

A Phenomenological Study on the Complexities of Balancing Motherhood and Being a Nurse Educator

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ABSTRACT

Motherhood and the nurse educator role involve dual responsibilities that connect family care and teaching demands. This study explored the lived experiences of mothers who strive to balance motherhood and their role as nurse educators. Seven registered nurses who are both clinical instructors and classroom educators and who are also mothers were selected through purposive sampling from a higher education institution in Pagadian City. In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit rich descriptions of their experiences, which were analyzed using Van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology guided by the five existential life worlds, namely, corporeality, spatiality, temporality, relationality, and materiality. Key interconnected themes emerged including navigating physical exhaustion and emotional guilt in the dual role of a nurse educator and mother; spaces of work and home as sites of exhaustion, emotional contrast and renewal; striving to balance limited time through planning, prioritization, and role negotiation; supportive relationships as a pillar for balancing professional and maternal roles; and material objects as facilitators and reflectors of balancing motherhood and clinical instruction. Despite these challenges, participants showed resilience and adaptability, finding purpose in their dual roles that support both personal fulfillment and professional growth. Academic administrators and policymakers can support nurse educator-mothers through wellness programs, flexible schedules, mentoring, family-inclusive support, and better teaching resources, while nurse educator-mothers can promote balance through self-care, time management, setting boundaries, and effective use of teaching tools.

Keywords: coping strategies, dual role, exhaustion, motherhood, nurse educators

INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is a significant life role that involves caring for and nurturing children while building strong emotional connections that shape daily life and family relationships. Through this role, mothers support their children's growth and well-being, which also contributes to their own identity and personal development (Almeida et al., 2025). Family relationships and support systems play an important role in sustaining caregiving responsibilities and strengthening family resilience (Pan et al., 2025). As children grow and responsibilities change, mothers continuously adapt to new challenges and expectations. These experiences, together with personal and social pressures, influence how they perceive themselves and fulfill their roles (Gonzales & Balabagno, 2025).

In the Philippines, working mothers in educator roles often struggle to balance their professional and family responsibilities. Pasay-an et al. (2023) found that nurse educators in Baguio and Benguet experience difficulties managing teaching, research, administrative duties, and household responsibilities, which affect their quality of life. Delavin and Pogoy (2023) described the emotional exhaustion and self-sacrifice of married female teachers during the pandemic through metaphors like "drained cellphones" and "melting candles." Similarly, Ancho et al. (2023) reported that teacher-parents face daily parenting hassles that increase stress and leave little time for self-care. Together, these studies show how overlapping responsibilities at home and work can lead to exhaustion and constant time pressure among female educators.

These challenges become even more demanding in nursing education. The Commission on Higher Education, through CMO No. 15, s. 2017, requires nursing faculty to manage both classroom instruction and

Related Learning Experience (RLE) supervision. Section 11.6(b) states that classroom lecturers must also supervise students during RLE or work closely with clinical staff. Because of this, clinical instructors must juggle teaching responsibilities while ensuring patient safety and guiding students in hospital settings. Dayon and Dagoc (2025) found that instructors connect their teaching competence with student performance but struggle with heavy workloads and limited institutional support. Falguera et al. (2025) also linked challenging clinical environments to lower well-being, reduced job satisfaction, and added family pressures. Likewise, Wu and Ho (2023) identified workload and stress as major contributors to burnout and lower teaching self-efficacy among clinical nursing teachers.

Being both a mother and a nurse educator means balancing caregiving at home with teaching, mentoring, and clinical responsibilities at work. Managing these roles often requires constant adjustments, time management, and emotional control (Labrague et al., 2021). The demands of teaching, supervising students, and preparing academic requirements beyond working hours can increase stress and workload (Aldhafeeri et al., 2025). At the same time, their experiences as mothers may help them become more empathetic and compassionate when guiding nursing students in classroom and clinical settings.

Although studies have explored nurse educators' workload and the experiences of working mothers in academia, little research focuses specifically on mothers who serve as clinical instructors. Most studies discuss nurse educators in general or teacher-parents outside clinical settings, without fully addressing the unique demands of hospital-based teaching and clinical supervision (Pasay-an et al., 2023). As a result, the experiences of clinical instructor-mothers remain underexplored.

