



## Assessing the Antecedents and Consequences of Work Life Imbalance (With Special Reference to Female Nurses in Government Hospitals)

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### Abstract

Work life imbalance has been identified as one of the serious problems among nurses in health care industry of Sri Lanka. The overall research study has been structured based on the concept indicator model built up with referring to the two research objectives, which was identifying the antecedents and consequences of work life imbalance. The qualitative research was conducted through structured interviews, using 20 female nurses who are employed at Colombo District Government Hospitals. Qualitative data were analysed by using the thematic analysis. The findings of the study revealed that, parental demand, lack of family support, task difficulty, nature of working schedules and lack of staff as the antecedents which create the work life imbalance and intention to leave the job, conflicts in work and home, health problems, feeling overload and stress and demanding leaves as consequences of work life imbalance. Consequently, the current study concluded that among the majority of selected participants, the work life imbalance is existing. Based on the in-depth data collected by participants, it identified that they are having struggles in balancing their work lives while balancing their personal lives. Finally, study suggests management of hospitals to pay more attention on reducing nurses' work life imbalance by taking necessary steps and actions. Equally, this study will be beneficial in employees' perspective to enhance their work life and personal life by getting a proper understanding of work life imbalance.

### Introduction

In today's age, work life balance is a topic which has been subjected to be discussed by many people around the world. Most of the time companies are understanding the importance of work life balance due to the conflicts face by their employees from their personal and professional obligations. The result of a poor balance between work and personal life not only affects employees, but it also affects the companies that they work for because, it can be resulted to generate lower productivity levels at work places. When employees are having a healthy work life balance state, it will enhance their satisfaction and ultimately it will increase the productivity of the work places. Therefore, work life balance can be identified as an important subject to study. Work-life balance means effectively combining working life with private obligations or aspirations (Littig, 2008). Previous scholars gave the concepts clarity between work life balance and work life imbalance. According to them, work life balance means balancing everything, which it brings significant advantages to individuals (Lockwood, 2003; Dallimore & Mickel, 2009), while work life imbalance means not balancing everything, which can be result to have numerous negative consequences to individuals (Byron, 2005; Haemmig & Bauer, 2009). Above definition explain that individuals have to perform different roles in different parts of their lives. Sometimes performing a one part might affect to perform other parts of their lives. Therefore, there is demand of balancing work and life. Work life balance of women in current world is very critical due to roles that they have to play as a wife, a mother, a daughter, a child, as an employee. In Sri Lanka, women employment is nearly 35% (Annual report of Census and Statistic

Department, 2015). Nursing is one of a significant job that women are engaged in. Total amount of nurses in Sri Lanka is 35,629 (Annual Health Bulletin Report, 2015). Healthcare industry plays a major role in a country's medical sector performance and its wellbeing. Due to rising health issues in the country, the performance of Health Care workers is very important. Nurses are the "backbone" of any health care system and their workload is multifaceted and very complex (Alwis, 2015). Nurse in Sri Lanka carries out many roles including providing care to patients, administering medications ordered by the doctor, coordinating paramedical services, as well as supervising junior nursing and assistant staff members. They are more interactive with patients rather than other workers. To complete their tasks, they engage in shift works and night duties. Because of that, work stress can be increased and work life imbalance may occur. Therefore, it is very important to consider the facts that cause work life imbalance to them. In any organization, Human resource is considered as a valuable asset. Therefore, organizations must realize these facts and take necessary steps toward developing work life balance policies in order to enhance their working states as well as personal state.

The working status of women in Sri Lanka is changing and this has led to increase the pressure upon women when balancing their work at office as well as at home. Imbalanced work life will make more women to quit their jobs to fulfill the duties at home. When considering medical sector, nurses are playing a major role and they also face the problem in balancing their work as well as their family. Many researches have been conducted to identify the meaning, reasons and the outcomes arising from the work life balance (Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010; Naithani, 2010; Grzywacz, Carlson & Shulkin, 2008;

Dallimore & Mickel, 2009). However, only few researches have conducted to identify the work life imbalance in general (Shobitha & Sudarsan, 2014; Devadoss & Minnie, 2014; Duxbury & Higgins, 2008; Lu & Kao, 2013). To identify consequences of work life balance, there is only one empirical research conducted. More supportive the family- friendly culture perceived by employees, the lower the intangible extensions of work demand on home life (Baldry and Scholarios, 2003). Thus, it is important to understand work life imbalance and find out its consequences. Hence this research is focusing on assessing antecedents of work life imbalance and its consequences with special reference to female nurses in Sri Lankan government hospitals.

