

Impact of 12-Hour Shift on Nurses' Ability to Deliver Quality Patient Care in Palawan

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing nurses' significant contribution to healthcare requires understanding their diverse roles. The World Health Organization (2018) states that nurses' job descriptions encompass a variety of responsibilities, such as overseeing and treating patients and collaborating on health and health promotion initiatives with families and communities.

This study examined the impact of 12-hour shifts on nurses' ability to deliver quality patient care in selected hospitals in Palawan. Specially, it assessed the relationship between nurses' demographic profiles- age, sex, civil status, educational attainment, employment status, and years of experience- and their perceptions of the effects of extended shifts. A total of 20 nurses from Narra Municipal Hospital, Aborlan Medicare Hospital, and Southern Palawan Provincial Hospital participated in the study. Data were gathered using researcher-made questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including the chi-square test of independence.

Findings revealed that the nursing workforce was predominantly young (55% aged 22-26), female (85%), single (70%), and employed under Contract of Service (80%), with most having less than two years of clinical experience. These characteristics were associated with greater vulnerability to long shifts' physical and emotional demands. In terms of impact, respondents reported adverse effects on physical health (mean= 2.90) and mental/ emotional well-being (mean= 2.84), citing fatigue, sleep disruption, and stress. However, job satisfaction was rated positively (mean 3.03), with nurses valuing continuity of care and professional development opportunities. Patient care and safety (mean 2.85) were also perceived positively, suggesting that nurses maintained confidence in their ability to deliver quality care despite personal challenges.

The study concluded that while 12-hour shifts pose risks to nurses' well-being, they offer job satisfaction and care delivery benefits. Based on these insights, a health promotional plan was proposed to address fatigue, support mental health, and improve overall work conditions for nurses under extended duty hours.

Keywords: *12-Hour Shift, Nurses, Physical Health, Mental Health, Quality Patient Care, Job Satisfaction, Patient Care, Healthcare Workforce, Work-life Balance, Burnout, Organizational Outcomes, Palawan, Health Promotional Plan.*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the complex roles of nurses is key to appreciating their vital contribution to healthcare. According to the World Health Organization (2018) and the International Council of Nursing (2012), nurses are responsible not only for

managing and treating patients but also for promoting health, preventing illness, restoring health, and alleviating suffering within individuals, families, and communities.

Work schedules and shift patterns significantly affect nurses' well-being and the quality of patient care. Studies, such as Dall'Ora (2015), highlight that shift length influences nurse satisfaction and health outcomes. The adoption of 12-hour shifts in some European hospitals aims to improve efficiency by reducing shift handovers, minimizing interruptions, and increasing productivity. Nurses often favor 12-hour shifts because they provide consecutive days off (Bae et al., 2014).

This study addresses a gap regarding the impact of 12-hour shifts on nurses at Narra Municipal Hospital, Aborlan Medicare Hospital, and Southern Palawan Provincial Hospital, where no prior research or health promotional plan exists. While 12-hour shifts are common in some Palawan hospitals, others still follow 8-hour shifts. Extended shifts may improve continuity and personalized care due to longer patient interactions, but they also risk causing fatigue, errors, and diminished care quality. Conversely, 8-hour shifts may reduce fatigue and enhance work-life balance but can result in fragmented care and cumulative exhaustion from more workdays.

This study aims to explore these dynamics to better understand how shift length affects nurses and patient care in Palawan hospitals.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study, titled "Impact of 12-Hour Shifts on Nurses' Ability to Deliver Quality Patient Care in Palawan," employed a quantitative-correlational research design. Data were collected through systematically distributed online Likert scale questionnaires completed by 20 nurses from Narra Municipal Hospital, Aborlan Medicare Hospital, and Southern Palawan Provincial Hospital. The study analyzed quantitative data to assess how 12-hour shifts affect nurses' ability to provide quality patient care across these three hospitals.

Research Participants

The study used purposive sampling, a method where the researcher selects participants based on their judgment. The target respondents were 20 nurses working 12-hour shifts at Narra Municipal Hospital, Aborlan Medicare Hospital, and Southern Palawan Provincial Hospital.