This study explored the lived experiences of mothers balancing motherhood and their roles as nurse educators. Guided by Van Manen's existential framework, it examined: (1) the physical and emotional demands of being both clinical instructors and caregivers; (2) how spaces such as the hospital, school, and home shape their experiences; (3) how they manage time and dual responsibilities; (4) how relationships with patients, colleagues, supervisors, children, and family influence their experiences; and (5) how material aspects, such as nursing tools and household objects, reflect and shape their daily lives.

The results of this research may help educational institutions improve workload distribution, flexible scheduling, and support programs that promote work-life balance among nursing faculty. Clinical instructor-mothers may benefit from strategies that help lessen role conflict, stress, and work-family pressure, improving their well-being and job satisfaction. Nursing students may also benefit from better-supported instructors who can provide more effective clinical guidance and mentorship. In addition, the findings may help policymakers and nursing leaders develop more family-oriented and gender-sensitive policies for the nursing education workforce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed Van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of mothers balancing the complexities of motherhood and being nurse educators. Rooted in phenomenology of practice, van Manen's approach emphasized the interpretation of lived experience to uncover essential meanings embedded in everyday life (van Manen, 1990). Guided by the lifeworld existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, lived relationships, and lived materiality, the study situated experiences within their contextual and embodied realities. Through iterative reflection and interpretation of participants' narratives, the researcher sought to reveal the deeper meanings of balancing motherhood and professional roles as nurse educators.

Setting

This study was conducted at a higher education institution in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. The university was known for its strong academic performance and consistent success in the Philippine Nurse Licensure Examination (PNLE), reflecting its commitment to producing competent nursing graduates. It employed licensed nurses as faculty members and

clinical instructors, many of whom were mothers, allowing them to handle academic teaching and hospital-based clinical supervision simultaneously. This setting provided a context where nurse-mothers balanced teaching, clinical duties, and family responsibilities, which made it suitable for exploring their experiences and challenges in managing both professional and maternal roles.

Participants

This study consisted of seven participants who were selected using purposive sampling based on specific inclusion criteria. Eligible participants were registered nurses who: (1) were currently serving as clinical instructors involved in both teaching and hospital-based supervision; (2) were mothers with at least one child aged between 1 to 12 years old; (3) had a minimum of one year of continuous experience balancing teaching responsibilities, clinical duties, and parenting; and (4) were willing to participate and provided informed consent. These criteria ensured the inclusion of individuals best positioned to articulate the complexities of balancing motherhood and the role of a nurse educator.

Instruments

The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview guide as the primary data collection instrument, guided by an interview protocol with open-ended questions. The protocol was carefully developed to facilitate the systemic collection of rich, in-depth data and to elicit comprehensive descriptions of the participants' lived experiences in balancing motherhood and their roles as nurse educators. The interview guide was grounded in van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenology, specifically anchored on the five lifeworld existentials: lived body, lived time, lived space, lived other, and lived materiality. Questions were thoughtfully constructed to encourage participants to reflect deeply on their experiences within these dimensions, particularly in relation to their dual roles as mothers and nurse educators.

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection procedure commenced upon obtaining approval from the Dean of the Graduate School. Formal requests were then submitted to the School Administrator and the Dean of the College of Nursing of the BSN program to secure permission to conduct the study. After approval, the researcher coordinated with the college administrator to identify nurse-mothers who met the inclusion criteria.

Eligible participants were then contacted and informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and significance. They were assured that participation was voluntary, their information would remain confidential, and they could withdraw at any time without consequences. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection began.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient for the participants to make them feel comfortable and open in sharing their experiences. With consent, all interviews were audio-recorded, and field notes were taken to capture non-verbal cues and context. To ensure accuracy of the participants' accounts, member checking was done by summarizing key points during or after the interview and allowing participants to confirm or clarify their responses. Afterward, recordings were transcribed, anonymized, and analyzed using van Manen's phenomenological approach to identify key themes. All data were securely stored in password-protected files and locked storage accessible only to the researcher.

