

Intensive Care Unit Nurses' Work Life Balance, Job Attraction and Retention*Samah Abo-Elenein Abdallah¹, Sara Abdel-Mongy Mostafa²*^{1,2} Lecturer of Nursing Administration, Faculty of Nursing, Tanta University**Abstract**

Background: Intensive care units (ICUs) nurses face many challenges stem from complexity of patient care, work overloads, limitation of time, working environment and administrative duties which would affect their work life balance, job attraction and retention. **Aim** of this study was to explore the relationship between work life balance, job attraction and retention among ICUs nurses. **Methods:** Descriptive – co-relational design was used. The study was conducted at ICUs at Tanta University Main Hospital on all the available (190) nurses. Three tools for data collection were used. Tool (I): Work Life Balance Questionnaire. Tool (II): Job Attraction Assessment Scale and Tool (III): Job Retention Assessment Scale. **Results:** More than half (59%, 55%) of ICUs nurses' perceived a- low level of work-life balance and job retention respectively. Beside, more than half (61%) of them perceived a moderate level of job attraction. **Conclusion:** It was concluded that the work life balance was positively correlated with job attraction and retention. Therefore, **it was recommended that** hospital administrators and nurse managers need to adopt strategies for promoting ICUs nurses' work life balance so their job satisfaction, attraction and retention will be improved.

Key words: Intensive care units, Job attraction and retention, Nurses, Work life balance.

Introduction

In today's knowledge economy, retaining the competitive nursing staff and maintain their competitive advantages is one of the major challenges for health care organizations particularly in ICUs to provide safe and quality care to acute and critically ill patients ⁽¹⁾. High workloads in ICUs can lead to high rate of absenteeism and turnover which would affect nurse's job productivity and consequently affect their work life balance, job attraction and retention ⁽²⁾. Turnover rate have been increasing among ICUs nurses for many reasons, including search for better work environment, increasing job autonomy, more salaries and benefits, career advancement, better job opportunities and retirement ⁽³⁾. However, another key reason for nurses and in particular women leave their job is to find a better work life balance ⁽⁴⁾. To decrease turnover, attract and retain highly qualified nurses, nurse managers need to improve the working environment which consequently maintain their work life balance ⁽⁵⁾.

Work-life balance is the degree to which a person is equally involved and satisfied with their work and family role. It refers to a particular balance between work life and personal life which consequently result in work and personal life enhancement ⁽⁶⁾. This work-life balance requires both job and family real demands which are must be

effectively fulfilled with appropriate resources ⁽⁷⁾. This satisfactory balance results in employee's job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, retention and family functioning⁽⁸⁾. Whereas, the perception of work-life imbalance causes tension escalation within the person as either work or family demands become unsatisfied. This negative imbalance results in nurses' stress, lower commitment with organization, job dissatisfaction, turnover, domestic violence and lower productivity⁽⁹⁾.

Work life interference with personal life tends most often to impact upon ICUs nurses and results in increasing difficulty in managing a balance between work and family responsibilities. Factors shown to impact the most upon ICUs nurses trying to balance work and life include; required hours of work, a lack of flexibility in being able to alter their working hours, time off or leave arrangements, a lack of access to suitable childcare arrangements, and excessive stresses and tensions in the ICUs which make working life more difficult and/or even unpleasant ⁽⁹⁾. These unsatisfied interferences and demands potentially affect nurse's work and social life and become a serious cause of psychological discomfort for organization's and families ⁽¹⁰⁾. Therefore, work life policies should permit nurses to balance their work life by giving more time

to different activities such as leisure, family care duties, training courses, resting or social life⁽¹¹⁾. Such practices when adopted can reduce work related stresses, increase satisfaction and performance⁽¹²⁾.

Another competitive advantage associated with work-life balance benefits is the ability to attract and retain ICUs nurses. The attraction and retention of ICUs nurses are more important today than ever before. Some of the trends like globalization, increase in knowledge work and technological advancement make it essential that hospitals acquire and retain high competent ICUs nurses⁽¹³⁾. Therefore, many hospitals are desperate to find qualified ICUs nurses to fill job openings and are working to make it appear more attractive to candidates by adding various options and benefits. Nurses' attractiveness usually starts by launching a job, and finished with new employments and the work and hospital become attractive if a nurse is interested to apply for it, wants to stay and engaged in it⁽¹⁴⁾.

