

Work–Life Balance Among Hospital Nurses: Examining the Influence of Workload and Social Support

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the effect of workload and social support on work-life balance in inpatient unit nurses.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative methods, the entire population of 52 inpatient nurses at a private hospital in Blitar, was studied using a saturated sampling technique. The gathering of data was performed with the help of a questionnaire and the analysis was carried out using PLS-SEM.

Originality – This study provides a more detailed examination of work-life balance among hospital nurses, with a focus on inpatient unit nurses. It emphasizes strategies for managing workload challenges and leveraging social support to promote nurses' well-being.

Findings and Discussion – The study results showed that workload and social support had a positive and significant impact on work-life balance. These findings emphasize the importance of planning and managing time to effectively manage workloads and the importance of social support from those in the workplace who provide attention and care, thus supporting nurses' balance between work and personal life.

Conclusion – Effective time management, stable and well-planned work conditions, and support such as attention and care from those around them can improve one's quality of life, thereby helping an individual achieve a work-life balance.

Keywords – Work-Life Balance, Workload, Social Support, Nurse

Introduction

Nurses are a key human resource in hospitals, playing a vital role in ensuring the smooth operation of hospital services for patients. The attitudes and behaviors exhibited by nurses in the workplace have a significant impact on the hospital as an organization dedicated to providing healthcare services. This study examines the phenomenon of work-life imbalance experienced by nurses. At one of the private hospitals in Blitar, this imbalance is evident in nurses' weekly work schedules, which exceed the actual working hours in Indonesia as stipulated by law. Nurses work 48 hours per week, exceeding the standard 40-hour workweek. Long working hours are a primary cause of work interfering with personal life, as the extended hours reduce time for personal well-being. Long and rigid work hours can increase the likelihood of mental and physical fatigue, reduce time for one self, and can impact quality of life (Widayana et al., 2025).

This work-life imbalance can be attributed to the workload. The workload experienced by nurses is evident in the significant amount of overtime worked each month; overtime may occur when there is a shortage of medical staff or when patient volumes are high. Such high demands inevitably have an impact on nurses, such as physical and mental exhaustion, stress, an increased risk of errors, job dissatisfaction, and decreased performance. The high volume of overtime causes nurses to lose time for their

personal lives and spend more time working. A heavy workload can strain or complicate on personal relationships with family, friends, and other close ones (AbdELhay et al., 2025). One indicator of the workload faced by nurses is the nature of their work, as evidenced by public complaints in Google Maps reviews of hospitals regarding nurses' negligence in performing their duties, their failure to understand and follow standard operating procedures (SOPs), and a lack of professionalism on the job.

Indirectly, this points to a high-pressure work environment and a heavy workload, which may lead nurses to leave their posts to rest or attend to personal matters. Furthermore, work-life balance is also influenced by social support. The lack of social support is evident in the nursing care received by the public, which is clearly visible in Google Maps reviews of hospitals. Nurses take a long time to respond to patients, speak rudely, are unfriendly, and lack courtesy. This indicates that nurses are in poor and unstable conditions, which may be caused by a lack of social support felt by nurses, resulting in suboptimal performance and efforts in patient care. The challenges faced by nurses affect their professional social practice and mental health; this necessitates a reevaluation of how peer support is implemented and integrated into the healthcare system (Watson et al., 2025).

The lack of social support is also evident from an interview with one of the nurses, who stated that she "did not receive any material or tangible assistance, such as financial aid or supplies, from her coworkers." As a result, the nurses did not receive instrumental support, even though instrumental support plays a significant role in helping nurses feel better. In a previous study, Köse et al., (2021) finding a link between social support and work-life balance influenced by resilience. Meanwhile, Priandari & Adnyani, (2024) states that work-life balance mediates the effect of workload on stress. No previous studies have specifically addressed both of these issues simultaneously; however, they are interrelated and connected to work-life balance. This study suggests that social support and workload may serve as overlooked variables in examining their effects on work-life balance, and that work-life balance is not commonly treated as a dependent variable.

