

Exploring the Balance Between Mental Health and Professional Fulfillment in BPO Nursing: Challenges and Strategies

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the balance between mental health and professional fulfillment among nurses working in healthcare Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) settings in the Philippines. Specifically, it examined levels of mental health, burnout, adaptive coping, work-life balance, and work engagement, as well as factors influencing professional fulfillment. A mixed-methods research design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 50 licensed Filipino nurses using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21), Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), Work-Life Balance Scale, and Brief COPE Inventory. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to quantitative data, while qualitative findings provided contextual insights into participants' experiences. Findings revealed that although participants experienced varying levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout, they generally demonstrated moderate to high levels of work engagement, adaptive coping, and work-life balance. Work-life balance emerged as the strongest predictor of professional fulfillment. Qualitative findings emphasized the importance of meaningful work, career development opportunities, supportive work environments, and effective adaptation to the demands of BPO nursing. The study highlights the need for workplace interventions that promote employee well-being, mental health, and work-life balance. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on nontraditional nursing roles and provide evidence to support policies and programs that enhance professional fulfillment among BPO nurses.

Keywords: BPO nursing, Mental health, professional fulfillment, Burnout, Work-life balance, Adaptive coping, Work engagement.

INTRODUCTION

The expanding role of nurses in telehealth, case management, health informatics, and healthcare outsourcing has created new career opportunities beyond traditional bedside practice (American Nurses Association [ANA], 2021; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021). In the Philippines, workforce challenges such as limited clinical employment opportunities and inadequate compensation have led many nurses to pursue careers in the healthcare Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector (Alibudbud, 2023; Corpuz, 2023). While BPO nursing offers improved compensation and career stability, it also presents challenges related to mental health, work demands, and professional identity (Limpin & Artiaga, 2023; World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Despite the growing number of nurses in these roles, limited research has examined their experiences. Therefore, this study

explored the mental health and professional fulfillment of Filipino nurses working in healthcare BPO settings to provide insights that may support workforce well-being and policy development.

Statement of the Problem

This study examined the factors influencing nurses' mental health and professional fulfillment in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector. It explored the occupational, personal, and organizational factors affecting nurses' well-being and the strategies they use to balance mental health and professional fulfillment.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the limited literature on mental health and professional fulfillment among nurses in healthcare BPO settings. By exploring the experiences of BPO nurses, the findings provide insights into their well-being, professional identity, and career satisfaction in nontraditional nursing roles. The results may inform the development of workplace policies, support programs, and interventions that promote occupational health, resilience, and professional fulfillment, thereby supporting the sustainability of the nursing workforce.

Scope and Delimitations

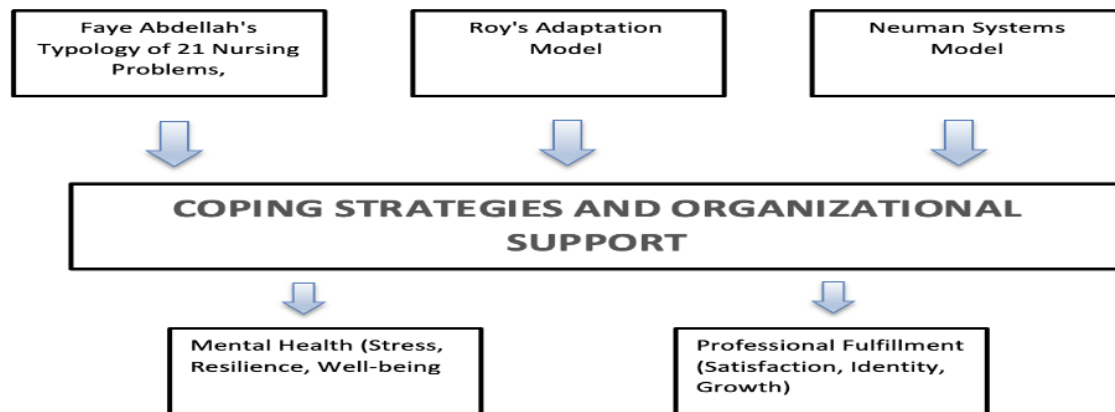
The study focused on licensed Filipino nurses employed in healthcare-related BPO roles in the Philippines who had at least 6 months of work experience. Participants included nurses engaged in call-based and non-call healthcare functions, such as telehealth, utilization review, case management, and clinical documentation. Nurses working in traditional healthcare settings, those employed outside the Philippines, individuals in non-clinical administrative roles, and those with incomplete responses were excluded to ensure that the findings reflected the experiences of nurses directly involved in BPO-based healthcare services.