As nurses, educators, and mothers, the researchers recognized that their own experiences could influence how they interpreted participants' stories. To address this, they remained mindful of their assumptions and approached each interview with openness, empathy, and respect to ensure that participants' experiences were accurately and fairly represented.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher sought ethical approval from the Misamis University Research Ethics Committee (MUREC) to ensure that the research complied with established ethical

standards for studies involving human participants. Formal approval was also obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School, the School Administrator, and the Dean of Nursing of the higher education institution in Pagadian City where the study was conducted, confirming that the study adhered to institutional policies and safeguarded the well-being of the participants. All potential participants were provided with a thorough explanation of the study's purpose, objectives, data collection procedures, and their rights as participants, including their right to voluntarily participate, decline participation, or withdraw at any time without penalty or effect on their employment or institutional standing. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and interviews were conducted beyond office hours to avoid disruption of their regular duties.

Confidentiality and privacy were ensured through the use of pseudonyms or participant codes in all transcripts, reports, and publications, and any identifiable information was modified to maintain anonymity. All audio recordings, field notes, and transcriptions were stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the researcher and were retained and destroyed in accordance with ethical data retention policies and the Data Privacy Act. The researcher also upheld the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence by minimizing potential harm, allowing participants to decline any question that caused discomfort, and offering referrals for counseling if necessary. Participants were also provided with a small token of appreciation in recognition of their participation, as a gesture of gratitude for their time, effort, and willingness to share their experiences.

Data Analysis

This study used van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological framework to explore lived experiences through reflection and interpretation.

The analysis started with immersion in the data, where interview transcripts were read over and over to get a full sense of what the participants were sharing. At this stage, personal assumptions were set aside as much as possible so the meanings in the data could come through more clearly.

After this, significant statements were pulled out by identifying key phrases and sentences that best captured important parts of the participants' experiences. These were then organized into themes that reflected the main experience of balancing caregiving responsibilities and nurse educator roles, guided by van Manen's lifeworld existentials.

The analysis also considered five lifeworld dimensions. Lived body (corporeality) focused on physical fatigue, stress, and the demands of caregiving, teaching, and clinical supervision. Lived space (spatiality) looked at how home, school, and hospital settings shaped feelings and day-to-day experiences. Lived time (temporality) explored how participants experienced time pressure, urgency, and frequent switching between roles. Lived human relation (relationality) examined relationships with family, colleagues, students, supervisors, and patients, and how these influenced support and expectations. Lived things (materiality) considered how everyday objects like phones, planners, teaching materials, and household items either supported or sometimes added to daily pressures.

To strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings, interpretations and emerging themes were regularly reviewed and discussed with experienced qualitative research mentors. This helped check clarity, consistency, and depth in how the meanings were developed. The findings were then further shaped through reflective interpretation, where themes were refined and organized into a clear and connected narrative that reflected participants' lived realities.

Throughout the process, there was a constant back-and-forth between individual transcripts and the whole dataset. This helped refine interpretations and made sure the core meaning of participants' experiences was not lost. Overall, the aim of the analysis was not only to describe their experiences but also to understand the deeper realities of balancing caregiving and nurse educator roles.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the lived experiences of nurse educator mothers balancing motherhood and their professional roles as educators and clinical instructors. The study involved seven participants who were nurse educators and mothers actively engaged in teaching, clinical supervision, and family responsibilities. The participants varied in age, number of children, years of teaching experience, and family structure, allowing for diverse perspectives on the experience of balancing motherhood and professional responsibilities.

Participant 1 (P1), 38-year-old mother with a 1-year-6-month-old daughter, has been working as a clinical instructor for 2 years. Her daughter currently lives with the father and was cared for by a nanny and her mother-in-law. She's only able to visit her daughter on weekends after class and during holidays and communicates through chats and calls. Her daughter and husband live 2 hours away from her. She stays at her parents' house while in the city, which is 15 minutes away from the affiliated hospital. She is assigned to the hospital ward and handles two major subjects aside from RLE supervision.

Participant 2 (P2), a 32-year-old mother with one child aged 7 years. She has been working as a clinical instructor for two years. Her child, who has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is cared for by the stepfather while she is at work. She lives 15 minutes away from the school and 25 minutes from the affiliated hospital. She is assigned in the special area and handles two major subjects, aside from RLE supervision.