Job retention and attraction strategies are an important means for attracting and retaining skilled nurses particularly in areas where there is a high staff turnover, difficulties in recruiting and retaining skilled staff, a competitive job market, and labor and skill shortages. In attraction process, ICUs nurses need to find the useful information about the hospital that

ultimately influence the final choice of employment which this information presented to the candidates nurses and they balance everything they know about the jobs from similar positions to those of the hospital that wants to attract them and certainly marks its decision on employment⁽¹⁵⁾.

Also, hospitals need to consider the factors that may affect ICU nurses attraction into their employment to identify their shortcomings, make improvements and increase the ability of finding potential staff nurses. These factors are involving working environment that must be safe, healthy and well-equipped to attract the right nurses to their employment mainstream and human resource development which hospitals provide opportunities for professional growth to allow ICUs nurses to manage their own careers. Also, recruitment strategies that are activities in human resource management used to attract sufficient job candidates who have the necessary potential and competencies to fill job needs to assist the hospital to achieve its objectives. Finally, hospitals image is necessary element to attract and retain qualified ICUs nurses as it influences them for evaluation of the hospital and its employment opportunities, and attitudes towards the hospital^(15, 16).

Most researchers identify the job attractiveness scale that comprises five attributes to assess to what extent the hospital offers the following values to attract ICUs nurses: interest value, social value, economic value, development value and application value. Interest value assesses attraction to an employer that offer an exciting work environment, with creativity and forward-thinking and the hospital produce innovative, high-quality products and services. Social value assesses attraction to a fun and happy work environment and good relationships with superiors and colleagues. Economic value assesses attraction regarding salary, compensation, promotion opportunities and job security. Development value assesses attraction to employment that provides career-enhancing experience, recognition, self-worth and confidence. Finally, application value relates to acceptance, opportunity to apply and share knowledge and the environment that is humanitarian and customer orientated^(17, 18).

Nurses' job retention is a process by an organization to create an environment which involves them within their jobs for longer period of time⁽¹⁹⁾. A more comprehensive definition of retention is to prevent the loss of proficient employees from leaving productivity and profitability⁽²⁰⁾. ICUs nurses' job retention is critical for hospital as it provides the driving force

to achieve the development and achievement of the hospital's goals and objectives⁽²¹⁾. It is the process of physically keeping ICUs nurses within their jobs for longer period of time for hospital success and prevents the loss of proficient ICUs nurses from leaving productivity and profitability⁽¹⁹⁾.

Early investigations should be undertaken to determine factors that affect retention of ICUs nurses to enable hospital to develop interventions that can address this challenge. These factors are involving nursing staff in decisions that affect them and increase their autonomy and control over their work lives to be more motivated, committed to the hospital, productive and satisfied with their jobs. Also, another factor that might have an influence on retention of ICUs nurses is the state of wellness which is a holistic approach of looking after the physical, psychological and social state of well-being. As unhealthy ICUs nurses can affect hospital performance and increase its costs because of low productivity owing to illness, medical care, and production disruption as a result of absence and turnover⁽²²⁾.

Compensation and appreciation of the performed work and leadership style are considered the key factors that affect job attraction and retention of the best nurses, promote their commitment and influence them to enthusiastically direct their efforts

and abilities towards attaining a hospital goal⁽²³⁾. Beside, training and development that are given by hospital are necessary to facilitate ICUs nurses to master their knowledge, skills and apply them to their day-to-day activities and help them to prepare for the future and relationship with supervisor and co-worker are also the major reason for staying with a particular job for having many of the same values, attitudes and philosophies that supervisors and co-workers have⁽²⁴⁾.

Significance of the study

ICUs nurses face a challenge balancing between personal life and work especially who have babies and other demands such family, home and children needs as well as family members with health problems. Additionally, nurse's work in intensive care units which are a stressful work environment because of caring for sick and dying patients has different feelings of sadness, depression, pain and emotional stress which negatively affect their personal lives. Also, most of nurses work rotating shifts which disrupt their family lives. On other hand, nurses who are able to balance their work, family and life commitments have been shown to be happier in their job and are more likely to stay and work towards a- rewarding and productive career. Therefore, creating a balance between work-life is found as one of the suitable practices that when adopted

can reduce work related stresses, increase attraction and retention.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to exploring the relationship between work life balance, job attraction and retention among intensive care unit nurses.

