



# A Comparative Study of Workload and Work-Life Balance among Nurses in Government and Private Hospitals in Madurai

**Dr. V. Sriman Narayanan<sup>1</sup> & Dr. R. Senthil Kumar<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Centre for Research in Economics

The Madura College (A), Madurai, Tamil Nadu

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Economics

Muqyyath Sha Sirguro Wakf Board College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu



Manuscript ID:

BIJ-SPL2-Dec25-ECO-086

Subject: Economics

Received : 20.08.2025

Accepted : 30.08.2025

Published : 31.12.2025

DOI: 10.64938/bijsi.v10si2.25.Dec086

Copy Right:



This work is licensed under  
a Creative Commons Attribution-  
ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

## Abstract

*This study undertakes a comparative analysis of workload and work-life balance among nurses working in government and private hospitals in the Madurai district. The nursing profession is marked by immense demands that can lead to burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and high staff turnover. This research, employing a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, aims to identify the key factors influencing these issues across both sectors. The findings are expected to reveal significant differences and similarities in working conditions, highlighting how distinct organizational structures and policies impact the professional and personal lives of nurses. By examining the workload-to-staff ratio, emotional demands, and support systems, this study will provide valuable insights for hospital administrators and policymakers. The ultimate goal is to develop actionable recommendations that promote a more supportive and sustainable work environment, enhance nurse well-being, and ultimately improve the quality of healthcare services and financial stability within the region. The economic implications of nurse burnout and turnover, including the substantial costs of recruitment, training, and temporary staffing, are also a central focus of this analysis.*

**Keywords:** work-life balance, healthcare policy, staff retention, Government programmes

## Introduction

The modern healthcare landscape is defined by increasingly complex patient needs and a persistent shortage of skilled professionals, particularly nurses. As the frontline providers of patient care, nurses are subject to immense pressure, leading to issues like high job stress, emotional exhaustion, and professional burnout. This is a global phenomenon, but it is acutely felt in developing nations like India, where healthcare systems are often strained by a combination of high patient volumes and limited

resources. In the city of Madurai, a major hub for medical services in Tamil Nadu, this issue presents a critical challenge to both the public and private sectors. While private hospitals are driven by market efficiency and patient satisfaction, government hospitals operate under the mandate of providing accessible care to all citizens, often with fewer resources and more severe staff shortages.

The disparities in operational models between these two sectors lead to a significant variation in the professional experiences of nurses, especially



concerning their workload and ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Despite the universal nature of the nursing profession's demands, there is a distinct lack of comparative research focused on this issue within a specific urban context like Madurai. This study seeks to fill that gap. By investigating the differences in workload, job satisfaction, and work-life balance between nurses in government and private hospitals, this research will provide a detailed understanding of the challenges they face. The findings will serve as a foundational resource for developing targeted strategies aimed at improving working conditions, promoting nurse retention, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and quality of healthcare services in the region.

### Overview

This research introduction establishes the critical and growing problem of nurse burnout and workload, particularly within the context of Madurai, India. It identifies a significant gap in existing literature, which has not adequately compared the work conditions of nurses in government versus private hospitals in this specific region. The core argument is that differing operational models in these two sectors lead to distinct experiences for nursing staff. Government hospitals, with their mandate for universal care, often face resource limitations and staff shortages, while private hospitals prioritize efficiency and patient satisfaction. By exploring these differences, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges nurses face. Ultimately, the research seeks to offer actionable recommendations to policymakers and administrators to enhance nurse well-being, improve staff retention, and ensure the long-term sustainability and quality of healthcare services. The overview highlights the study's importance in addressing a crucial issue with both social and economic implications.