## Literature Review

Work life balance can be identified as relationship between your work and the commitments in your personal life, and how they impact on one another. When it explains in simple term, work life balance means managing your work life along with your personal life without any conflicts. While there are many issues in a working environment, work-life balance (WLB) has attracted attention in recent years. In actual scenario, most people are struggling to balance their work life with their family life. Due to the rising advancements and many other various factors like competitive environments, developing markets, globalization and technological innovations in the industries, the work load that have to complete by each individual employee is very critical and important.

Work-life balance is a broad concept defined in different ways by different researchers using diverse dimensions. "Work" and "Life" have been rather loosely defined in literature (Guest 2002) where work is paid employment and life is everything outside of the formal employment. According to Taylor (2003), there are many different definitions of the term work -life balance. He argues that 'balance' is presumed to exist between the paid work we perform and the lives we lead outside our job. Tara Shankar & Jyotsna Bhatnagar (2010) said that a person can experience work family balance perfectly, even though work weighs more than family, and in a consistent way in the course of a whole lifetime. Another area where we can apply this Work life balance is employee and employer perspective. Lockwood (2003) has defined WLB from two angles, and perspective, on from the employer viewpoint and the other from the employee's viewpoint. Work Life Balance from the Employees' viewpoint: "refers to the dilemma of reconciling and managing both work obligations and personal/family responsibilities". Work Life Balance from the Employer's viewpoint: "refers to the challenge of creating and developing strategies, policies and best practices for a supportive organizational culture where employees can focus on their jobs while at work". However, when people have a balanced work life and personal life, they will get positive consequences. Some researchers have found out this through their findings. According to the findings of Lockwood (2003); Dallimore & Mickel (2006), we can generally state that Balance in at least the majority of key areas of an individual's life brings significant advantages, both material and non-material, to all involved.

Work life imbalance means not managing or balancing one's personal life as well as the work life. This is a negative term. There is no proper definition given to this work life balance. But scholars have found out the general meaning of work life imbalance throughout their findings. Work life imbalance was initially termed as work family conflict (Shobitha & Sudarsan, 2014). Kahn et al. (1964) defined it as "a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role being made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role". Based on literature review we can identify the general nature of this work life imbalance. According to Victor Devadoss and J. Befija Minnie (2014), Work-life 'imbalance' has over a period of time attracted concern because of increasing problems related to employee health, monotony at work place, declining levels of productivity and efficiency at the employee level. And also, they said that Imbalance also has a negative impact in the personal life of working people-some of which have even become social hazards- increasing number of divorces, infertility due high stress levels, advent of nuclear families. Imbalance between organizational and personal commitments and the inefficient management of life priorities can lead to serious consequences in each or all of these domains (Shobitha & Sudarsan,

2014). In lot of literature, they explained that work life balance is highly influencing for female. Higgins & Duxbury (1992) said that while both genders are affected by the challenges of balancing work and family, women report higher level of difficulty and related stress. As the subjective meaning of balance differs by gender, work-life balance concerns how women leaders handle family life while fulfilling responsibilities at work (Guest, 2002). Dr. Sudhinder Singh Chowhan (2012) found out that there is significant difference in Work-life imbalance in terms of gender. Females are suffering from work-life imbalance more than males comparatively. Based on their findings of many researchers, they have found out the fact that Work-family imbalance has numerous negative consequences for both employees and employers (i.e., organizations), and therefore for the wider community as well (Byron, 2005; Jones, Burke & Westman, 2005; Haemmig & Bauer, 2009).

When it comes to the nurses' point of view, Work life-home life balance is reported as a strong factor contributing to retention of nurses in the profession (Morelle, 2005). He also found that work demands of nurses' causes an imbalance in fulfilling the family needs. Work load of nurses are depending on the patient admitted to hospitals. Number of patients that nurses have to treat is unpredictable. Due to illnesses, virus flus, accidents and other matters, they have to contribute vastly. The increased workload often results in exhaustion and the nurses will have no energy left after the work and this often results in an imbalance between work life and home life (Ranasinghe & Rathnayake, 2016; Dinta Suresh, 2013). According to Dr. Umesh Maiya and Viveka Marie (2015), Health care sector is an area where one has to work 24/7, always vigilant and on toes. This creates stress among nurses when they are working overtime and constantly under pressure. Striking balance between work and family is essential to have physical and mental health. Nurses may be faced with extremely high patient loads and the perception of job insecurity, which can contribute to stress and work-life imbalance (Mrinal M. Varma, Angela S. Kelling, Shanta Goswam, 2016). Based on the findings of Dr. Ipseeta Satpathy, Dr. B. Chandra Mohan Patnaik, Ms. Sasmita Jena (2014), they concluded that most of the nursing staff were dissatisfied with Work Life Balance and family related issues and personal problems caused concern for nursing staff. Also Work-life balance issues have assumed a lot of importance in recent times due to increasing in single parent families, dual career couples and issues of elder care which create complex situations for the nursing staff.