Research Instruments

The study used a survey questionnaire with 25 Likert scale questions, providing four response options for respondents to share their opinions on the impact of 12-hour shifts on nurses. The data collected helped in developing and recommending a health promotional plan.

Data Analysis Procedure

Correlation is a valuable statistical method used to analyze the direction and strength of relationships between quantitative variables. This study employed a quantitative-correlational approach to examine connections between two or more variables, enabling efficient analysis of data patterns in multivariate research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of age

Respondents' Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
22 – 26 years old	11	55.00	1 st
27 – 31 years old	3	15.00	3 rd
32 – 36 years old	4	20.00	2 nd
37 years old and above	2	10.00	4 th
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Table 1 reveals that the majority (55%) of nurses in the three district hospitals in Palawan are aged 22 to 26, indicating a predominantly young and relatively inexperienced workforce. This demographic trend suggests that while younger nurses may offer energy and adaptability, they may also struggle with the physical and emotional demands of 12-hour shifts, increasing their risk of fatigue and burnout. The next largest age groups are 32–36 years (20%), 27–31 years (15%), and 37 years and above (10%). The limited presence of older, experienced nurses highlights the need for mentorship and support systems to help younger nurses build clinical competence and deliver safe, quality care in high-stress settings.

Table 2
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of sex

Respondents' Sex	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Male	3	15.00	2 nd
Female	17	85.00	1 st
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Table 2 shows a significant gender disparity among nurses in the three district hospitals in Palawan, with 85% being female and only 15% male. This aligns with global trends where nursing is predominantly female due to societal norms and gender roles. The findings suggest that female nurses may face unique challenges, such as balancing work with family responsibilities, which can be intensified by 12-hour shifts. This imbalance may contribute to higher levels of stress and burnout among female nurses, reinforcing the need for supportive workplace policies that consider gender-specific needs.

Table 3
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of Civil Status

Respondents' Civil Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
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Married	6	30.00	2 nd
Single	14	70.00	1 st
Widowed	0	0.00	3.5 th
Separated	0	0.00	3.5 th
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Table 3 reveals that 70% of the nurse respondents are single, while 30% are married, with no widowed or separated individuals. This reflects a predominantly young workforce and aligns with previous age-related findings. Single nurses may have greater schedule flexibility and fewer family obligations, potentially making it easier for them to manage 12-hour shifts. However, the demands of long shifts can still lead to fatigue and stress for all nurses, regardless of civil status. Married nurses, in particular, may face greater challenges balancing work and family responsibilities, increasing their risk of burnout. These findings highlight the need for supportive measures to help nurses manage work-life balance, especially in high-stress environments.

Table 4
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of Highest Educational Attainment

Respondents' Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Bachelor's Degree	18	90.00	1 st
Master's Degree	2	10.00	2 nd
Doctorate Degree	0	0.00	3 rd
TOTAL	120	100.00	

Table 4 shows that 90% of the nurse respondents hold a Bachelor's degree in nursing, while only 10% have a Master's degree, and none have a Doctorate. This indicates that the nursing workforce is primarily composed of individuals with basic professional qualifications. While adequate for standard nursing practice, the lack of advanced degrees may limit clinical expertise, leadership, and mentorship opportunities. This could impact the professional development of younger nurses and the team's ability to manage the challenges of 12-hour shifts. The findings highlight the need to promote continuing education and advanced training to enhance clinical competence, reduce burnout, and improve care quality in demanding work environments.

Table 5
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of Employment Status

Respondents' Employment Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Permanent	4	20.00	2 nd
Contract of Service	16	80.00	1 st
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Table 5 shows that 80% of the nurse respondents are employed under a Contract of Service, while only 20% hold permanent positions. This indicates a workforce largely composed of contract nurses, who may face job insecurity, limited benefits, and less support compared to permanent staff. Such conditions can heighten stress and vulnerability to burnout, especially when working 12-hour shifts. The lack of employment stability and benefits like health insurance and paid leave may negatively affect their well-being and job performance. These findings underscore the need to improve employment conditions to support nurse retention, reduce burnout, and maintain quality patient care.

