampling. The inclusion criteria for nurses were > 1 year of service, not on leave/sick leave/study leave.

The independent variable in this study was nurses' work-life balance. Meanwhile, the dependent variable in this study was nurses' burnout. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The work-life balance questionnaire used the Work-Life Balance (WLB) Scale, which consisted of 15 questions. The burnout questionnaire used the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Human Services Survey (MBI-HSS), consisting of 22 statements regarding emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal accomplishment. The reliability analysis demonstrated good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.82 for the Work-Life Balance Scale and 0.88 for the Maslach Burnout Inventory-HSS. Work-life balance is categorized into three categories: high (score 46-60), moderate (score 30-45), and low (score 15-29). Burnout is also categorized into three categories: mild burnout (score 22-44), moderate burnout (score 45-66), and severe burnout (score 67-88). This questionnaire was adapted from previous research. Before conducting the research, all respondents were given a complete explanation of the objectives, benefits, and methods of the research. The explanation was given directly when the researcher distributed the questionnaire.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize respondent characteristics, work-life balance, and burnout levels. Prior to inferential analysis, data distribution was assessed and found to be non-normally distributed. Therefore, the Spearman rank correlation test was used to examine the relationship between work-life balance and burnout. This

study has obtained an ethical approval letter from Universitas Harapan Bangsa with letter number B.LPPM-UHB/725/07/2025.

**RESULTS**

This study was conducted in the inpatient ward of Goeteng Taroenadibrata Regional General Hospital in Purbalingga for one month. The results of the study include data related to nurses' work-life balance and burnout, as well as the relationship between these variables.

**Table 1 Characteristics of nurses in the Inpatient Ward of Goeteng Taroenadibrata Regional General Hospital Purbalingga 2025**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	23	18,5
	Female	101	81,5
Age	26-35 years	38	30,6
	36-45 years	55	44,4
	46-55 years	31	25
Latest Education	Diploma	69	55,6
	Ners	54	43,5
	Magister	1	0,8
Working Periode	< 3 years	14	11,3
	≥3 years	110	88,7
Total		124	100

**Table 2. Work-life balance and burnout among nurses in the inpatient ward of Goeteng Taroenadibrata Regional General Hospital Purbalingga 2025**

Variabel	Category	Frequency	%
Work-life balance	High	2	1,6
	Mild	38	30,6
	Low	84	67,7
Burnout	High	17	13,7
	Mild	67	54
	Low	40	32,3
Total		124	100

**Table 3. Cross-tabulation of work-life balance and burnout among nurses at Goeteng Taroenadibrata Regional General Hospital Purbalingga 2025**

Burnout	Work-life balance			Total	P value	CC
	Low	Mild	High			
Low	37	3	0	40	0,001	-
Mild	44	23	0	67		
High	3	12	2	17		
Total	84	38	2	124		

The Spearman correlation coefficient demonstrated a statistically significant negative correlation of moderate strength ( $r = -0.448$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), indicating that improvements in work-life balance are moderately associated with reductions in nurse burnout.

## DISCUSSION

Most respondents in this study were in the 36–45 age group (late adulthood). This age group generally has considerable work experience and high social responsibilities, both at work and at home. This can affect the balance between work and personal life due to the increasing demands of both roles. According to research (14), nurses in late adulthood tend to experience higher levels of work stress due to the complexity of their responsibilities, but they also have better adaptability skills.

The majority of respondents in this study were female, in line with the dominance of female nursing staff in Indonesia. Women tend to consider family more central to their lives than men due to widespread cultural norms and gender-based values. The dual roles that women play as professionals and family members often lead to role conflicts that affect work-life balance. Study (15) shows that female nurses are more prone to work-family conflict than male nurses due to greater emotional and social demands at home.

Most respondents had worked for  $\geq 3$  years, indicating a good level of work experience in dealing with the dynamics of nursing services. Length of service can improve clinical skills and the ability to adapt to work pressures. However, research (16) mentioning that long working hours without rotation or adequate rewards can increase the risk of burnout due to boredom and monotony of tasks.

The results of the study show that most nurses have a low level of work-life balance. Based on the questionnaire analysis, the personal life enhancement of work (PLEW) dimension had the highest score, while the personal life interference with work (PLIW)

dimension had the lowest score. Personal life enhancement of work (PLEW) shows the extent to which a person's personal life enriches their performance and satisfaction at work. A harmonious personal life, family support, or social activities can be a source of energy, motivation, and emotional stability at work. The higher the PLEW score, the greater the contribution of personal life to performance and well-being in the workplace. Meanwhile, personal life interference with work (PLIW) shows the extent to which personal life interferes with work performance. This interference can arise from family responsibilities (e.g., childcare, caring for parents), household problems, or emotional pressure from personal life that is carried over to the workplace. The higher the PLIW score, the greater the negative influence of personal life on work effectiveness (17).

Nurses face workplace challenges such as excessive workloads, staff shortages, low salaries, and work fatigue, which can lead to poor patient care outcomes. Most nursing professionals around the world report low to moderate quality of working life. More than half of nurses working in healthcare institutions in Riyadh are dissatisfied with their working lives, and about 94% of them want to resign from their current roles (18).

Various factors influence nurses' work-life balance, including individual aspects (age, income, work experience), social support, and organizational factors (working hours, workload, and policies). Younger nurses can arrange their schedules more flexibly, while older nurses have more family responsibilities. Adequate income reduces stress, and longer experience improves time management but can increase the risk of work fatigue (19). These effects can reduce the quality of care and increase the likelihood of leaving the profession. For example, supportive leadership and supervisor behavior have been linked to higher levels of work engagement and lower levels of conflict. Hospitals that promote a work-life balance culture through institutional policies report better results in staff retention and job satisfaction (20).