## Methods

The phenomenological approach was using under qualitative method, that has been designed to assess the antecedents and consequences of work life imbalance of female nurses of government hospitals to explore the objectives in a detailed manner. According to Rubin and Babbie (2010), qualitative design is a research design that is subjective and involves a naturalistic and interpretive approach where data is normally gathered using interviews to generate qualitative data. Moreover, Corbin and Strauss (2008) explained that Qualitative Research is primarily exploratory research. Further they emphasized, the Phenomenological approach, inquiry what people experience in regard to some phenomenon or other and how they interpret those experiences. A phenomenological research study is a study that attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation (or phenomenon).

## Sample and Sample Technique

A sample of Twenty (20) female nurses who are working in government hospitals in Sri Lanka have taken to conduct the study. Government hospitals were selected since 75.06% of the hospitals in Sri Lanka are government hospitals.

The research has been conducted through convenience sampling where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility to participate in study. This is also known as availability sampling and it is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study.

## Data Collection

Structured interview method was used for data gathering research information. Personal interviews were carry out in order to identify the nurses' problems in relation to their work life imbalance, its antecedents and consequences since it helped to identify deep views, opinions and experiences of respondents regarding the research problem. Structured interview guidelines were used to conduct the interview. Rather than depend on that in depth and cross questions were asked in structured interview method.

## Data Analysis

Gathered qualitative information were analyzed through "Thematic" analysis using "NVivo 10" software. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns/themes of qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was used to divide the answers given by the respondents into themes and analyze them based on these themes or nodes. Based on research problems, two main themes were constructed and under that sub themes were built to identify antecedents and consequences of work life imbalance. Interviews were transcribed into word documents and assigned these transcribed data in to patterns and themes.

## Findings

The purpose of this research study was to assess the antecedents and the consequences of work life imbalance. The questions that asked by the research were also based on the main purpose. The major questions that were addressed by the research are:

1. What are the antecedents of work life imbalance?
2. What are the consequences of work life imbalance?

Based on these main questions, structured interview guidelines were built and qualitative data were collected through 20 structured interviews in order to conduct the research.

## Demographics of Respondents

Twenty female nurses were selected as interviewees of the research. All the participants are currently employing in government hospitals in Sri Lanka. Out of these 20 nurses, 9 nurses (45%) were from nursing "grade 1", 8 nurses (40%) were under nursing "grade 2" and 3 nurses (15%) were in nursing "grade supra". All the participants were married and out of that only one nurse was expecting a child. All the other nurses were already parents. Before starting the interview all the nurses were asked whether they are suffering from work life imbalance. Out of 20 nurses, 16 nurses (80%) responded that they are struggling with work life imbalance and other 4 nurses (20%) stated that they do not have any issues regarding work life imbalance.

By using thematic analysis technique at initial, two parent nodes were built at the first place as basic categories. They are antecedents node and consequences node. Under these two basic nodes, sub nodes or child nodes were constructed accordingly. All these nodes were built according to the inductive analysis where it based on the information mentioned by the interviewees.

## Themes Summary

**Table 1: Theme Summary, Source: Through Qualitative Findings**

Parent Themes	Child Themes
Antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parental demand</li> <li>• Lack of family support</li> <li>• Task difficulty</li> <li>• Nature of working schedules</li> <li>• Lack of adequate staff</li> </ul>
Consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intention to leave the job</li> <li>• Conflicts in work and home</li> <li>• Health problems</li> <li>• Feeling overload and stress</li> <li>• Demanding leaves</li> </ul>

### Antecedents

#### *Parental Demand*

According to the findings, most of the participants (17 out of 20 participants, 85%) perceived to have parental demand as a critical antecedent which leads to creates work life imbalance. Further it illustrates that, lot of nurses have problem in taking care of their children due to their work. The results indicate that nurses have to put maximum effort to spend much more time with their children and participate in their school and other works rather than other female workers. Based on their idea, when nurses are working at hospitals, they have to cover lot of duties and tasks in hospitals. Due to these duties and tasks, nurses have limited time to contact with their kids. In addition, when nurses are back in homes, due to household works also they find it hard to contribute more time with their children.