Participant 3 (P3), a 41-year-old mother with three children aged 17, 16, and 5 years old. She has been working as a clinical instructor for one year and works alongside her husband in the same role. Her youngest child, aged 5, has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). She is assigned in the hospital ward and teaches two major subjects with RLE supervision. She lives 15-20 minutes away from the school and from the affiliating hospital.

Participant 4 (P4), a 35-year-old single mother with two children aged 14 and 12 years old. She has been working as a clinical instructor for three years while also serving as a special area nurse in one of the hospitals in the region. She handles research subjects and serves as the outside of the city affiliation coordinator.

Participant 5 (P5), a 33-year-old mother with two children aged 10 and 3 years. She has been working as a clinical instructor for five years and lives 10 minutes away from the school and 20 minutes from the affiliated hospital. She teaches two major subjects and also serves as the research coordinator and handles students in the special area.

Participant 6 (P6), a 31-year-old mother with one child aged 6 years old. She has been working as a clinical instructor for six years and lives two hours away from the city. She is assigned to the ward, teaches two major subjects, and also serves as the psychiatric affiliation coordinator,

Participant 7 (P7), a 38-year-old mother with three children aged 11, 8, and 5 years. She has been working as a clinical instructor for three years. She is assigned to the special area and teaches two major subjects. She lives near the affiliated hospital but is approximately 15–20 minutes away from the school.

Enduring Physical Exhaustion and Emotional Guilt in the Dual Role of a Nurse Educator and Mother

This theme highlighted how participants experienced persistent physical exhaustion and emotional guilt as they balanced their professional and maternal responsibilities. Their dual roles as nurse educators and mothers required continuous engagement in teaching, clinical supervision, childcare, and household duties. The overlap of these responsibilities limited rest and led to sustained physical and emotional strain. Many described feeling overwhelmed by the constant transition between work and home demands. This exhaustion was understood as an embodied experience shaped by ongoing role demands. The body became the site where fatigue was continuously felt through hours of work and caregiving. This persistent strain reflected how their physical being was inseparable from their lived responsibilities.

Van Manen's lived body highlights how the body is not separate from experience but is the very means through which life is lived. The participants' fatigue shows how their bodies carried the weight of continuous demands, making exhaustion a constant, felt presence. In this way, their physical strain reflects how deeply their responsibilities are embodied in everyday life. This was further supported by the following subthemes: *embodied fatigue and survival mode, maternal guilt and emotional longing and resilience, faith, and coping mechanisms*.

Embodied Fatigue and Survival Mode

Participants described their daily routine as physically exhausting due to the combined demands of their professional and maternal roles. Many participants expressed that by the end of the day, they were already physically drained, yet they still had responsibilities waiting for them at home. Some participants described their situation as being in "survival mode," where they focused on completing necessary tasks rather than achieving rest or relaxation. The body therefore became the place where fatigue, stress, and responsibility were carried daily. Physical exhaustion was not only caused by teaching and clinical supervision but also by travel between school, hospital, and home, as well as household responsibilities and helping children with schoolwork. The participants' experiences showed that the body carries the burden of multiple roles, making physical fatigue a constant part of their lived experience. This subtheme highlights that balancing motherhood and being a nurse educator is physically demanding, and participants often sacrifice rest in order to fulfill both roles. These were the statements by the participants:

"There is real physical exhaustion... Emotionally, there is guilt at times, especially when there are important milestones that I miss because of work." – P7

"It's very exhausting, ma'am. When I get home, I really just want to sleep, but I feel guilty because my child is waiting for me." – P1

The statement of Participant 7 reflected how exhaustion is not only mentally recognized but physically felt and carried within the body. The participant's body did not only feel tired from work demands but also carried the emotional weight of missing important moments, making the fatigue heavier and more persistent. According to Qian & Pengfei (2025), constant juggling of academic and motherhood roles led to physical and mental exhaustion for many academic mothers. The demands of work not only depleted the energy but also led to feelings of guilt when professional responsibilities took precedence over important family moments. Sharma, et al. (2022) found that many working mothers frequently experience low energy, inadequate sleep and various health concerns. In this sense, "exhaustion is carried in the body" means that the strain of balancing roles is deeply embodied, affecting both the physical state and emotional experience simultaneously. Paoletti et al. (2022) also discussed in their study that working mothers experience more strain while parenting and have lower energy levels when both parenting and work are highly distressing.