I.2 Research question

1. What is the level of work life balance among intensive care units nurses?
2. What is the level of job attraction and retention among intensive care units nurses?
3. Is there a relationship between work life balance, attraction and retention among ICUs nurses?

II. Subjects and method

II.1.Subjects

Research Design

Descriptive -correlation research design was used.

Setting

The study was conducted in intensive care units at Tanta University Main Hospital included Medical, Cardiac, Neuro, Anesthesia, Pediatric, Neonate and Chest ICUs.

Subjects

The subjects included all available (190) ICUs nurses were working in the previously mentioned settings and willing to participate in the study.

Tools of the study: the researchers prepared a structured questionnaire to

collect data of this study. It consisted of three tools as follow;

Tool (1): Work Life Balance Questionnaire

This tool was developed by researchers guided by **Jensirani & Muthumani (2017)** ⁽²⁵⁾ and **Banu & Duraipandian (2014)** ⁽²⁶⁾ to assess the level of work life balance among ICUs nurses. The tool included two parts: **Part (1):** personal characteristics including age, years of experience, marital status, level of education and work unit. **Part (2):** Work life balance items to assess the level of work life balance among ICUs nurses through (17) items distributed into three subscales: work life interference with personal life (6 items), personal life interference with work (6 items), and work/personal life enhancement (5 items).

Tool (2): Job Attraction Assessment Scale

This tool was developed by the researchers guided by **Puri (2018)** ⁽²⁷⁾ and **Larsson (2014)** ⁽¹⁷⁾ to assess the level of job attraction among nurses through (38) items distributed into five factors: Interest value (8 items), social value (14 items), Economic value (6 items), development value (6 items), and application value (4 items).

Tool (3): Job Retention Assessment Scale

This tool was developed by the researchers guided by **Theron (2015)** ⁽²⁸⁾ and **Kyndt**

(2009) ⁽²⁹⁾ to assess the level of job retention among nurses through (35) items distributed into three factors: Compensation and recognition (8 items), relationship with supervisor/manager (11 items), and job satisfaction (16 items).

Scoring system: ICUs nurses' responses were measured in three points Likert Scale ranging from disagree =1, uncertain= 2, and agree=3 with some items with reverse scored. The respondents' total scores were classified into three levels, high level > 75%, moderate level 60 - 75%, and low level < 60%.

Method:

Validity and Reliability

The tools were translated into Arabic and reviewed by 4 experts in nursing administration and 2 experts in psychiatric nursing from Faculty of Nursing- Tanta University. The tools were modified based on experts' comments. A pilot study was conducted on (19 ICUs nurses) were excluded from the actual study sample; to ensure the clarity of the tools and to estimate the required time for completing the tools. Reliability of the tools was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient test, its value was (0.815) for tool 1, (0.804) for tool 2 and (0.856) for tool 3 respectively.

Fieldwork

The data was collected by researchers from ICUs nurses included in the study. The researchers met the subjects during their

work shifts to distribute the questionnaires. The subjects recorded the answer in the presence of the researchers to ascertain all questions were answered. The questionnaire sheets were taken 20-30 minutes for each nurse to be filled. The data was collected in a period of two months.

Ethical consideration

The researchers obtained an official permission from Tanta University Main Hospital responsible authorities to carry out the study. Researchers met the participant ICUs nurses and explained the purpose of the study to them to gain their cooperation for participation in the study. Informed consent was obtained from each participant nurse. The confidentiality of their responses, and right to withdraw from the study at any time were emphasized.

Statistical analysis:

Statistical analysis is performed by statistical Package SPSS in general (version 20), also Microsoft Office Excel is used for data handling and graphical presentation. Data was collected, coded and organized into tables, and then analyzed using number and percent. Pearson's R was used to verify the correlation. Significance level is considered at $P \leq 0.05$.