This study tests and proposes a new variable, namely the influence of workload and social support on work-life balance. Its novelty lies in the fact that workload accounts for nurses' time use and working conditions, as well as social support factors that were not addressed in previous studies. The practical benefit of this study is to provide hospital management with a deeper understanding of the importance of work-life balance for nurses, demonstrating that improving work-life balance involves not only training but also attention to time management, working conditions, and the support received by nurses. This study contributes to the human resources literature by highlighting that nurses' well-being (work-life balance) may not be achieved due to heavy workloads, and the importance of positive support (social support). Therefore, the objective is to demonstrate the negative influence of workload and the positive influence of social support on work-life balance. This study aims to analyze the effects of workload and social support on work-life balance among nurses in the inpatient of a private hospital in Blitar.

Literature Review

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is the harmonization of personal and professional life to achieve well-

being and happiness. It is important to ensure that each individual can integrate their work and personal life to maximize their professional performance. A work-life balance can be achieved by balancing work, family, and your own needs and priorities (Köse et al., 2021). Work-life balance is the concept of harmonizing an individual's career aspirations with personal interest, family life, leisure time, and spiritual well-being (Meli Noviani, 2021).

Workload

Workload refers to all types of tasks or work that come with time constraints for completion. According to Spagnoli et al., (2020) excessive workload is a common occupational demand, referring to the number of tasks that must be completed within a relatively limited timeframe and has been shown to affect performance. Workload is the volume of work assigned by an organization that employees must complete within a specific timeframe (Putera & Irbayuni, 2023).

Social support

Social support refers to a person's trust belief that others are available to provide help and support when facing problems or difficulties. According to Köse et al., (2021), social support is an important resource for coping with stress and difficulties. A key factor in building bonds in the workplace is the presence of strong social support. Support from colleagues turns out to be crucial in fostering a sense of friendship and solidarity, thereby helping to alleviate feelings of loneliness and exhaustion (Watson et al., 2025).

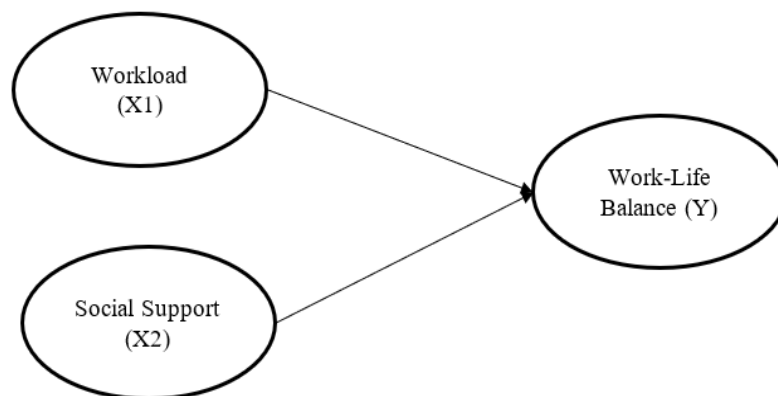


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

H1: Workload(X1) has a negative effect on work-life balance (Y) among nurses.

H2: Social support (X2) has a positive effect on work-life balance (Y) among nurses.

Methods, Data, and Analysis

This study uses quantitative research techniques. This research is a descriptive and formal study involving hypothesis testing. The goal is to systematically reveal the effect of workload and social support on work-life balance. This research sample consisted of 52 respondents. The method of sampling employed in this research was the saturated sampling technique, where all populations in this study were sampled. The data collection

method used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed online using google form. The data were then analyzed using component-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis tool. The testing procedures for the SEM-PLS analysis were conducted using Smart PLS.

Results

Outer Model

Table 1. Outer Loading

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X1.1 <- X.1	0.881	0.868	0.077	11.418	0.000
X1.2 <- X.1	0.791	0.773	0.111	7.146	0.000
X1.3 <- X.1	0.753	0.750	0.094	7.998	0.000
X2.1 <- X.2	0.724	0.709	0.170	4.259	0.000
X2.2 <- X.2	0.805	0.760	0.180	4.468	0.000
X2.3 <- X.2	0.847	0.805	0.161	5.257	0.000
Y1 <- Y	0.733	0.717	0.142	5.143	0.000
Y2 <- Y	0.710	0.694	0.156	4.558	0.000
Y3 <- Y	0.746	0.731	0.113	6.628	0.000
Y4 <- Y	0.760	0.752	0.116	6.578	0.000

Table 2. Construct reliability and validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Beban Kerja (X1)	0.743	0.787	0.657
<i>Social Support</i> (X2)	0.708	0.714	0.630
<i>Work-Life Balance</i> (Y)	0.722	0.725	0.544

Based on the outer loadings table, all reflective indicators for the variables workload (X1), social support (X2), and work-life balance (Y) show factor loadings (original sample) greater than 0.5 and are significant. The results of the analysis show that the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha value for the variables workload (X1), social support (X2), and work-life balance (Y) are all above 0.7. This indicates that all variables in this study are reliable and the AVE test results for the workload (X1) variable were 0.657, social support (X2) were 0.630, and work-life balance (Y) were 0.544. Overall, these variables showed values greater than 0.5.