Participant 1 reflected the interplay between physical exhaustion and emotional guilt. Although her body longs for rest, the presence of her child elicited a strong sense of responsibility that compelled her to set aside her fatigue. Thus, guilt becomes embodied, as emotional strain intensifies and is felt alongside the physical burden of her responsibilities. The study of Baykal (2023) stated that being good both at work and mothering was challenging, and the feeling of being inadequate might cause maternal guilt. Collins (2021) defined maternal guilt as a type of internalized oppression, one regulatory mechanism by which intensive mothering discourses reproduce mothers' feelings of inadequacy, and they felt that working full-time meant they didn't spend enough time with their kids. Lastly, Constantinou et al. (2021) connect physical depletion with maternal guilt, highlighting mothers' feelings of being "depleted" and "divided" due to multiple demands.

Maternal Guilt and Emotional Longing

This subtheme reflected how working mothers felt guilty when exhaustion from work limited the time and energy they could give to their children. At the same time, they experienced a strong longing to reconnect

and be present, showing how deeply they valued their role as mothers despite these challenges. These were the statements of the participants:

“Sometimes, all I want is to sleep—not just to rest, but to be held by my children.” - P4

“There are times when they have activities at school and I also have activities at school, and it makes me feel very guilty that I prioritize others over my own child.” – P5

Participant 4 reflected how working mothers experienced maternal guilt alongside a deep emotional longing shaped by physical exhaustion and competing responsibilities. Even rest became intertwined with affection and longing for closeness with their children, while work demands often led to feelings of guilt. Wanting to sleep “to be held” by her children showed that even in fatigue, the mother still longed for closeness, as if physical tiredness carried an emotional emptiness that only her child could fill. This aligns with findings that working mothers often experience a strong desire for physical closeness with their children (Montano et al., 2023), while exhaustion, as an embodied experience, heightens emotional vulnerability and the need for connection (Gebhardt et al., 2024) and contributes to feelings of depletion accompanied by longing and guilt (Constantinou et al., 2021). Taken together, these suggest that maternal exhaustion is not merely a state of physical fatigue but a deeply lived experience where the body itself expresses both weariness and an enduring need for emotional connection. Another statement from a participant reads:

Participant 5’s statement reflected how working mothers experienced guilt as a persistent and lingering awareness of missed presence, especially in situations where work demands coincided with their child’s important activities. This emotional conflict reflected the internal struggle between professional responsibility and maternal responsibility. This is supported by research showing that work–family conflict significantly contributes to sustained feelings of guilt, particularly when professional responsibilities interfere with family involvement and meaningful interactions with children (Apostol et al., 2025). Similarly, studies indicate that maternal guilt is strongly linked to reduced participation in children’s lives due to work demands, reinforcing feelings of inadequacy and emotional strain (Foucreault et al., 2023). Additionally, recent findings highlight that greater work demands and longer hours intensify maternal guilt, as mothers perceive themselves as falling short in their caregiving role (Bayyar et al., 2026). Overall, this showed that maternal guilt came from the constant struggle between meeting work responsibilities and wanting to be there for their child’s important moments.

Resilience, Faith, and Coping Mechanisms

Despite the physical exhaustion and emotional guilt, participants demonstrated resilience and developed coping mechanisms to manage their dual roles. Participants described using strategies such as time management, prioritization, mental conditioning, and planning in order to manage their responsibilities. The participants stated:

“That is why, as a working mother, we truly need strong mental resilience.” – P1

“I usually calm myself and pray that everything will turn out well.” –P2

“I’ve learned to prioritize tasks and manage my time effectively.” –P3

Participant 1 reflected on how working mothers viewed resilience not just as a way of thinking but as something they actively lived out in their daily ordeals. It showed that strength was not constant, but something they had to repeatedly draw upon to manage their roles. This aligns with research showing that working mothers rely on psychological resilience to cope with work–family conflict and emotional strain, helping them sustain both roles despite ongoing demands (Orhan et al., 2025). In addition, recent findings highlighted that resilience is developed through lived experiences and daily coping practices, rather than being a fixed trait, especially among working mothers balancing multiple roles (Apostol et al., 2025). This showed that resilience was lived through the body, as mothers physically and emotionally endured daily demands while continuing to fulfill both work and caregiving roles.