Results

Table (1) shows distribution of ICUs nurses according to their personal data. The

ICU nurses' age ranged between 22 up to 53 years, and the highest percent (42.1%) of them had from 30 to 40 years old with mean 34.56 ± 6.3 and the most (63.2%) of them were married. As regard to education level, more than half (55.3%) of ICUs nurses had a bachelor degree. About half (50.0%) of them had from 10 to 20 years of experience with mean scores 14.57 ± 6.32 and range from 1-30 years. 18.9% and 16.8% of ICUs nurses worked in pediatric and anesthesia ICUs respectively.

Figure (1) shows level of work life balance, job attraction and retention as perceived by ICUs nurses. More than half (59%, 55%) of ICUs nurses' perceived a low level of work-life balance and job retention respectively beside, more than half (61%) of them perceived a moderate level of job attraction. While, 20%, 12% and 11% of ICUs nurses' perceived high level of job attraction, job retention and work-life balance respectively.

Table (2) illustrates ICUs nurses' perception of work life balance. The table shows that there was a-statistically significant difference between ICUs nurses' perception of work life balance. The most (77.9% and 71.1%) of ICUs nurses agree that work life interfere with personal life and personal life interfere with the work with mean 14.02 ± 2.34 and 12.80 ± 3.12 respectively while, more than half (63.2%)

of them disagree with work/personal life enhancement with mean 9.48 ± 2.76 .

Table (3) illustrates ICUs nurses' perception of job attraction. The table shows that there was a statistically significant difference between ICUs nurses' perception of job attraction. The most (75.8%, 74.7%, 74.2%, 73.2% and 70.0%) of ICUs nurses disagree with development value, interest value, application value, social value and economical value with mean 13.64 ± 3.04 , 17.93 ± 3.08 , 8.90 ± 2.14 , 30.74 ± 5.16 and 12.60 ± 2.45 as factors that enhance job attraction respectively.

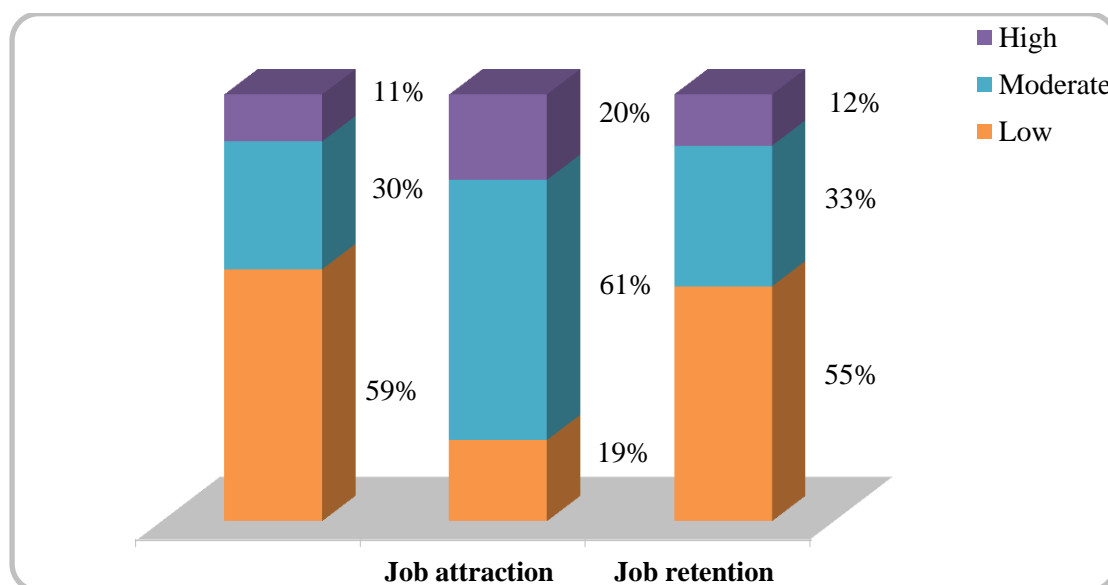
Table (4) illustrates ICUs nurses' perception of job retention. The table shows that there was a statistically significant difference between ICUs nurses' perception of job retention. The most (77.4%, 75.8%, and 73.6%) of ICUs nurses disagree with compensation and recognition, relationship with supervisors and job satisfaction with mean 18.58 ± 3.60 , 25.01 ± 4.04 and 35.38 ± 6.80 as factors that enhance job retention respectively.