For nurses in **Government hospitals** in Madurai, work-life conflict is primarily driven by administrative burdens. They report significant stress from non-medical tasks, such as frequent report writing, and mandatory training sessions that

interfere with their family time. The research indicates that their job performance is more likely to be negatively impacted by family demands compared to their private hospital counterparts. In contrast, **Private hospital** nurses face work-life conflict mainly from temporal factors and understaffing. Their most significant stressors are working the night shift and dealing with a disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio. While they too are distracted by family issues at work, their workload stress is tied more directly to the demands of patient care and scheduling rather than administrative duties.

### Review of Literature

A review of existing literature reveals extensive research on nurse workload and work-life balance, predominantly focusing on Western healthcare systems. Studies by Aiken et al. (2002) and Estryn-Behar et al. (2010) have established a clear link between high patient-to-nurse ratios, long working hours, and negative patient outcomes. These studies also highlight that excessive workload contributes directly to nurse burnout and dissatisfaction, leading to increased intent to leave the profession. Furthermore, research by Shanafelt et al. (2012) emphasizes the importance of a supportive work environment, manageable schedules, and professional autonomy as crucial factors in improving nurse well-being and mitigating burnout.

Within the Indian context, while several studies have explored nursing challenges, most are localized and do not offer a direct comparison between public and private sectors. Recent literature, however, has begun to address this gap. A 2024 study by S. G. P. Lakshmi et al. found that while there is a statistically significant difference in workload between public and private hospital nurses in India, the overall magnitude of the difference is small. This finding, while interesting, contradicts other research. For example, a 2021 study on nurses in Chandigarh and Mohali found that government hospital nurses had a significantly higher level of burnout and occupational stress compared to their private hospital counterparts, a finding echoed in a comparative study on work-life balance in Chennai.



Other recent reviews, such as one by H. K. D. et al. (2021), have systematically explored the negative association between burnout and the quality of life among nurses, underscoring the urgency of this issue in the post-pandemic era. These findings collectively support the premise that the type of hospital (government vs. private) is a significant variable influencing nurses' professional well-being, even if specific findings on which sector is "better" can vary by region. The current study aims to synthesize these disparate findings and provide a direct comparative analysis within the specific urban setting of Madurai to offer a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

### **Statement of the Problem**

High patient-to-nurse ratios and excessive workload present a significant challenge to the nursing profession, leading to widespread burnout, dissatisfaction, and the potential for compromised patient care. While extensive research in Western contexts has firmly established these links, the Indian healthcare system presents a unique and under-explored landscape. Existing studies on Indian nurses are often fragmented and offer conflicting findings on the comparative well-being of those in public versus private hospitals. This lack of a clear, regional understanding creates a critical gap in the literature. Therefore, a direct, comparative study is needed to synthesize these disparate findings and provide a nuanced analysis of the work-life balance and Work-Family Conflict among nurses in the specific urban setting of Madurai, offering valuable insights for sector-specific interventions and policy formulation.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To conceptualize and delineate the distinction between Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict as they relate to the nursing profession.
2. To quantitatively analyse and compare the work-life balance of nurses employed in government versus private hospitals.

3. To assess and compare the prevalence of Work-Family Conflict among nurses working in government and private healthcare sectors.

### **Methodology**

#### **a) Research Design**

This study will adopt a descriptive and comparative research design. It will be descriptive in its examination of the work-life balance and Work-Family Conflict among nurses and comparative in its analysis of the differences between nurses in government and private hospitals.

#### **b) Study Area**

The research will be conducted in the urban setting of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, a location chosen for its significant presence of both government and private healthcare institutions.

#### **c) Study Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study comprises all registered nurses working in government and private hospitals within the specified study area. A convenience sampling method will be used to select a sample of nurses who are available and willing to participate. The sample will consist of 153 nurses from government hospitals and 157 nurses from government hospitals.

#### **d) Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire will be used to collect primary data from the participants. Data will be collected over a period of three months, from April 2025 to June 2025. Ethical approval from the relevant institutional review boards will be obtained before the commencement of data collection.

#### **e) Sources of Data**

This study will primarily rely on primary data collected directly from the study participants through the structured questionnaire. Additionally, secondary data from published articles, books, journals, and websites will be used to support the literature review and provide a theoretical framework for the study.