In addition to that, nurses who had infant kids, have problem in breastfeeding and look after them with constant care. It was noted that, in that case they need to get help from others to take care of their children. Nurses stated that sometimes husbands are also busy with their jobs. Nurses identified that in these kinds of situations they are really getting helpless regarding their kids if they cannot afford help from other parties. Some participants identified that because of their absence, their kids are getting closer to others who are looking after them behalf of them.

*"When I am not having many works, I have time to contact with family randomly via phone to see whether they ate or slept. My kids are giving me phone calls when I am at work. Children like to talk with me in telephone because they miss me. But when there are lots of works I cannot even think about it. I don't even have time to answer the phone. So sometimes my children scold at me asking why I am not answering. My kids were really sad and angry when I get back home after these types of incidents..."*

Participant 01,  
personal interview  
2017

#### *Lack of Family Support*

Lacking of family support is another major factor identified by nurses. According to their perception, if nurses have good family support, they can easily do job and also they can minimize problems in the family. Based on the information gathered, 16 nurses out of 20 nurses stated that they have lack of family support. This support can be mainly received from their parents and their husbands. According to the data, majority of nurses are having the support from their parents rather than their husbands. Nurses identified that how they are having a lack of support without the help from their parents

“.....When I had my son there were 5 nurses who were on maternity leave. My mother was living with my brother those days. She didn't come here because she always hates the weather here. And my mother in law lives next door. But refused to look after him because she said that she can't deal with babies. I and my husband were helpless because of that.....”

Participant 05,  
personal interview-2017

Apart from that, considerable amount of nurses stated that they are having low amount of support from their husbands. The main reason for this is their husband's job. Majority of nurses identify that the job of their husbands are very much important in balancing work and family.

“My husband is doing tourism. He was not at home all the time when my son is little. Still like that. I think if my husband was there it could have been a big help when son was little. Because of that I didn't have much time to learn and do exams. I had to consider my son. I expected my husband's help a lot.....”

Participant 04,  
personal interview-2017

*Task Difficulty*

Fourteen nurses out of 20 stated that because of the difficulties in the work they have to perform, they feel higher amount of stress and find it hard to balance both work and family. One of the reasons nurses have identified is that they have to do multiple tasks at one time because the low amount of staff and also increasing the amount of patients day by day. Because of this matter, most of the times they have to get scolded by doctors, supervisors as well as from patients and also nurses have to work for long working hours sometimes

“.....I am handling 2 inventories regarding drugs and other goods. I am doing a job of two nurses in that case. It is supervisor's responsibility to manage this. But since there is no enough staff I have to complete this. Handling inventories is a critical thing. If one inventory is missing, I have to get scolded by both doctors and supervisors.....”

Participant 18,  
personal interview-2017

In addition to that, they cited about critical and difficult duties that they have to perform as nurses as the other reason. Some of the tasks that nurses have to do are way too risky according to their information and sometimes they have to do tasks even though they dislike performing them.

“...There may be patients who are having dangerous infections like HIV. We have to put a syringe and draw blood from them to send the sample to laboratory. There is a high possibility to pass those kinds of viruses in to our body. This is a huge pressure. If something happens my whole life including my family is in danger.....”

Participant 16,  
personal interview-2017

*Nature of Working Schedules*

Nurses identified that due to their working schedules, they are facing problems in balancing work life and family life. Normal hours allocated for a shift is 6 hours but they have to work more than that. Nurses have to do extra hours (OT) and night duties for 12 hours for a month definitely including 24 hours shifts sometimes. In clinical wards, nurses have to work for 8 hours without extra duty or night shifts. But due to large amount of patients, they have to work more than allocated time.

This problem decrease the hours they have to spend with family and because of that family problems are easily occurring. Nurses stated that most of their

husbands are dislike of doing night duties because they think that it is not safe to do night duties for females. Besides the other reason is misunderstanding of husbands as well as sometimes from their in- laws. Some nurses mentioned that when they are doing night duties, they also feel uncomfortable due to many reasons arise from patients and their staff.

“....My mother in law is very strict. She doubts about me when I am doing night duties. I am doing it to earn more money. But when I am doing it more she is always having doubts. My husband also sometimes whining when I am doing night shifts.....”