Table (5) illustrates correlation between ICUs nurses' work life balance, their job attraction and retention. The table shows that all the work life balance subscales was statistically significant and positively correlated with job attraction and retention at ($p \leq 0.05$).

Table (6) illustrates correlation between ICUs nurses' characteristics and their work life balance, job attraction and retention. The table shows that there was a highly statistically significant positive correlation between ICU nurses' work life balance subscales and job attraction with their age and years of experience at ($p \leq 0.001$). Also, there was a statistically significant positive correlation between ICUs nurses' job retention and their age and years of experience at ($p \leq 0.05$).

Table (1): Distribution of ICUs nurses according to their personal data

Tanta University Main Hospitals (N=190)					
ICUs nurses' personal data	N	%	ICUs nurses' personal data	N	%
Age (years)			Experience (years)		
<30	62	32.6	<10	50	26.3
30 – 40	80	42.1	10 – 20	95	50.0
> 40	48	25.3	> 20	45	23.7
Mean±SD	34.56±6.3		Mean±SD	14.57±6.32	
Range	22-53		Range	1-30	
Marital status			Working Unit		
Single	62	32.6	Anesthesia ICU	32	16.8
Married	120	63.2	Cardiac ICU	36	18.9
Divorced	3	1.6	Chest ICU	27	14.2
Widow	5	2.6	Medical ICU	23	12.1
Education level			Neuro ICU	31	16.3
Diploma in nursing	30	15.8	Neonate ICU	20	10.5
Technical Institute of nursing	55	28.9	Pediatric ICU	21	11.1
Baccalaureate degree	105	55.3			

**Figure (1): Level of work life balance, job attraction and retention as perceived by ICUs nurses****Table (2): ICUs nurses' perception of work life balance**

Work life balance subscales	perception			Mean ± SD	X ²	P-value
	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree			
	%	%	%			
-Work Life Interference with Personal Life	77.9	14.2	7.9	14.02±2.34	256.374	<0.001*
- Personal Life Interference with Work	71.1	15.3	13.6	12.80±3.12	182.574	<0.001*
-Work/Personal Life Enhancement	14.7	22.1	63.2	9.48±2.76	116.400	<0.001*

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table (3): ICUs nurses' perception of job attraction

Job attraction factors	Perception			Mean ± SD	X ²	P-value
	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree			
	%	%	%			
- Interest value	11.1	14.2	74.7	17.93±3.08	220.279	<0.001*
- Social value	10.0	16.8	73.2	30.74±5.16	205.405	<0.001*
- Economical value	12.1	17.9	70.0	12.60±2.45	173.858	<0.001*
- Development value	8.9	15.3	75.8	13.64±3.04	232.879	<0.001*
- Application Value	10.0	15.8	74.2	8.90±2.14	215.732	<0.001*

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table (4): ICUs nurses' perception of job retention

Job retention factors	Perception			Mean ± SD	X ²	P-value
	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree			
	%	%	%			
- Compensation and recognition	7.9	14.7	77.4	18.58±3.60	250.689	<0.001*
- Relationship with supervisors	4.7	19.5	75.8	25.01±4.04	240.458	<0.001*
- Job satisfaction	11.1	15.3	73.6	35.38±6.80	209.574	<0.001*

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table (5): Correlation between ICUs nurses' work life balance, their job attraction and retention

Work life balance subscales	Job attraction		Retention	
	R	P-value	r	P-value
- Work Life Interference with Personal Life	0.427	<0.001**	0.284	<0.001**
- Personal Life Interference with Work	0.384	<0.001**	0.433	<0.001**
- Work/Personal Life Enhancement	0.298	<0.001**	0.169	0.035*

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table (6): Correlation between ICUs nurses' characteristics and their work life balance, job attraction and retention

Factors	ICUs nurses characteristics			
	Age		Years of experience	
	R	P-value	r	P-value
Work life balance subscales	0.425	<0.001**	0.356	<0.001**
Job attraction	0.394	<0.001**	0.332	<0.001**
Retention	0.375	0.002*	0.230	0.004*

Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Discussion

The need for critical care services and competent ICUs nurses is becoming a huge challenge for health care organizations. At the same time, health care facilities are experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining health care professionals. Issues include complexity of patient care, intense patient needs, nursing shortage, limitation of time, working environment, administrative duties and family needs are most common among nurses⁽³⁰⁾. However, high work life balance is essential for organizations to achieve high performance and growth in profitability and to continue to attract and retain nurses. Therefore, to retain the existing staff and to attract potential new entrants, healthcare organizations have to adopt strategies that would help in promoting the work life balance and consequently enhancing nurses' attraction and retention^(6,7).