Table 6
Respondents' Demographic Profiles in terms of Years of Experience

Respondents' Years of Experience	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Rank
Less than 2 years	8	40.00	1 st
2 – 5 years	7	35.00	2 nd
6 – 10 years	1	5.00	4 th
More than 10 years	4	20.00	3 rd
TOTAL	20	100.00	

Table 6 reveals that the majority of nurse respondents have limited work experience, with 40% having less than 2 years and 35% having 2–5 years. Only 5% have 6–10 years, while 20% have over 10 years of experience. This indicates a workforce dominated by relatively inexperienced nurses, which may impact their ability to handle the physical and emotional demands of 12-hour shifts. The lack of seasoned nurses may also limit mentorship opportunities, increasing stress and feelings of isolation among newer staff. These findings highlight the need for strong support systems and mentoring programs to help inexperienced nurses build resilience and competence in high-pressure environments.

Respondent's Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift Duty

Table 7
Respondents' Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift In terms of Physical Health

Statement	Mean	Descriptor
1. <i>I feel physically exhausted at the end of my 12-hour shift</i>	3.10	Agree
2. <i>Working 12-hour shifts has increased the frequency of illness (e.g., colds, flu, etc.).</i>	2.80	Agree
3. <i>Working 12 hours negatively affects the pattern and quality of my sleep.</i>	3.00	Agree
4. <i>The physical demands of working a 12-hour shift cause me significant stress.</i>	2.70	Agree

5. <i>After completing a 12-hour shift, I feel too tired to perform any activities outside work.</i>	2.90	Agree
Overall Mean Rating	2.90	Negative Impact
Legend for the Mean Rating: <i>Strongly Disagree: 1.00 – 1.74; Disagree: 1.75 – 2.49; Agree: 2.50 – 3.24; Strongly Agree: 3.25 – 4.00</i>		
Legend for the Overall Mean Rating: <i>High Positive Impact: 1.00 – 1.74; Positive Impact: 1.75 – 2.49; Negative Impact: 2.50 – 3.24; High Negative Impact: 3.25 – 4.00</i>		

Table 7 reveals that nurses perceive 12-hour shifts as having a negative impact on their physical health, with an overall mean rating of 2.90. The highest-rated concern (mean = 3.10) is physical exhaustion at the end of shifts, indicating widespread fatigue among respondents. Other notable concerns include disrupted sleep patterns (mean = 3.00), inability to engage in personal activities post-shift (mean = 2.90), and increased illness frequency (mean = 2.80). These findings suggest that long shifts contribute to physical strain, weakened immunity, and reduced work-life balance, all of which can impair both nurse well-being and patient care. The results align with prior studies highlighting the adverse health effects of extended working hours and underscore the need for organizational support and effective fatigue management strategies.

Table 8
Respondents' Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift In terms of Mental and Emotional Health

Statement	Mean	Descriptor
1. <i>I feel mentally stressed after working a 12-hour shift.</i>	3.40	Strongly Agree
2. <i>I experience emotional exhaustion by the end of a 12-hour shift.</i>	2.70	Agree
3. <i>Working 12-hour shifts negatively impacts my ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance.</i>	2.50	Agree
4. <i>I experience mood swings in 12-hour shifts.</i>	2.45	Agree
5. <i>Aside from the mental and emotional strain, I do not feel accomplished after completing my 12-hour shifts.</i>	3.15	Agree
Overall Mean Rating	2.84	Negative Impact
Legend for the Mean Rating: <i>Strongly Disagree: 1.00 – 1.74; Disagree: 1.75 – 2.49; Agree: 2.50 – 3.24; Strongly Agree: 3.25 – 4.00</i>		
Legend for the Overall Mean Rating: <i>High Positive Impact: 1.00 – 1.74; Positive Impact: 1.75 – 2.49; Negative Impact: 2.50 – 3.24; High Negative Impact: 3.25 – 4.00</i>		

Table 8 indicates that nurses perceive 12-hour shifts as having a negative impact on their mental and emotional health, with an overall mean rating of 2.84. The highest-rated concern is mental stress after shifts (mean = 3.40), reflecting the

psychological strain nurses experience. Many also reported a lack of accomplishment after long shifts (mean = 3.15) and emotional exhaustion (mean = 2.70), highlighting the toll on emotional well-being.