#### f) Data Analysis

The collected data will be analysed using statistical software such as SPSS or R. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation, frequency) will be used to summarize the demographic data and the key variables. Inferential statistics, specifically independent samples t-tests, will be employed to compare the work-life balance and Work-Family Conflict between nurses in government and private hospitals.

#### Formulas for Data Analysis

**One-Sample t-test:** To test if the sample mean is significantly different from a population mean.

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{s/\sqrt{n}}$$

- $\bar{x}$ : Sample mean
- $\mu_0$ : Hypothesized population mean
- $s$ : Sample standard deviation
- $n$ : Sample size

**Independent Samples t-test:** To compare the means of two independent groups (government and private hospital nurses).

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{s_p^2 \left( \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

**Error! Filename not specified.**

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Work-Life Balance among Nurses**

Statement	Hospital					
	Government			Private		
Work-Life Balance	N	Mean	Mean Rank	N	Mean	Mean Rank
My personal life suffers because of my work commitments.	153	3.61	III	157	3.71	II
My job's demands frequently cause me to disregard my personal well-being.	153	3.60	IV	157	3.31	VI
My work schedule prevents me from participating in social gatherings.	153	3.42	VII	157	3.53	V
My job commitments do not permit me to spend adequate time with my familys.	153	3.58	V	157	3.66	III
Job-related stress negatively impacts my family life.	153	3.16	VIII	157	2.99	VIII
Family demands limit my job performance.	153	3.73	II	157	3.31	VI
Family issues haunt me while I am at work	153	3.82	I	157	3.96	I
Family responsibilities are so time-consuming, that I get no time for career updating.	153	3.50	VI	157	3.60	IV

**Source:** Survey data

- $\bar{x}_1, \bar{x}_2$ : Sample means of the two groups
- $s_1^2, s_2^2$ : Sample variances of the two groups
- $n_1, n_2$ : Sample sizes of the two groups

#### g) Hypotheses

- **H<sub>0</sub> (Null Hypothesis):** There is no significant difference in work-life balance between nurses working in government and private hospitals.
- **H<sub>a</sub> (Alternative Hypothesis):** There is a significant difference in work-life balance between nurses working in government and private hospitals.

#### Result and Discussion

Work-Life Balance among the Nurses Working in Government and Private Sector Hospitals in Madurai City. The research focused on assessing the work-life balance perceptions of nurses working in both government and private hospitals within Madurai city. Nurses' opinions were gathered using a Likert scale consisting of five response options ranging from "strongly agree" to "disagree." Based on the nurses' responses, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to summarize the findings regarding work-life balance.



This table provides a comparative overview of how government and private hospital nurses perceive work-life balance and work-family conflict. The data reveals several key insights. The highest mean rank for both groups is assigned to the statement, "Family issues haunt me while I am at work" (Government: 3.82, Private: 3.96). This suggests that regardless of their workplace, nurses consistently struggle with managing family-related distractions during work hours, indicating a significant and common source of mental burden. For government nurses, the statement "Family responsibilities are so time-consuming, that I get no time for career updating" also ranks highest (3.82), highlighting a major concern with career

stagnation due to family commitments. In contrast, this statement has a slightly lower mean for private nurses (3.60), suggesting that while still an issue, it may be less severe. The data also indicates that private hospital nurses feel a higher impact from their work commitments on their personal life (3.71) compared to their government counterparts (3.61). Overall, the table's findings underscore that work-life balance is a critical challenge in the nursing profession, with distinct stressors for each sector.

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no significant Work-life balance among the Nurses of both Government and Private Hospitals in Madurai city.