The present study points that, more than half of ICUs nurses had low level of work life balance. This result could be related to most of ICUs nurses agreed that work life interfere with their personal life and personal life interfere with their work.

Beside, high percent of them disagreed with work/personal life enhancement. This result may be due to unsuitable working hours, lack of facilities for nurses, poor relationship with supervisors, inability to balance work with family needs, inadequacy of vacations time for nurses and their families and an inappropriate working environment. Beside, work related duties make ICUs nurses to change their plans for family activities and cause work family conflict and incompatibility between work and family roles. Also, the time of their job takes up can make them difficult to fulfill their family responsibilities and after work, they come home too tired to do some of things they would like to do. At the same time most of ICUs nurses agreed that their personal life take up time that they would like to spend at work and their personal demands are so great that it takes away from their work as well as most of them had personal problems. So, ICUs nurses need to prepare them to cope with these challenges and hospital authorities must implement family-friendly approaches to encourage

them to balance their work-family challenge.

The current study result was in line with **Gamal (2019)**⁽³¹⁾ who found that most of nursing staff had high level of work interfering with family life and cause work family conflict. At the same line, **Aroosiya (2018)**⁽³²⁾ and **Almaki et al. (2012)**⁽³³⁾ found that majority of nurses reported they were incapable of balancing between the work home lives due to poor staffing, management and supervision practices, lack of professional development opportunities, and an inappropriate working environment in terms of the level of security, patient care supplies and equipment, and inadequate salary. Also, present result was confirmed by **Dawnes and Kackemore (2016)**⁽³⁴⁾ whose showed that work cause lots of stress and pressure to nursing staff and other health issues due to work life imbalance. Beside, **Suguna and Franco (2017)**⁽³⁵⁾ revealed that most of the nursing staff was dissatisfied with work-life balance. This result was contraindicated with **Al-Momari (2017)**⁽³⁶⁾ who's found that almost all nursing staff had low level of family interfering

with the work and majority of nursing staff had moderate level of work-life balance as total.

The present study results revealed that, more than half of ICUs nurses' had moderate level of job attraction. This result may be due to most of ICUs nurses disagreed with development value, interest value, application value, social value and economical value as factors that enhance job attraction. Actually, those nurses perceived that their work is not interested to them; they have no flexible work schedule and their working environment not safe and comfortable. Besides, the hospital not provides good promotion opportunities, compensation and benefit and satisfactory salary. As well as, hospital provides limited opportunities for improvement, to enhance their creativity and innovation, to teach others what they learned, to receive enough training to do their job in best manner and independence decision making.

Really ICUs nurses' always experienced being uncomfortable, confused and loss of control, emotionally drained, and incompetent as a result of facing uncertain

situations in ICUs and the most of patients were critically ill and majority of them were mechanically ventilated and their health status is unstable and unpredictable. Therefore, nurse supervisors should support those nurses by ensuring that they receive appropriate motivation, in addition to guidance and regular follow-ups. Nurse supervisor should display fairness and consistency in recommendations and decisions affecting nurses; communicate clearly with nurses, give and receive feedback and provide them with recognition and supportive work environment. Beside, **Haile et al (2017)**⁽³⁷⁾ added that nurse supervisor as a good leader should show concerns to all nursing staff, help them to manage any work risks, solve their problems, and demonstrate how to work and live by values and beliefs. Empower and give them a sense of responsibility and accountability coupled with recognition and rewards, demonstrate concern about their needs, develop and provide them with the necessary tools to continue to improve and achieve success in the work place.