Inner Model

Table 3. R-Square

	R-Square
<i>Work-Life Balance (Y)</i>	0.306

The R-squared value for the dependent variable work-life balance (Y) is 0.306. This means that the model weakly explains less than 50% of the variation in work-life balance that is influenced by workload and social support. Meanwhile, the rest is affected by additional elements that are not addressed in this research.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Strandard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X1. → Y	-0.448	-0.473	0.114	3.927	0.000
X2. → Y	0.234	0.266	0.105	2.242	0.025

Based on the table, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding these hypotheses:

The hypothesis that workload has a negative effect on work-life balance is accepted, with a path coefficient of -0.448 and a T-statistic of 3.927 > 1.96 or p-value of 0.000 < 0.05 (from Za table value of 0.05), so it is significant (negative). The hypothesis that social support has a positive effect on work-life balance is accepted, with a path coefficient of 0.234 and T-statistic of 2.242 > 1.96 or p-value of 0.025 < 0.05 (from Za table value of 0.05), so it is significant (positive).

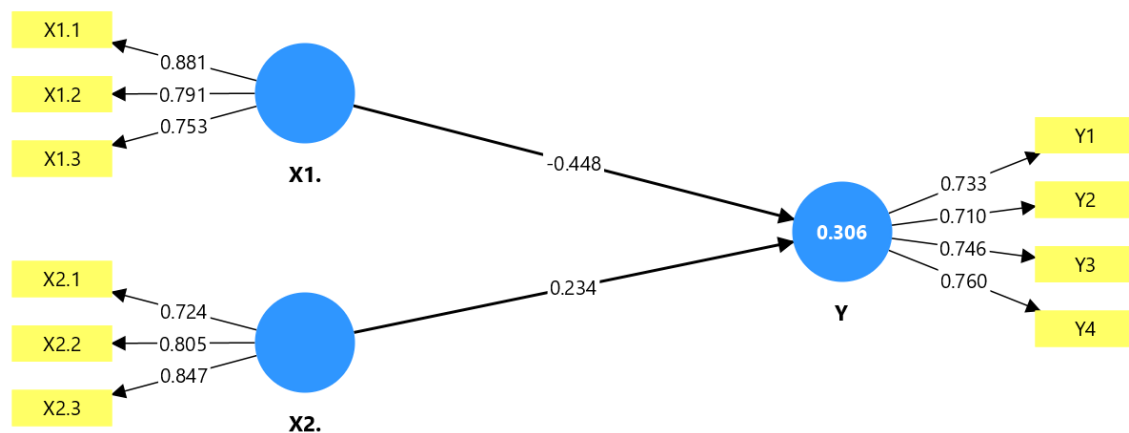


Figure 2. Output PLS

Discussion

The Effect of Workload on Work-Life Balance

Based on the result of the study, it was found that workload has a significant positive effect on work-life balance. This means that the higher the perceived workload, the higher the perceived work-life balance among nurses. A manageable workload allows nurses to feel comfortable balancing their professional and personal lives. Outside of working hours, nurses spend time with family and friends, focusing on their personal lives. Nurses can be said to have a healthy workload, as evidenced by their continued desire to improve, which is balanced by the hospital's support for them. This is essential because it benefits both parties without overburdening either, enabling them to achieve shared goals through cooperation and a healthy balance. This study shows that workload comprising time use, working conditions, and performance targets received a fairly high average score based on the data analysis.