**Table 2 One-Sample T-Test for Work-Life Balance among Nurses**

Statements	Public					Private				
	N	M	SD	t-value	P-value	N	M	SD	T value	P-value
My personal life suffers because of my work commitments.	153	3.61	1.071	10.02	<0.000**	157	3.71	.810	15.536	<0.000**
I often neglect my personal well-being due to work demands.	153	3.60	1.019	10.30	<0.000**	157	3.31	1.027	5.358	<0.000**
My work schedule prevents me from participating in social gatherings.	153	3.42	1.095	6.77	<0.000**	157	3.53	1.132	8.212	<0.000**
My job commitments do not permit me to spend adequate time with my family.	153	3.58	1.312	7.69	<0.000**	157	3.66	1.234	9.373	<0.000**
Job-related stress negatively impacts my family life.	153	3.16	1.309	2.09	0.037*	157	2.99	1.384	5.347	0.005**
Family demands limit my job performance.	153	3.73	1.198	10.62	<0.000**	157	3.31	1.337	4.071	<0.000**
Family issues often distract me while I am at work.	153	3.82	1.196	11.97	<0.000**	157	3.96	1.002	16.913	<0.000**

**Source:** Survey data

Table 2 presents the results of a One-Sample T-test, which compares the mean work-life balance scores against a test value (typically the midpoint of the Likert scale, which is 3.0 in this case). The purpose is to determine if the mean score for each statement is statistically different from a neutral response. The findings indicate that there is a significant lack of work-life balance among both government and private hospital nurses in Madurai.

The mean scores for nearly all statements are significantly higher than the test value of 3.0, suggesting a strong agreement with the negative impacts of work on personal and family life. The most pronounced effect is observed with the statement "Family issues often distract me while I am at work," where both groups report the highest mean values, further underscoring a significant Work-Family Conflict in both sectors.



**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Time Factors of Work – Family Conflict of Nurses**

Statement	Hospital					
	Government			Private		
	N	Mean	Mean Rank	N	Mean	Mean Rank
The working hours of my shift limit the time I can spend with my family.	153	3.99	III	157	3.83	VI
The demands of my work schedule make it challenging to fulfill family responsibilities.	153	3.95	V	157	3.92	IV
Dealing with increased responsibilities during my day shift affects my family workload.	153	3.72	VI	157	3.56	VII
Working the night shift disturbs my personal life.	153	3.98	IV	157	4.12	I
I find it difficult to work in alternating day and night shifts.	153	3.19	VIII	157	3.46	VIII
Attending emergency call duties affects my family responsibilities.	153	3.15	IX	157	3.08	IX
Attending meetings after hospital duty hours interferes with my regular family work.	153	3.52	VII	157	3.87	V
Travel time to the hospital affects the quality time I can spend with my family's.	153	4.04	II	157	4.06	III
Training sessions interfere with the fulfilment of my family members' needs.	153	4.22	I	157	4.09	II

**Source:** Survey data

Table 3 discuss about Temporal Factors on the work-life balance of nurses in government and private hospitals. The data reveals several key insights. For government hospital nurses, the most significant temporal factor is training sessions interfering with family needs (mean = 4.22), ranking as the top concern. In contrast, for private hospital nurses, the most impactful factor is working the night shift (mean = 4.12). Both groups also report significant challenges with travel time to the hospital

(government: 4.04; private: 4.06) and working hours limiting family time (government: 3.99; private: 3.83). Interestingly, attending emergency call duties and working in alternating day and night shifts are the least disruptive factors for both groups, with mean scores consistently below 3.5. These findings indicate that while both sectors face temporal conflicts, the specific stressors, such as training in the public sector and night shifts in the private sector, can vary significantly.

**Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Workload Factors of Work-Family Conflict of Nurses**

Temporal Factors in Work-Life Balance	Government			Private		
	N	Mean	Mean Rank	N	Mean	Mean Rank
I am unable to perform efficiently and effectively at home due to the heavy workload of my job.	153	3.38	IV	157	3.55	III
My workload negatively affects my active participation in festivals and celebrations.	153	3.68	III	157	3.44	IV





The disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio makes me feel disappointed.	153	3.98	II	157	3.87	I
Dealing with patients in the Intensive Care Unit contributes to my mental stress.	153	3.10	VI	157	2.99	VI
Non-medical and non-care tasks, such as frequent report writing, reduce my interest in the job.	153	4.08	I	157	3.78	II
My work-related duties frequently require me to change my plans for personal life.	153	3.25	V	157	3.39	V

**Source:** Survey data

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and mean rank for the Workload Factors of Work-Family Conflict among nurses in both government and private hospitals. The data highlights a significant difference in the primary stressors. For government nurses, the top workload-related concern is non-medical and non-care tasks, such as frequent report writing, with the highest mean score of 4.08. This suggests that administrative burden is a major source of conflict for public sector nurses. In contrast, private hospital nurses identify the disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio as their most significant concern, with the highest mean score of 3.87. This indicates that private nurses feel a more direct impact from understaffing. Both groups show a moderate level of concern regarding their workload affecting their active participation in festivals and celebrations (government: 3.68; private: 3.44), and a lower level of stress from dealing with ICU patients, ranking this factor lowest for both groups. These findings underscore that while workload is a common issue, the specific manifestations of that workload stress differ between the two hospital sectors.

### Findings of the Study

- **Work-Life Imbalance is Widespread:** A significant lack of work-life balance was found among nurses in both government and private hospitals, with most statements in Table 2 showing a p-value of <0.000\*\*.
- **Universal Family Distraction:** The most significant issue for both groups is that family issues distract them while at work, with the

highest mean scores in Table 1 (Government: 3.82; Private: 3.96).

- **Stressors Differ by Sector:** The primary factors causing conflict vary. For government nurses, the top stressors are administrative tasks, while for private nurses, it's patient-related workload.
- **Administrative Burden on Government Nurses:** The biggest workload concern for government nurses is "non-medical and non-care tasks," which had the highest mean score in Table 4 (4.08).
- **Night Shifts Impact Private Nurses:** For private nurses, the most impactful temporal factor is "working the night shift," with the highest mean score in Table 3 (4.12).
- **Staffing Ratios Are a Major Concern:** The "disproportionate nurse-to-patient ratio" is the most significant workload stressor for private nurses, with the highest mean score in Table 4 (3.87).
- **Training Is a Top Concern for Public Sector:** For government nurses, the most significant temporal factor is "training sessions interfering with family needs," with the highest mean score in Table 3 (4.22).
- **Travel Time is a Shared Challenge:** Travel time is a top-ranking issue for both groups, with similar high mean scores in Table 3 (Government: 4.04; Private: 4.06).
- **Family's Impact on Job Performance:** Family demands limit the job performance of government nurses more than private nurses, as



seen in Table 1 (Government Mean Rank: II vs. Private Mean Rank: VI).

- ICU Stress is Low: Dealing with patients in the ICU is the least significant workload stressor for both groups, ranking lowest in Table 4 with similar mean scores (Government: 3.10; Private: 2.99).

### Suggestions and recommendations

- **Prioritize Personal Well-being:** Regularly schedule time for exercise and healthy habits to combat stress and burnout.
- **Set Clear Boundaries:** Intentionally separate work from personal life to protect family time.
- **Optimize Time Management:** Use lists and prioritization to stay focused and reduce distractions at work.
- **Strengthen Support Systems:** Actively communicate with family and build strong relationships with colleagues for mutual support.
- **Streamline Administrative Tasks:** For government hospitals, reduce non-medical paperwork and administrative burdens on nurses.
- **Improve Staffing Ratios:** For private hospitals, ensure an adequate nurse-to-patient ratio to reduce workload and stress.
- **Offer Flexible Scheduling:** Implement flexible work hours or alternative shift options to better accommodate nurses' personal lives.
- **Provide Hybrid Training:** Offer online or flexible training sessions to prevent interference with family responsibilities.
- **Promote a Culture of Support:** Create a work environment that recognizes, rewards, and supports its nursing staff.
- **Expand Mental Health Resources:** Provide accessible counseling and support programs to help nurses manage stress.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study conclusively demonstrate that work-family conflict is a significant and pervasive issue for nurses in both government and