Participant 06,  
personal interview-2017

“When it comes to some male patients they are very bad. I worked in male wards. When I am doing night duties sometimes they are showing their secret body parts to me through sarongs. At those times I feel really upset and angry and disgust.....”

Participant 01,  
personal interview-2017

*Lack of Adequate Staff*

Nurses mentioned that in many hospitals there are low amount of nursing staff. Nurses have mention that because of this reason they have to bear a huge amount of work load a day. Due to lack of staff nurses stated that they are facing many problems in many ways. One is rising of working stress of the nurses because they have to do multiple tasks at one time.

“...Also I am working at a hospital ward which is having a small number of staff. So I have to work overtime other than the normal night shifts I have. Especially in festive season and during the special holidays, nurses have to work. Actually sometimes we are doing a job that has to do by 3 people ...”

Participant 10,  
personal interview-2017

Nurses identified that sometimes they cannot do their work properly due to the overload of work. Internal conflicts are also arising because of that with their superiors. In family side, because of the more duties, nurses will miss family responsibilities and conflicts will arise among family members.

“.....But if the staff is less, we can't give proper attention to patients because we have to look for many patients. If something going wrong our supervisors and doctors are shouting at us. And when I go home late, my husband is shouting at me. One ward must have at least 10 nurses as my opinion. Otherwise nurses can't work.....”

Participant 04,  
personal interview-2017

**Consequences**

*Intention to Leave the Job*

Nurses identified that if they are coming to the maximum level of imbalance of work life and family life. Two main reasons identified by nurses for leaving the job is inability of completing family responsibilities and feel very much pressure from work. However because of rising family expenditures, their limited and specific knowledge, nurses are still hanging with their job in order to earn good money. Nursing is a job which is paying a good salary and pension benefit. Nevertheless 2 nurses out of 20 nurses are in the idea of leaving the job.

*"I will leave my job if that is a worst case scenario. There were time my mother in law shouted at me saying she can't look after son. At that time I wanted to give up my job. But I stayed because the job is important...."*

Participant 13,  
personal interview-2017

*"I am actually now going to leave my job because I can't work at hospital with TB. Supervisors are not also giving me flexible working schedules to work even I am suffering from this. My husband and son is pressuring me to leave my job. I have only 3 years remaining. I am 57 years old and I think now it is enough..."*

Participant 04, personal  
interview-2017

#### Conflicts in Work and Home

Nurses have to complete tasks at work place and they also have responsibilities at home as a wife and a mother. Due to their heavy working schedules, lack of staff and difficult works, nurses have to contribute a lot as an employee. In that case, nurses will miss family responsibilities. Because of their working stress, nurses mentioned that they find it hard to complete their work properly and also, they have to argue with their supervisors and fellow staff most of the time.

*"When my supervisors are scolding and when patients' parents are shouting, I feel down sometimes. And feel angry. I am also arguing back with them at this kind of times. Nurses cannot do everything like robots. They need to understand that...."*

Participant 06,  
personal interview-2017

When it comes to home, there also nurses have to face for conflicts especially from their spouses. Since nurses are doing work for more extra hours and night shifts, they mentioned that there is possibility to the occurrence of conflicts between husbands and them. Some of the nurses identified that their kids are also feeling sad when they are not home for a long time.

*"My husband is working in Doha. When I am on duty he can't contact with me because of time difference. So we are hardly contacting with each other. He is sometimes misunderstanding me. I don't want to talk about that but that is a big problem. He is complaining that I am not even caring about our daughter also...."*

Participant 02,  
personal interview-2017

#### Health Problems

Because of the imbalance of work and family, nurses stated that they are suffering from health problems. Health problems can be identified in both physical health term and mental health term. 2 nurses out of 20 nurses are currently suffering from health related diseases. Apart from that, majority of the participants are having physical pains and feeling of stress. When engage in the job, nurses always have to go here and there and they have to bend and lift too. Most of the nurses identified that they do not even have time to sit and rest a little bit.

*"Now I am suffering from TB. I am sneezing all the time. That is the physical pain I feel. My back is sometimes paining when I am engage with my duties since I am old..."*

Participant 04,  
personal interview-2017

When nurses are home and engage with household things this pain is increasing because throughout the day they become tired. Nurses also stated that feeling of

stress is a huge problem. According to nurses' view, they are easily getting angry, sad and down because of their stress.