Other concerns include difficulty maintaining work-life balance (mean = 2.50) and mood swings (mean = 2.45), though these were rated lower. These findings suggest that extended shifts contribute to chronic stress, emotional fatigue, and reduced job satisfaction, which can affect both nurse retention and the quality of patient care. The results align with prior studies emphasizing the mental health challenges associated with long working hours in nursing.

Table 9
Respondents' Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift In terms of Job Satisfaction

Statement	Mean	Descriptor
1. <i>I am satisfied with working 12-hour shifts as part of my nursing job.</i>	3.10	Agree
2. <i>The work environment during 12-hour shifts is conducive to my job satisfaction.</i>	2.90	Agree
3. <i>My work is recognized and appreciated, even when working long 12-hour shifts.</i>	2.89	Agree
4. <i>Working a 12-hour shift provides adequate career growth and development opportunities.</i>	3.15	Agree
5. <i>I am satisfied with the quality of care provided to every patient despite the demands of 12-hour shifts.</i>	3.13	Agree
Overall Mean Rating	3.03	Positive Impact

Legend for the Mean Rating: *Strongly Disagree: 1.00 – 1.74; Disagree: 1.75 – 2.49; Agree: 2.50 – 3.24; Strongly Agree: 3.25 – 4.00*

Legend for the Overall Mean Rating: *High Negative Impact: 1.00 – 1.74; Negative Impact: 1.75 – 2.49; Positive Impact: 2.50 – 3.24; High Positive Impact: 3.25 – 4.00*

Table 9 shows that nurses generally view 12-hour shifts positively in terms of job satisfaction, with an overall mean rating of 3.03. The highest-rated statement (mean=3.15) suggests that nurses believe long shifts provide opportunities for career growth, while other high ratings reflect confidence in maintaining care quality and satisfaction with the shift structure. However, slightly lower ratings on work environment (2.90) and recognition (2.89) suggest areas needing improvement. Overall, nurses appreciate the benefits of 12-hour shifts despite challenges, aligning with past studies highlighting increased job satisfaction from shift continuity, though contrasting with recent findings linking long shifts to fatigue and stress,

Table 10
Respondents' Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift In terms of Patient Care and Safety

Statement	Mean	Descriptor
1. <i>I can provide high-quality patient care despite working 12-hour shifts.</i>	3.20	Agree
2. <i>Working 12-hour shifts positively affects patient safety due to fatigue and mental exhaustion.</i>	2.75	Agree
3. <i>The 12-hour shifts decrease the risk of medical errors, compromising patient safety.</i>	2.71	Agree
4. <i>Long working periods have improved the Quality and continuity of care.</i>	2.70	Agree
5. <i>The long duration of 12-hour shifts improves my ability to make effective decisions.</i>	2.65	Agree
Overall Mean Rating	2.80	Positive Impact

Legend for the Mean Rating: *Strongly Disagree: 1.00 – 1.74; Disagree: 1.75 – 2.49; Agree: 2.50 – 3.24; Strongly Agree: 3.25 – 4.00*

Legend for the Overall Mean Rating: *High Negative Impact: 1.00 – 1.74; Negative Impact: 1.75 – 2.49; Positive Impact: 2.50 – 3.24; High Positive Impact: 3.25 – 4.00*

Table 10 shows that nurses generally perceive 12-hour shifts as having a positive impact on patient care and safety, with the highest mean rating (3.20) reflecting confidence in their ability to provide high- quality care despite long hours. While some concerns about fatigue and risks were acknowledged (mean=2.75), nurses still saw potential safety benefits from reduced handovers and improved continuity of care (means=2.71 and 2.70). The overall mean rating of 2.80 suggests favorable view of the impact of 12-hour shifts on care quality, though this perception aligns with some studies and contrast with others that warn of increased error risks due to exhaustion.