Review of Related Literature

The literature indicates that Filipino nurses face challenges such as understaffing, low compensation, heavy workloads, and limited career opportunities, which lead many to pursue roles in healthcare BPOs. While these positions offer improved compensation and job stability, they also present challenges related to psychosocial stress, night-shift work, and professional identity. Existing policies offer limited support for these emerging nontraditional nursing roles, underscoring the need for further research into the mental health and professional fulfillment of BPO nurses.

Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored in Faye Abdellah's Typology of 21 Nursing Problems, Roy's Adaptation Model, and the Neuman Systems Model. These theories explain how BPO nurses maintain mental health and professional fulfillment through holistic care, adaptation to workplace demands, and resilience against environmental stressors. Together, they emphasize that well-being and professional fulfillment are shaped by the interplay among individual coping abilities, nursing practice, and organizational support systems.



METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively examine the factors influencing nurses' mental health and professional fulfillment in the BPO sector.

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design consisting of a quantitative cross-sectional survey followed by qualitative semi-structured interviews. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data through methodological triangulation provided a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing mental health and professional fulfillment among BPO nurses.

Research Steps

The study used standardized, validated instruments to assess mental health, burnout, work engagement, work-life balance, and coping strategies among BPO nurses. These included the DASS-21, Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), Work-Life Balance Scale, and Brief COPE Inventory. A semi-structured interview guide was also used to explore participants' experiences related to stress, professional identity, coping, and job fulfillment, providing complementary qualitative insights.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Data collection was conducted in accordance with ethical and research guidelines. Ethical clearance, necessary permissions, and informed consent were secured prior to data gathering. Quantitative data were collected through online surveys, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. To ensure confidentiality and data security, participant identities were anonymized using coded identifiers, and all data were managed in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and established data protection protocols.

Data Analysis Methods

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. Statistical analyses were performed using GraphPad Prism version 8.0.2. Qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Findings from both phases were integrated through triangulation to provide a comprehensive understanding of mental health and professional fulfillment among BPO nurses.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The research instruments underwent expert validation and pilot testing to ensure their relevance, reliability, and suitability for the BPO healthcare setting. Established instruments, including the DASS-21, Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), were used given their proven validity and reliability. To ensure qualitative rigor, member checking, peer debriefing, and audit-trail procedures were employed, thereby enhancing the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study findings.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, data privacy, beneficence, and justice. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. All data were anonymized, securely stored, and managed in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure participant privacy and the ethical integrity of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Burnout. BPO nurses generally reported low to moderate burnout, with personal burnout being the most prevalent. Burnout levels did not significantly differ across demographic and work-related characteristics.

Work Engagement. Most respondents demonstrated moderate to high work engagement. While demographic factors showed no significant influence, compensation and financial stability were identified as important motivators for sustaining engagement.

Work-Life Balance: Most nurses reported moderate to high work-life balance. Effective time management, adequate sleep, exercise, and social support helped maintain balance, although overtime work and personal responsibilities remained common challenges.

SUMMARY

BPO nurses play an increasingly important role in modern healthcare delivery by providing telehealth, case management, and healthcare support services through digital platforms. Despite demonstrating moderate to high levels of work engagement and effective coping strategies, many nurses experienced significant levels of burnout, stress, anxiety, and depression. The findings suggest that the demands of BPO work, including performance metrics, high workloads, and nontraditional schedules, can negatively affect mental well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The study further identified work-life balance as a key factor associated with professional fulfillment and work engagement. Nurses who maintained a healthier balance between professional and personal responsibilities reported better well-being and greater engagement at work. Overall, the findings highlight the need for organizational interventions that promote work-life balance, strengthen mental health support, and reduce occupational stressors to enhance nurses' well-being and professional fulfillment in the BPO sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future research should include larger, more diverse samples to improve the

generalizability of the findings and further examine factors influencing burnout and professional fulfillment among BPO nurses. The findings may inform workplace policies and interventions that promote employee well-being, engagement, and retention. BPO organizations are encouraged to implement strategies that support work-life balance, mental health, and adaptive coping, while educational institutions, policymakers, and healthcare organizations may use these findings to develop programs that strengthen resilience, prevent burnout, and promote overall well-being among nurses in BPO settings.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools were used solely for grammar checking and language refinement. No AI tools were used for data collection, analysis, interpretation, or reporting. The author assumes full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.

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