*"There are sometimes I get angry with my daughters because of the stress. But I am always trying to manage it. I don't even have time to rest sometimes. Most of the time I am bathing at night after completing works at home. Because of that I got wheezing and my hair also got white early. And I have troubles in sleeping...."*

Participant 16,  
personal interview-2017

#### Feeling Overload and stress

Most of the nurses stated that they are feeling overload of work because of the lack of staff and heavy working schedules. Since there is low number of nurses in a ward they have to do lot of work at one time. Nurses identified that they are working for more hours than their scheduled time and feeling tired and stress. Because of this matter, nurses are finding it hard to balance their family life as well as work life properly. Most of the respondents are suffering from this work overload and finally it result to a huge stress.

*"If nurses have to do a one duty at one time, we can manage thing but actually we cannot do that. We are doing many tasks at one time. With that how we can find time to contact with home? That is impossible. I don't know about others. I am really unhappy when I have to do lot of things at once and it is a huge stress for me...."*

Participant 20,  
personal interview-2017

#### Demanding Leaves

Demanding leaves is one of the important results arising when they cannot handle both work life and family life. Majority of the nurses mentioned that as a solution they are always getting leaves when they have problems. Sometimes there may be family emergencies that nurses have to attend immediately. At these times nurses identified that they are taking leaves. Some nurses stated that they are staying at home on leave with no pay. In case of sudden situations and when nurses are feeling unwell, nurses mentioned that it is really hard to take leaves from the supervisors. But all of the nurses identified that they somehow took their leaves after lot of arguments with supervisors. Participants identified that they are taking their available leaves to the fullest because of the stress of the job.

*"I will take leave if there is an emergency matter. In my case I take all my leaves to the maximum..."*

Participant 05,  
personal interview-  
2017

*"I will get absent. Sometimes my family members will have personal matters. In that case I will stay at home with no pay. There were times I actually did that. When I was pregnant one day I did a night duty while vomiting. And in the morning the nurse who was appointed to take the morning shift got absent. My supervisor asked me to cover that shift also. But I demanded a leave and I went home that day..."*

Participant 19,  
personal interview-2017

## Discussion

### Objective 1 – Identify the Antecedents of Work Life Imbalance

When understanding the concept of work life imbalance, it is necessary to know what the factors creating this work life imbalance to employees and how they are occurring within them. This objective has built to assess those factors of work life imbalance and to find out the reasons for that using the current research's findings as well as the past researchers' findings.

According to the research findings, parental demand has been found out as an important antecedent of work life imbalance. As a parent, a person has to complete many responsibilities for his or her children. Nowadays, each and every person involves with jobs. Due to the rising expenditures in families, both mothers and fathers engage in jobs. As the parents get busy with their works, they will find less time to pay attention to their kids. Because of that, the work life imbalance can be occurred. Based on research findings, when employees have depending kids, this parental demand is increasing. If mothers are breastfeeding, these mothers have high tendency of restlessness and anxiety resulting from lack of sight of their child when they engage in work. Because of these reasons nurses are having hard time in balancing family and work when it comes to parental demand. The current study findings were validated by past researchers and they have noted that how parental demand is affecting to work life imbalance. According to these findings combining work and parenting can interfere with a working parent's ability to dedicate sufficient time to their family and this situation is highly related to workers who have younger children. (Adema and Whiteford, 2008; Beutell and Greenhaus, 1980).

Family support is very much important when balancing work life and family life. Based on research findings, if a person is having lack of family support, he or she will find problems in balancing personal life as well as the work life. When an employee is getting busy with his or her work life, they will miss some family responsibilities. To fulfill these responsibilities, they need the support from their family a lot. This support can receive from their parents, siblings, and children as well as from their spouses. When it comes to women, they play active role in the economic development of their country. Because of that they need to have a high family support to manage their family life and work life. Support is not only doing household works and taking care of their kids. They should have a good understanding regarding their job too. That will help them to relive the stress that they are receiving from work demand and family demands. Understandable family is very important to everyone. Some scholars have mentioned their opinion regarding this family support and work life imbalance. They are identifying that support receive from family members will play a significant role in balancing personal and professional lives (S. Padma , M. Sudhir Reddy, 2013; Marcello Russo and Abraham Carmeli, 2015; Carmen K. Fu and Margaret A. Shaffer, 2001).

