Exploring Work-Family Balance of Deans of Nursing: A Phenomenological Study

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## Faculty Disclosure

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<tr>
<th>Faculty Name:</th>
<th>Kimberly McErlane, PhD, MSN, RN, CNS</th>
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<td>Employer:</td>
<td>Northern Kentucky University</td>
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Goals and Objectives

• **Session Goal**: Present qualitative research methods and findings from a study of the lived experiences and shared practices of nursing deans related to work-family balance.

• **Session Objectives**:  
  1. Describe the qualitative research methodology used to explore the lived experiences and shared practices of female nursing deans related to work-family balance.  
  2. Examine results of a qualitative research study that explored the lived experiences and shared practices of female nursing deans related to work-family balance.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences and shared practices of female nursing deans as it relates to work-family balance.
RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the meaning of the lived experience of deans of nursing as it relates to work-family balance?
DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Qualitative Interpretive Hermeneutic Phenomenological Approach

Heiddeger

van Manen

Describing, Understanding and Interpreting
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

• 12 Deans
• Midwestern States
• Age: 81% 50 years or older 54% 60 years or older
• Years in Position: 1.5 to 22 years; 50% in position 5 years or more
• Marital Status: 9 married, 0 single, 1 divorced, 2 widowed
• Children: 2 no children, 10 had children
• Care Responsibilities: 2 participants were caring for loved ones
STUDY FINDINGS: 7 MAIN THEMES

Feeling Stressed

Deans Cross Borders Between Work & Family

Sources of Support for Positive Balance

Specific Experiences that Hinder Balance

Strategies to Achieve Balance

Satisfaction with the Deanship

Recommendations for Novice Deans
THEME: FEELING STRESSED

100% of the deans

Factors associated with stress:

- Years of Experience
- Workload
- Hierarchical position
- Time pressure
- Fluctuations in busyness

Dr. L stated, “It is kind of like learning how to drive. If you take your eyes off the road – when your first learning how to drive you just think you’re going to end up in a ditch. And I just feel so responsible of course to everyone, students and faculty and staff alike. And so right now I’m kind of really gripping the wheel pretty tight.”
• “Like a marshmallow peanut butter sandwich, you know, those fluff sandwiches, the kids make, and you are kind of …. you are squooshed,… the faculty are kind of pushing you from the bottom up. You know, they are kind of pushing, and that is okay, and then the administration is kind of pushing from the top.”
• Moving back and forth
• Permeability
• Conscious Choices
  “my grandkids are involved with basketball and sometimes I just say the heck with the rest of the place, I’m just going to go to the basketball game and have fun.”
• Technological Devices
## THEME: SUPPORT & HINDRANCES

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<th>Sources of Support</th>
<th>Hindrances</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Supportive and Understanding Spouse</td>
<td>• Nonfunctioning Faculty Team</td>
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<td>• Family Support</td>
<td>• Student Issues</td>
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<td>• Administrative Assistant Support</td>
<td>• Caring for Family Members</td>
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<td>• Faculty Support</td>
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<td>• Mentors</td>
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<td>• Spirituality</td>
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THEME: STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE BALANCE

• Prioritizing tasks:
  “When you set a time that you are going to work on something and you set a priority regarding what you are going to work on, you have to have the discipline to stick to it.”

• Turning Things Off:
  “you have to give yourself the ability to turn off work”
THEME: SATISFACTION

• “I am very blessed, and so for me it is not a big deal to take some work home at night, and you know, read some articles or grade papers or answer my student calls, because I love doing that.”

• “I can say that I, Dr. S. initiated and started the first BSN program at Shasta University (pseudo name). And to me satisfaction-wise, that’s a big chunk in my career as I go to look back on things and I think we’ll feel it more so. So I think from that piece that professional aspect, internal satisfaction that’s been a big plus for me.”
THEME: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NOVICE DEANS

- Take time for yourself and family
- Find a mentor
- Prioritize tasks
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- The deanship is stressful
- Workload is perceived as heavy
- Stressfulness depended on years in the position
- Deans shape and transform boundaries
- Despite the stressfulness of the position, satisfaction with the position was expressed
- More research is needed to learn more about the nursing deanship
- Usefulness: to mentor novice deans & improve work environments
REFERENCES