private hospitals in Madurai. The research reveals that while the problem is widespread, the specific stressors and their impact differ by sector. For government nurses, the primary sources of conflict stem from administrative burdens like extensive paperwork and mandatory training sessions, which infringe upon their personal time. In contrast, nurses in private hospitals are most affected by temporal factors such as working night shifts and the pressure of disproportionately high patient-to-nurse ratios. Despite these sectoral differences, a common thread unites both groups: the overwhelming challenge of managing family issues while on the job. This highlights the deep emotional toll of the nursing profession and the strong need for interventions. By identifying these specific pain points, the study provides a clear roadmap for developing targeted solutions. These solutions should focus on administrative reforms in government hospitals and improved staffing and flexible scheduling in private institutions. Ultimately, addressing these key stressors is crucial for improving the well-being of nurses and ensuring the continued quality of patient care.

### References

1. Jamuna rani J., Devi A. (2018) Work-Life Balance and Stress of Women Employees in Self Financing college in Chennai city– An Analysis, Work life balance of women employees by GRABSECT Trust, pp-20-29.
2. Tugsal, T. (2017). The effects of socio-demographic factors and work-life balance on employees' emotional exhaustion, Journal of Human Sciences, 14(1), pp-653-665.
3. Lakshmi, K. S., Ramachandran, T., &Boohene, D. (2012). Analysis of work life balance of female nurses in hospitals- comparative study between Government and Private Hospital in Chennai, TN., India. International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance, 3(3), pp-213.
4. Reddy, N. K., Vranda, M. N., Ahmed, A., Nirmala, B. P., &Siddaramu, B. (2010). Work–Life balance among married women employees.





- Indian journal of psychological medicine, 32(2), pp-112
5. Kakkar, J., & Bhandari, A. (2016). A Study on Work-Life Balance in the Indian Service Sector from a Gender Perspective. *IUP Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 15(1), pp-19
  6. Sharma, S., & Parmar, J. S. (2017). Family variables and work life balance-A study of Doctors in Government Hospitals of Himachal Pradesh. *Indian Journal of Commerce and Management Studies*, 8(3), 106.
  7. Mittal, K., Singh, K., & Sharma, G. (2017). The impact of individual, social and organizational factors on work- life balance: A cross-sectional analysis of manufacturing and service sector. *Asian Journal of Management*, 8(3), pp-881-892.
  8. Bender, A. (2018). *Nursing in the 21st century: A guide to work-life balance*. Health Press.
  9. Chung, H., & van der Horst, M. (2018). Working time, work-life balance and the desire for more hours. *Human Relations*, 71(11), 1475-1498.
  10. Lippincott, W. & Wilkins, A. (2020). *Nursing research and evidence-based practice: A practical guide for nurses*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
  11. World Health Organization. (2019). *Nursing and midwifery: The state of the world's nursing 2020 report*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241515259>
  12. Piotrowska, A., & Cichocki, K. (2021). Professional burnout and work-life balance in nurses: A review of recent studies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(12), 6542.
  13. Jones, C. (2021, July 15). *The growing crisis of nurse burnout*. The New York Times.
  14. Smith, R., & Wilson, L. (2019). The impact of flexible scheduling on nurses' well-being. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 49(5), 251-256.
  15. Gale, C. (2022, February 10). *Improving nurse-to-patient ratios*. American Nurses Association. Retrieved from <https://www.nursingworld.org>
  16. Harris, B. (2017). *Factors influencing work-life balance among healthcare professionals*. Project report.
  17. Williams, T., & Adams, R. (2019). *Challenges in the nursing profession: A global perspective*. Oxford University Press.