Confirming to our study results **Larsson (2014)**⁽¹⁷⁾ who found that social value had the lowest mean followed by development value, interest value, application value and finally economic value for nurses attraction. **Eger et al. (2019)**⁽³⁸⁾ also found that majority of nurses identified the highest importance to social value. Interest value, economic and development value were the second-most important for employee attraction to jobs. They pointed out that factors are important for building a positive firm reputation, which will enhance intentions to apply among potential nurses.

Current study result revealed that more than half of ICUs nurses' perceived a low level of job retention. Actually, most of ICUs nurses disagreed with compensation and recognition as factors that enhance job retention. This result may be due to lack clear system of compensation at work and recognition leading to the feeling that salary and incentives distribution is not fair compared to their colleagues. In addition, those ICUs nurses perceive that benefits they received are not adequate to fulfill

their basic needs and the salary they received isn't equal with their performance. Thus, recognition and reward for better performance of the staff should be made. This is motivate the staff for better performance and will help them to have sense of belongingness towards the organization. Along with the present study, **El Shoroky (2016)** ⁽³⁹⁾ found that more than fifty of nursing staff had low level of response about salaries and incentives as dimensions of job retention.

The current study also demonstrated that the most of ICUs nurses disagreed with their relationship with supervisors as factors that enhance job retention. This result may be due to bad management and supervision, and ineffective leadership style who don't know important of recognition and respect and how to deal with problems of nurses effectively. Present study result supported by **Hussain et al. (2018)** ⁽⁴⁰⁾ who found that majority of the study sample were not satisfied with the supervisory style and their non-participation in the decision making process in the organization. These findings disagreed with result of **Morsy and Sabra**

(2015) ⁽⁴¹⁾ whose showed that the highest mean scores of the dimensions of work context to job retention were management and supervision.

Current study result revealed that the most of ICUs nurses disagreed with job satisfaction as factors that enhance job retention. This result may be due to those nurses had imbalance between the professional and personal life with more duties at work place that interfere with their personal life without promoting rest time during work and had more family and child care responsibilities. Above all, they perceive dissatisfied with relationship with supervisors, lack of compensation and appreciation of the performed work and chances to be promoted and to learn. Therefore, allowing adequate breaks during the working day and improving salary and fringe benefits, relationship with co-workers, degree of respect and fair treatment from supervisors, followed by promotional opportunities and training and development are important benefits to improve workforce satisfaction and retentions and thus ensure meeting organizational goals and objectives. **El**

Sayed (2016) ⁽⁴²⁾ and **Park et al. (2012)** ⁽⁴³⁾ support our study finding and reported that nurses were least satisfied with their job in comparison with other professionals like allied. **Jayakumar (2012)** ⁽⁴⁴⁾ reported that proper feedback mechanisms, effective communication, supportive leadership, recognition and rewards and support from the nurse supervisors were an integral part of job satisfaction and retention. Contrasting findings were reported by **Morsy and Sabra (2015)** ⁽⁴¹⁾ whose found that more than two thirds of nurses were satisfied with their work. This is might to improvement in the salary of nurses and increases chances of nurses to work immediately after graduation.

Results of the current study clarified that work life balance was positively correlated with job attraction and retention. Actually, creating a balance between family and work life could result in greater satisfaction at home and at work, which results in greater nurses' performance and reduced turnover which consequently enhance nurse's attraction and retention. Present result was confirmed by **Sindhuja and Subramanian (2020)** ⁽⁴⁵⁾, **Singh and**

Dubey (2016) ⁽⁴⁶⁾ and **Eley et al. (2014)** ⁽⁴⁷⁾ whose revealed that the work-life balance has a direct impact on employee's retention and it also helps to improve the employee's job satisfaction. Also, **Burns et al. (2014)** ⁽⁴⁾ identified high workload resulting in long working hours and poor work-life balance as well as the responsibility of care for complex patient populations as the primary reasons nurses were not attracted to the field of health care organizations.

Aamir et al. (2016) ⁽¹²⁾ have highlighted that positive relationship between work-life balance and nurses' job retention in hospitals in which the organizations work-life balance policies can decrease the work and family conflict results increase in job attraction, satisfaction and lower intention to leave. Beside, **Ollier-Malaterre (2010)** ⁽⁹⁾ mentioned work-life balance positive result is related to staff' job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, retention and family functioning. Whereas, the negative imbalance results in staff' stress, lower commitment with organization, job dissatisfaction, turnover, domestic violence and lower productivity.