Participant 2 reflected how working mothers used both emotional and practical strategies to cope with the demands of their dual roles. The participant expressed that calming one self and praying served as a source of inner strength and reassurance. On the other hand, Participant 3 highlighted how prioritizing tasks and managing time effectively helped her stay organized and in control despite competing responsibilities. The statements illustrated that resilience was supported not only by faith and reflection but also by concrete actions that helped mothers navigate daily challenges. This was supported by studies (DeRossett et al., 2021) showing that spiritual coping, such as prayer, helps reduce stress and promotes emotional stability among working mothers and (Peykar et al., 2023) that time management and task prioritization are key strategies that improve role balance and reduce work–family conflict. Further studies also found that religious and spiritual practices provide meaning and emotional comfort, helping mothers cope with stress and role strain (Reyes- Espiritu, 2022), while effective time management is associated with lower stress and better psychological well-being among working parents (Aeon et al., 2021). This showed that coping was both emotional and practical, as mothers leaned on their faith and everyday strategies to get through challenges and continue with their roles.

Role Strain theory explained the difficulty experienced by the participants when the demands of motherhood and professional responsibilities competed for time, energy, and attention. The physical exhaustion and emotional guilt experienced by nurse educators who were also mothers reflected the difficulty of balancing professional responsibilities with caregiving duties. This theory helped explain how competing expectations from work and family roles created ongoing tension and strain in their daily lives.

Spaces of Work and Home as Sites of Exhaustion, Emotional Contrast and Renewal

The lived space of work and home shaped how mothers experience their daily roles, with each environment carrying its own demands and emotional weight. Work spaces often became sites of physical and mental exhaustion, while home spaces brought both emotional strain and moments of comfort and renewal. Moving between these spaces highlighted the contrast in their experiences, as mothers navigated fatigue while still finding meaning and restoration in the presence of their families. For the participants, the spaces they occupied, such as home, school, and hospital, were not just physical locations but emotional environments that shaped their experiences and roles.

Van Manen’s lived space shows that places are not just physical, but felt in different ways. For the participants, home, school, and hospital each carried their own emotional meaning, some draining, others comforting. Moving between these spaces shaped how they experienced their roles as both mothers and professionals. This theme has three subthemes: *work spaces as sources of pressure, fatigue, and emotional demand; home as a space of safety, peace, and emotional renewal and constant spatial transition, requiring adaptability and role shifting.*

Work Spaces as Sources of Pressure, Fatigue, and Emotional Demand

Participants described school and hospital environments as spaces associated with responsibility, pressure, and emotional demand. Moving between different work environments in a single day contributed to physical fatigue and emotional stress. Travel between spaces also consumed time and energy, contributing to exhaustion. Workspaces required them to be professional, responsible, and emotionally composed, which added to their role strain. These were the participants’ statements:

“Moving between different places in a day, like home, school, and the hospital, can be tiring and affects my energy and mood.” –P2

“By the time I get home, I’m usually exhausted, but then I have to switch into ‘Mom’ mode, which requires a whole different kind of energy.” – P3

“Traveling between distant places with different tasks already consumes much of my time and energy.” – P7

Participant 2 expressed that moving from one place to another within a day can be physically tiring and emotionally draining. It showed that constantly shifting between home, school, and the hospital affects both energy levels and mood. Recent studies show that daily travel or commuting is strongly linked to lower mood and higher fatigue because it reduces rest time and adds physical and mental strain (Zhang et al., 2023). It also affects emotional well-being, as longer or repeated travel is associated with increased stress and negative feelings throughout the day (Lee et al., 2023). In addition, Tao et al. (2023) highlighted in their research that frequent commuting can lower overall subjective well-being since the demands of travel interfere with recovery time and daily comfort.