The time use indicator had the greatest impact on work-life balance. This indicates that nurses feel they lack the ability to plan and manage their time effectively to complete their nursing duties. Furthermore, the lowest-scoring indicator in this study was the targets to be met, which pertain to completing nursing tasks. Some nurses aged around 20–21 cited time management as a strategy for completing their work. Overall, the workload at the hospital can be classified as poor based on the respondents' assessment criteria. The hospital has made efforts to provide the best possible conditions for nurses to work professionally. This data indicates that the hospital has successfully met most of the nurses' expectations. However, periodic evaluations are still necessary to further improve the workload borne by nurses in the inpatient units. The results of the statistical analysis using the PLS model demonstrate that workload has significant effect on work-life balance, with a coefficient of -0.448, a t-value of 3.927, and a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$).

This means that the higher the perceived workload, the higher the work-life balance experienced by inpatient unit nurses. The study by Reynaldi et al., (2022) supports this finding, concluding that the hypothesis test on workload showed a significant influence of workload on work-life balance. In the study by Meilanti et al., (2025), a significant positive impact was noted: the higher the workload, the more significantly it influences a higher work-life balance. In the study by Wirawan, (2022), it is stated that workload has a positive and significant impact on work-life balance, wherein workload serves as a contextual factor in triggering an improvement in work-life balance. When employees feel they have a heavy workload, this becomes a stimulus for the emergence of a significant and positive work-life balance.

The Effect of Social Support on Work-Life Balance

Based on the results of the study, it was found that social support has a significant positive effect on work-life balance. This means that the higher the level of social support perceived, the higher the work-life balance perceived by nurses. Good social support can motivate nurses to approach their work with enthusiasm, allowing them to also lead a fulfilling personal life. Nurses can be said to have good social support if they are able to work comfortably and complete their tasks effectively. The support available in the workplace environment significantly influences the work-life balance that nurses achieve. Hospitals play a crucial role in providing and fostering support for their nurses, ensuring

nurses receive the positive encouragement needed to fulfill their duties.

In turn, hospitals benefit from improved nurse performance, which helps build public trust and satisfaction with the care provided. This study shows that social support comprising instrumental support, informational support, and emotional support received a fairly high average score based on the data analysis. The emotional support indicator had the largest influence on work-life balance. This indicates that nurses receive attention and care from people in their work environment. Furthermore, the lowest indicator in this study was instrumental support, indicating that the direct assistance nurses receive as needed in their work is relatively low compared to the other indicators within this variable. Overall, social support at the hospital can be categorized as good based on the respondents' assessment criteria. The hospital has made efforts to create a supportive workplace and provide adequate assistance to its nurses. These data indicate that the hospital has successfully met most of the nurses' expectations. However, periodic evaluations remain necessary to ensure that the social support perceived and received by nurses in the inpatient unit continues to improve; support for work morale plays a crucial role in enhancing nurses' motivation to achieve work-life balance.

The results of statistical analysis using the PLS model prove that workload has a significant effect on work-life balance, with a coefficient value of 0.234, a t-value of 3.927, and a p-value of 0.025 ($p < 0.05$). This means that the higher the perceived social support, the higher the perceived work-life balance among inpatient unit nurses. Nurhabiba, (2020) study supports these findings, demonstrating a significant influence of social support on work-life balance; social support makes a substantial contribution to work-life balance. In the study by Köse et al., (2021) social support was found to influence work-life balance; the study stated that the higher the social support, the higher a person's resilience, the easier it is for them to achieve a work-life balance.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that workload has a negative impact, while social support has a positive impact on work-life balance among nurses in the inpatient unit at privat hospital in Blitar. In other words, a heavy workload reduces work-life balance among nurses due to time constraints and unstable, poorly planned work conditions. Conversely, high social support improves work-life balance; with attention and care from those around them, nurses can feel happier in both their professional and personal lives.

Limitation

This study has several limitations in interpreting its results. First, the study fell short in collecting the necessary secondary data, resulting in a limited scope of the issues identified. Second, the use of a self-administered questionnaire carries the risk that respondents may not answer accurately or honestly, as they tend to provide answers that are generally expected. Third, the limitations of previous studies that focused on workload, social support, and work-life balance. Fourth, this study only examined inpatient unit nurses; this sample limitation restricts the findings to other fields or units within the hospital. Recommendations for future research include exploring and examining this topic more deeply and broadly. Since this research has not yet been expanded, it is recommended that future researchers delve deeper, explore further, and search for more journals related to this research; it is hoped that they will be able to add

extensive variables, and it is suggested that future researchers study employees in other departments and fields.

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