Current results revealed that there was statistically significant positive correlation between ICUs nurses' characteristics (age and years of experience) and their work life balance, job attraction and retention. This might be explained by the fact that old ICUs nurses with more experiences able to deal with personal problems and fulfilling personal life with adequately perform their work responsibilities in addition they advanced in their career and had higher job status, more participation in decision making and autonomy and increase their income, they had a positive reflection on their work life balance, attraction and retention. Therefore, health care organizations need to enhance the development of oneself, support family needs and flexible work culture with management support to enhance nurses' work life balance. In agreement with these study findings, **Abdirahman et al. (2018)**⁽⁴⁸⁾ highlighted that mature nurses have greater job satisfaction, productivity and organizational commitment and had less burnout and intention to leave. This was contraindicated with result of **Rao (2017)**⁽⁴⁹⁾ who showed that there is

negative significant correlation among age and years of experiences of nursing staff and their work life balance. **Hayes (2015)**⁽⁵⁰⁾ also indicated a significant relationship between age, income, and turnover intentions; however, the relationship between length of tenure was not statistically significant. As well as, **Emiroğlu et al. (2015)**⁽⁵¹⁾ found that there is a significant relationship between demographic factors such as marital status, age, educational level and factors such as tenure and working department and turnover intentions.

In fact, work-life balance is necessary for ICUs nurses attraction and retention by offering them more flexible working options, access to a range of domestic services, determining correct staffing levels so that those nurses are not overloaded, allowing adequate breaks during the working day, having provision for various types of leave such as career leave and time-out sabbatical types of leave, providing child and elder (parent) care facilities and involving spouses and children in certain recreational, fitness and other social activities and facilities of the

hospital. Also, the health care providers must be work collaboratively to improve the nurse practice environment and to ensure work life balance for the reason that when the nurses work life improved, nurses can feel more satisfied and more committed to their profession and will reduce the rate of burnout and turnover in all health care sectors⁽⁵²⁾.

Conclusion

Findings of the current study concluded that there is a low level of work-life balance and job retention with moderate level of job attraction among ICUs nurses at Tanta University Main Hospital. Also, the work life balance was positively correlated with job attraction and retention. The data from this study may be used to highlight identifiable level of work life balance, attraction and retention within the professional subgroups. As the creation of healthy work environments is increasingly emphasized to improve quality care and decrease costs, these findings should be used by health care leadership to develop interventions that enhancing work life balance and in turn promote attraction and retention of health care providers. Further

work should address how to remediate these experiences, provide resources to ameliorate their consequences, and identify how to foster work environments in which professional and personal boundaries are well established to promote a healthy and flourishing workforce.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, key suggestions for nurse managers and hospital administrators to improve the quality of nurses working life who are working in intensive care units so that nurses retention will improves and subsequently nursing attract the new staff nurses through:

- Nursing managers need to consider the family aspect of their ICUs nurses. Childcare facilities, convenient working hours, and sufficient vacations should be made available for nurses. These advantages will help ICUs nurses to balance work with their family requirements.
- An equitable distribution of the current nursing workforce is needed to reduce workload, and to ensure adequate nursing

- services for patients, families and the community.
- Giving an opportunity to ICUs nurses to make decisions related to their work so increase their feelings of control at workplace.
 - Managers and nursing leaders should consider partnerships with relevant departments and educational organizations to offer part-time and distance-learning opportunities to enable ICUs nurses to further their education and develop their nursing knowledge and skills.
 - For the comfort of ICUs nurses, they should be provided with a furnished break area where they can rest and be able to place their private belongings securely.
 - Hospitals must be supported with the required materials and equipment for health care services.
 - Hospitals managers should work with the media to demonstrate the vital role of ICUs nurses in the care of the community, in the provision of health care services and in the advancement of the health of the population.
- The salary of ICUs nurses should be increased commensurate with the tasks performed.
 - More social, managerial, professional and organizational support should be directed to young and novice nurses as well as older nurses to increase satisfaction.
 - **Further research studies** needed to confirm the current study results in different health care sectors such as private, governmental and health insurance hospitals.

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