Participant 3's statements expressed a sense of deep physical exhaustion after a long day but also highlighted the need to shift roles despite that fatigue. Even when energy was already depleted, becoming a mother at home required a different kind of strength, which was more emotional, attentive, and nurturing. The phrase "mom mode" expressed how the participant shifted into a caregiving role that demanded her full attention, patience, and emotional presence. Research showed that working mothers commonly experienced role overload, where fatigue from paid work carries over into family responsibilities, making parenting tasks feel more demanding (Fan & Moen, 2024). This constant transition between work and family roles was linked to emotional exhaustion, especially when individuals were expected to immediately engage in caregiving despite depleted energy (Yan et al., 2024). Lastly, in the study of Lin & Szczygiel (2023) stated that parenting itself involves significant emotional labor, where mothers must regulate their own emotions while responding to their children's needs, even when they are already tired.

Participant 7 recounted how the demands of constant movement added to overall exhaustion, making daily responsibilities feel heavier and more draining. The statement showed how simply moving from one place to another already took a lot of the participant's time and energy. Studies showed that long and frequent commuting was strongly associated with higher physical fatigue and reduced daily energy because it extended working hours and limited rest time (Chen et al., 2024). In addition, research highlights that extended commuting disrupts work-life balance and lowers recovery time, making individuals feel more exhausted throughout the day (Han et al., 2023). These supported the idea that traveling between distant places with different tasks can significantly consume both time and energy.

Home as a Space of Safety, Peace, and Emotional Renewal

The home was described as a space of safety, peace, and emotional renewal. Participants felt emotionally secure when they were at home with their children. Home represented comfort, emotional connection, and personal identity as a mother rather than a clinical instructor. However, some participants also described quiet moments at home as emotionally heavy, suggesting that home was also a space where emotional reflection and guilt were experienced. This was supported by the following statements:

"When I return home, the quiet moments can feel emotionally heavy." –P1

"When I am at home with my children, I feel safe and at peace." – P4

"At work I stay fully focused on my responsibilities, while at home I disconnect from work because being with my daughter makes home my safe place." – P6

Participant 1 statement showed that coming home and experiencing silence can bring emotional weight instead of comfort. The quiet moments may allow thoughts, stress, and feelings from the day to surface, making the person feel more sensitive or overwhelmed. It reflected how rest does not always feel light or relaxing, because sometimes silence also makes emotions more noticeable. Recent studies showed that when people finally stop their daily activities, their minds may start to process stress, worries, and unresolved thoughts, which can lead to emotional discomfort (Zhu et al., 2025). This was often linked to rumination, where quiet moments give space for repeated thinking about stressful experiences, which can increase negative emotions instead of easing them (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2015). Research also explained that inner silence does not always feel peaceful for everyone, especially when the mind is still carrying emotional pressure from the day,

making quiet moments feel more intense and reflective (Rodriguez- Stanley et al., 2025). Therefore, silence at home sometimes brought emotional weight because it allowed feelings and thoughts to surface more strongly.

Participant 4, on the other hand, expressed that being at home with her children created a strong sense of comfort and security. It showed that the presence of her children brought emotional peace, which made the home feel like a safe space despite daily stress or exhaustion. Recent literature explained that close family relationships, especially with children, are strongly linked to emotional well-being because they provide support, warmth, and a sense of belonging (Prime et al., 2020). It is also found that positive parent–child interactions can reduce stress and help parents feel more emotionally balanced after work or daily demands (Spinelli et al., 2020). These studies supported the idea that being with children at home created emotional grounding, peace, and a sense of security.

Participant 6 reflected that being with her daughter makes home feel like a safe and comforting space, where she can rest mentally and emotionally. This statement showed how the participant separated her roles between work and home. At work, she gave full attention and focus to her responsibilities, while at home she intentionally stepped away from work-related thoughts. The study of Allen et al. (2014) explained that this kind of role separation or boundary setting helps individuals manage work and family demands more effectively by reducing stress spillover between roles. It is also found that positive engagement with family members at home can promote emotional recovery after work, helping individuals regain mental and emotional energy (Sonnetag et al., 2022). In addition, Bakker & de Vries's (2021) research highlighted that creating a safe and supportive home environment supports psychological detachment from work, which is important for overall well-being.