Table 11
Respondents' Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Shift In terms of Impact on
Organizational Outcomes

Statement	Mean	Descriptor
1. <i>Nurse productivity increases as a result of working 12-hour shifts.</i>	2.70	Agree
2. <i>Working a 12-hour shift does not contribute to higher employee turnover in the organization.</i>	2.50	Agree
3. <i>The 12-hour shifts have improved the overall efficiency of patient care delivery in your hospital</i>	2.90	Agree
4. <i>The 12-hour shifts have contributed to the organization's more efficient staffing schedule.</i>	3.00	Agree
5. <i>Nurses working 12-hour shifts experience less absenteeism due to more extended rest periods between shifts.</i>	3.15	Agree
Overall Mean Rating	2.85	Positive Impact

Legend for the Mean Rating: *Strongly Disagree: 1.00 – 1.74; Disagree: 1.75 – 2.49; Agree: 2.50 – 3.24; Strongly Agree: 3.25 – 4.00*

Legend for the Overall Mean Rating: *High Negative Impact: 1.00 – 1.74; Negative Impact: 1.75 – 2.49; Positive Impact: 2.50 – 3.24; High Positive Impact: 3.25 – 4.00*

Table 11 indicate that nurses generally view 12-hour shifts positively in terms of organizational outcomes, with the highest agreement (mean=3.15) on reduced absenteeism due to longer rest periods. Nurses also believe these shifts enhance the efficiency of patient care (mean=2.70) and staff turnover (mean=2.50) were more neutral. The overall mean of 2.85 suggests that nurses' associate 12-hour shifts with improved job satisfaction, care quality, and retention, although concerns about fatigue and burnout persist. These findings support previous research emphasizing both the benefits and risks of extended shifts.

Relationship between the Respondents' Demographic Profile and their Perceived Impact of the 12-Hour Duty

Table 12
Relationship between Profiles and Their Perception of the Impact of 12-Hour Duty

Demographic Profiles	p-value	Interpretation
<i>Age</i>	0.0015**	Significant
<i>Sex</i>	0.3975	Not significant
<i>Civil status</i>	0.0258**	Significant
<i>Highest educational attainment</i>	0.0652	Not Significant
<i>Employment status</i>	0.0035**	Significant
<i>Years of Service</i>	0.0008**	Significant

Legend: **Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 12 shows significant relationships between certain demographic factors and nurses' perceptions of 12-hour shifts. Overall, the findings highlight that age, marital status, employment type, and experience influence how nurses perceive long shifts, while sex and education level do not show a significant effect.

Based on the study's results, a health promotional plan for nurses can be proposed.

The study found that while nurses' working 12-hour shifts generally report job satisfaction, continuity of care, and professional growth, they also experience significant physical and mental challenges, including fatigue, illness, and disrupted work-life balance. These issues are especially pronounced among young, inexperienced, and contract nurses'. To address these concerns, the study recommends a comprehensive health promotional plan including a peer mentorship program, monthly wellness activities, emotional support sessions, time and energy management workshops, and a support forum for contract nurses'. These interventions aim to reduce burnout, enhance well-being, and improve job satisfaction and care quality.

CONCLUSION

The study found that age, civil status, employment status, and years of service significantly influence nurses' perceptions of 12-hour shifts, with younger, single, contract-based, and less experienced nurses reporting more challenges. In contrast, sex and educational attainment showed no significant impact. These findings highlight the need for targeted support, particularly for newer and contract nurses, to help them manage the physical and emotional demands of extended shifts.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends implementing mentorship programs, fostering open communication, and incorporating stress management and time management training in nursing education to help nurses- especially younger and contract-based ones – cope with the challenges of 12 hour shifts. Nurses are encouraged to practiced self-care and seek peer support, while healthcare leaders and policymakers should enforce supportive workplace policies, including shift regulations and wellness initiatives. Further research, including comparative studies between 8- hour and 12-hour shifts, is advised to guide staffing decisions and improve nurse well-being and patient care outcomes.

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