Task difficulty can also be aroused to employees due to many aspects as an antecedent of work life imbalance. According to the research findings having to do multiple tasks and performing critical and difficult duties leads task difficulty. Based on research findings it is found out that lack of staff and increasing the amount of duties will cause task difficulty to the respondents. In any organization, there should be a sufficient amount of staff in order to complete task. When it comes to organizations like hospitals, the duties that staff has to perform is unpredictable. It is hard to assume the amount of patients that are going to admit to the hospital per a day. Due to these facts, employees have to perform multiple tasks to fill the responsibilities of the job. Another fact identified by the research is performing critical and difficult duties and they will be uncomfortable to them sometimes. Because of this matter, employees will suffer from the stress and it will directly influence to their personal life too. Past research conducted by Natural Standard Research Collaboration in 2003 is also supporting this result by identifying experiencing difficulty in delegating tasks may be diagnosed with depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and/or anxiety disorder. In addition, it will create problems when accomplishing personal and family commitments.

Another important antecedent identified by the research findings is nature of work schedules. According to the research findings, the respondents are having normal working schedules for 6 hours and also, they have some other schedules like night shifts, 24 hour shifts and extra 12 hours shifts. Because of these extreme working schedules, employees will find difficulties in managing work life and family life. If a person has to spend more time at work place rather than his or her home, that will be a problem to them when fulfilling family responsibilities. Flexibility of work schedule is an important factor avoids work and family imbalance. According to the respondents of the research, they cannot have flexible work schedules due to their job. Since they are dealing with the health of the country, they have to consider their job too. However, in the other side it is clashing with their family life. Another thing is because of these types of bus working schedules, they will suffer from work related stress and they will also suffer from work related illnesses. Past researchers are also identifying how this work schedules are important to balance work life and family life through their findings. According to their findings, there is strong evidence that non-standard work hours and complex working schedules has a negative influence on work life balance and (Albertson et al., 2012; Tipping et al., 2012).

Based on research findings, it found out that lack of staff is negatively influence with the work life balance of employees. In that case, tasks that one employee has to perform is increasing. If person has to work beyond that capacity, his or her stress will increase and also his or her productivity will decrease. In government hospitals there are many number of patients who taking treatments per a day. If the number of nurse staff is less, it is very difficult to manage their duties with that much of patients. In Sri Lanka, health issues are arising day by day. Because of that there must be an adequate amount of nurses to serve them. Nonetheless according to the findings, lack of nurse staff is causing work related problems and family related problems to them. When considering the previous studies, research findings of "Acas" Organization in United Kingdom (2015) and Mark Royal (2013), many Organizations around the world expecting their employees to do more work with fewer amounts of staff and that is leading to increasing dissatisfaction with work life balance.

### Objective 2 – Identify the Consequences of Work Life Imbalance

As a result of work life imbalance, many outcomes will reach to employees. To have a clear knowledge of this work life imbalance, it is very important to recognize the results that can arise due to this term. Based on past findings, these consequences are discussing in an expansive manner in the below.

When an employee is feeling that they are not balancing their work life and family life well, there are many options that they can take. Intention to leave the job is one of the impotent consequences found out through research findings. If one person is in an extreme situation where he or she cannot balance work and family, they will tend to leave the job. Even though most of the participants said that they have work life imbalance, majority of them still engage with their job. The reason is good options available to them from their job as receiving a pension after the retirement and receiving a good salary. Another reason is they cannot engage in another job because they have only knowledge regarding that particular area. As per the past findings, the relationship among leaving the job and work life balance can be identified. According to these findings, there is a significant relationship between work-life conflict and turnover intentions; the more work-life conflict staffs struggle with, the more they think about quitting their jobs (Robert Half, 2015; Taghrid S. Suifan and his peers, 2016).

Base on the findings, when there is work life imbalance, there is a possible chance to occur conflicts in the work place as well as in the home. A person has to complete tasks at their work place and also they have to fulfil responsibilities of family. Sometimes when fulfilling one responsibility, it can clash with other responsibilities he or she have. If an employee has busy working schedules and lot of duties, they will get limited time to think about family responsibilities. Hence, when they have lot of family responsibilities as parents, spouses, they may have neglect or miss their job. Because of that they will start arguments and conflicts with their peers and supervisors and also when they are at home they will start conflicts and arguments with family members. In that case it identifies

that conflicts at work and at home tend to manifest them more frequently when an imbalance is present. Prior scholars also support this finding through their research findings. Findings of De Villiers and Kotze (2003) and Borris B. Baltes and his peers (2010) are emphasizing that the most significant work-family conflicts arise from complex workplace issues, and complex family related issues which strongly influence the work-life imbalance.