Research results (7) found that only 36.9% of nurses had a good work-life balance, while another study revealed that 94.5% of nurses had an unbalanced work-life balance.

Psychological factors are also important in maintaining the work-life balance of nurses. Those who have strong psychological resilience, such as the ability to think positively, manage emotions, and develop problem-solving strategies, tend to be better able to cope with work stress and adapt to job demands. Mindfulness-based stress reduction has also been shown to improve psychological resilience and support work-life balance in high-pressure jobs. In addition, family support plays an important role in nurses' well-being. Emotional and practical support from family, such as help with household chores or childcare, allows nurses to focus more on their work without being burdened by responsibilities at home. Family is not the only source of support for nurses; coworkers, friends, and other social networks also play a role in maintaining work-life balance. Positive social interactions can help reduce stress and provide the emotional support needed to cope with work pressures (21).

The results of the study show that most nurses are in the moderate burnout category, which describes chronic work pressure that is still manageable. Based on the questionnaire analysis results, the highest score was on the dimension of low personal achievement or professional failure (lack of personal achievement), while the lowest score was on the dimension of negative attitudes and feelings towards service recipients (depersonalization). This condition reflects that nurses experience emotional exhaustion due to high job demands and the intensity of interaction with patients. According to (22), burnout is a psychological syndrome that arises from prolonged, unresolved work stress. This phenomenon is commonly found in healthcare workers because they face significant moral and emotional responsibilities in providing services to patients.

The level of burnout among nurses is influenced by various factors, including high workloads, long working hours, and emotional stress in the work environment. (23) states that long working hours and a lack of organizational support increase the risk of burnout in healthcare workers. Interpersonal factors such as conflicts with coworkers or patients also exacerbate the stress experienced by nurses. Therefore, managing burnout requires a multidimensional approach involving organizational, individual, and social aspects. Burnout has a significant impact on nurses' performance, quality of nursing care, and psychological well-being. Nurses with high levels of burnout tend to experience decreased concentration, increased clinical errors, and reduced empathy for patients.

The results of the Spearman Rank correlation test show a significant negative relationship between work-life balance and burnout among nurses. This means that the better the balance between work and personal life, the lower the level of burnout experienced by nurses. This negative relationship is consistent with the conservation of resources theory, which states that individuals with a good life balance have more stable psychological resources. Study by (24) also found that work-life balance acts as a protective factor against emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in healthcare workers. Thus, life balance is not only a matter of personal well-being, but also an important factor in maintaining the performance and mental health of nurses. Work-life balance acts as a factor that influences burnout. Individuals who are able to manage the balance between their work environment and personal life well tend to be better able to manage their emotional, mental, and physical conditions. Thus, they can avoid excessive work stress that has the potential to cause burnout (25)

Theoretically, the negative relationship between work-life balance and burnout can be explained through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. In this model, work-life balance functions as a personal resource that helps individuals cope with demanding work demands. When nurses have a good

work-life balance, they are able to manage emotional energy more effectively and reduce burnout. Study by (26) shows that nurses with good work-life balance have higher resilience and emotional regulation, enabling them to withstand the impact of work stress. Thus, work-life balance can be viewed as a protective mechanism against burnout in the nursing context.

The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant negative correlation of moderate strength between work-life balance and burnout among nurses, suggesting that better work-life balance is meaningfully associated with lower burnout levels. This relationship extends beyond individual coping capacity and underscores the influence of organizational and contextual factors in shaping nurses' psychological well-being. Nurses in the 36–45 age group often face increasing professional responsibilities alongside family and social obligations, which may intensify role strain, particularly under conditions of high workload, insufficient staffing, and rigid shift systems that limit opportunities for rest and recovery (27).

From a work environment perspective, prolonged working hours, frequent overtime, rotating shifts, and high patient acuity in inpatient settings may exacerbate workload pressure and psychological fatigue. When these job demands are not offset by adequate organizational resources—such as flexible scheduling, supportive leadership, and sufficient staffing—nurses are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. This finding is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources model, which posits that work-life balance functions as a critical resource that buffers the impact of high job demands and reduces the risk of burnout (28).

#### **Implications for Nursing Management**

The results of this study carry important implications for nursing management. Nurse managers should consider work-life balance not solely as an individual responsibility, but as a strategic organizational concern. Practical management interventions may include optimizing shift scheduling, ensuring adequate staffing levels, reducing excessive

overtime, and promoting flexible work arrangements where possible. In addition, strengthening supervisory support and fostering a supportive work culture may enhance nurses' capacity to balance professional and personal roles, thereby reducing burnout risk and sustaining workforce performance in inpatient care settings.

#### **Limitations**

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference, as the observed relationship between work-life balance and burnout cannot determine directionality. Second, data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias. Third, this study was conducted in a single hospital setting, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other healthcare contexts. Future studies employing longitudinal designs and involving multiple institutions are recommended to further explore causal pathways and contextual variations influencing work-life balance and burnout among nurses.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the study show that work-life balance is related to nurse burnout. Hospitals can take steps such as adjusting working hours, optimizing workloads, providing social support, offering mental wellness programs to help nurses manage their work stress, and implementing policies that support work-life balance to minimize the risk of burnout among healthcare workers. With effective coping strategies and support from the work environment, nurses can maintain their productivity and the quality of healthcare services they provide. Further research should explore how work-life balance and burnout affect performance in greater depth. In addition, investigating other potential mediating variables, such as organizational support or individual coping strategies, can further explain the complex interactions between work-life balance, burnout, and nurse performance.

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