Person should have a good health condition to successfully entail in their job and to live happily with their family members. However, because of work life imbalance, employees have possibility to suffer from health related issues. These can be physical problems as well as mental problem. According to the research findings, the heavy working schedules and working duties are causing health problems to respondents. When it comes to nurses, they have possibility to have these illnesses. Especially they have mentioned that based on their ward, they have possibility to pass illnesses to their bodies. Moreover, when the job is getting restless and uncomfortable, that will cause physical pains to them because increasing stress can cause negative impact on mental health. These health conditions will affect them when they are dealing with family responsibilities. Some past literatures also confirm this fact throughout the findings. When it comes to both mental and physical health, they have found out that imbalance between the job and personal life is likely to damage both mental and physical health (Zoe Roberts, 2003; Mental Health Foundation of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, 2015)

When a person has to do tasks beyond his or her capacity, they will end up feeling overload. This matter can occur due to many aspects. Based on research findings, some reasons are heavy working schedules, lack of staff like wise. Because of these reasons, the work amount that one has to complete is increasing and because of that they may feel overloaded and their productive capacity will be reduced. Because of the overloaded nature they may feel stressed, anxious and also there is a chance to suffer from other kinds of health problems too. When they feel overloaded they may find it hard to complete their family responsibilities at home. That will cause problems in family life. Past scholar, Erin Brownfield and his peers (2005) says that it is not just long hours that make people feel overload. It is also the amount of pressure on the job and there can be work and nonworking-related outcomes from feeling overload like more mistakes made on the job, resentment towards employers and co-workers, less-successful relationships with friends, spouses and children, and poor health, to name a few.

One of the most important consequences identified by the research findings is demanding more leaves. When they are in a critical situation, they are demanding leaves to manage their family life with work. There are many leave options available to employees. However, the important thing is taking more emergency leaves as a result of work life imbalance. Emergency leaves are an effective means of achieving work life balance, because most times unforeseen circumstances boom up and employees are torn between their work and their personal issues to address. The emergency leave is however, necessary at times and situations when employees have necessary personal issues to attend even though their supervisors are not allowing them to take leaves. Past findings are also give similar opinions regarding this. These findings mention that due to work life imbalance, tendency of taking more leaves can be arise among employees (Altonji and Oldham, 2003; Nina Tomazevic and her peers, 2014).

## Conclusion

This study was conducted mainly to identify which factor and results of work life imbalance have more influence on their work life and family life using female nurses of government hospitals. Qualitative research design was used to proceed with research study and structured interview method was utilized to interview 20 female nurses working at Colombo District Government Hospitals. Throughout interviews, in-depth data were gathered by the respondents based on their experiences and ideas. These data were then categorized under antecedents theme and consequences theme and they were analysed using thematic analysis to generate final research outcomes, in order to attain research objectives.

As mentioned in the discussion of the research findings, major antecedents and consequences of work life imbalance has been identified. When it comes to antecedents, these are based on job perspective as well as their family perspective. Working Schedules, lack of staff, task difficulty is having the strongest significant relationship with work life imbalance in job perspective. In addition to that, when it comes to family perspective, parental demand and lack of family support are identified as antecedents of work life imbalance. This study found that there are negative consequences occur due to this work life imbalance. Intention to leaving the job, conflicts in work and home, health problems, feeling overload and stress and demanding leaves are the consequences identified through this research. The support from the family especially for look after children is a big challenge for current day female employees. Study identifying that female employees have found the involvement of family matters and demand issue getting from the family as a barrier for balance work and family life. In terms of working nature, the higher level of involvement and demand of work make negative impact upon work life imbalance.

The results, however, may not be generalized to other sectors or industries in Sri Lanka elsewhere as the sample size and population was limited to healthcare industry. Another reason for not being able to generalize the research findings is the qualitative nature or the design of the research study since, the qualitative researches cannot be generalized. But as females, they have to play many roles in the life. Therefore, there is a significant possibility of occurring work life imbalance to female employees because of these many role demands they have.

## Recommendations

It is suggested that the management and supervisors should pay a significant attention for the development of policies to deal with work life balance programs, and practices within the organization with strategic thinking.

Family friendly programs can be built within the organizations to help workers to have a good family life. For an example, as female employees are playing the role of mother, they need to give constant care and attention to their children. If hospitals can build day care centers to their children, this problem can be minimized.

Arranging flexible working schedules and providing transport and meal facilities to nurses is very practical in reducing their exhausted personal life obligations.

Since the nursing staff in Sri Lanka is in a low level currently, Health Ministry can increase the recruitment level of both female and male nurses per year.

The betterment is needed from employees themselves by managing their work and family role through this study by having a clear-cut understanding about their family role and job role separately to recover from the work life conflict issues.

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