Constant Spatial Transition Requiring Adaptability and Role Shifting

Participants described constantly moving between home, school, and hospital, which required them to shift roles frequently from teacher to clinical instructor to mother. This constant spatial transition required adaptability, time management, emotional adjustment, and role switching. This made the mother have a dual role that has an impact on the time management process. Spatial movement therefore reflected role transition and identity shifting, which was a significant part of their lived experience. These were the statements of the participants:

“Constantly transitioning between school and home can be mentally and emotionally challenging, but it has helped me develop adaptability and time management to fulfill both roles.” – P5

“Moving between different places... affects my energy and mood.” – P2

“I have to switch into ‘Mom’ mode...” – P3

The statement of Participant 5 and Participant 2 showed that constantly moving between school and home felt stressful and emotionally draining because of the need to handle different responsibilities. At the same time, it highlighted growth, as these repeated experiences helped them become more flexible and better at managing time. It reflected how challenges in daily life can also lead to personal development and stronger coping skills. It also reflected how these daily movements affected their mood and made them feel more stressed or less energized throughout the day. This experience reflected what studies described as work–family conflict, where the pressure from one role makes it harder to fully engage in another, often resulting in stress, reduced well-being, and difficulty maintaining balance (Tsang et al., 2023). Research showed that individuals who navigate multiple roles tend to develop career adaptability, the ability to adjust to changing demands, which helps them stay engaged and function effectively even in complex situations (Chen et al., 2024). Over time, managing both domains encouraged individuals to become more intentional with their time and priorities. While the dual demands may initially feel overwhelming, they can foster practical coping strategies and resilience, enabling individuals to meet responsibilities in both settings more efficiently and with greater control (Çivilidağ & Durmaz, 2026). Despite these challenges, such repeated transitions can also strengthen adaptability and time management.

Participant 3 highlighted the need to quickly shift into a caregiving role after work. It reflected the effort required to become emotionally present and responsive as a mother, even when feeling tired. This constant switching of roles was mentally draining, especially when they were already tired, because it required immediate emotional presence and attention (Sonnentag et al., 2022). Even with work stress, they learned to set it aside and became present for their children, showing how they prioritized family despite competing demands (Matias et al., 2023). This ability reflected strong emotional regulation and role commitment.

The Theory of Caring by Swanson emphasized the importance of maintaining meaningful connections and nurturing relationships within different life settings in explaining this theme. The experiences of exhaustion, emotional contrast, and renewal between work and home reflected how caring was continuously expressed and sustained across both environments. This theory helped explain how moments of emotional strain and recovery were shaped by acts of caring toward patients, students, and family members in their respective spaces.

Striving to Balance Limited Time through Planning, Prioritization, and Role Negotiation

Among participants, time was consistently described as insufficient, stressful, and requiring careful management. This theme showed how the participants tried to manage limited time by carefully planning their tasks and deciding what matters most. It also showed how they adjusted their roles and responsibilities to balance both work and family demands effectively.

Van Manen's lived time sees time as something felt, not just measured. For the participants, time felt tight and pressured, influencing how they balanced and managed both work and family roles. The subthemes that supported this theme are *time as insufficient and stressful* and *role prioritization and flexible strategies*.

Time as Insufficient and Stressful

All participants expressed that time was never enough to fulfill all their responsibilities as mothers and clinical instructors. They experienced constant scheduling conflicts between school responsibilities, clinical duties, household chores, and childcare. Participants described themselves as always running after deadlines and struggling to allocate time for both family and work. This reflected that time for nurse-mothers was experienced as pressure, urgency, and insufficiency. The participants supported this finding by the following statements:

"I often feel that time is never enough for either role, so I rely on careful planning, routines, and even small daily moments like video calls to stay connected with my daughter." – P1

"Sometimes time is not enough, especially when my child's school activities and my teaching responsibilities happen at the same time, so I plan my day carefully from early morning preparation to work and family needs." - P2

"The feeling that time is never enough is constant, as balancing teaching, childcare, household duties, and family obligations create ongoing scheduling conflicts." – P3

"I am always running after deadlines while trying to finish household chores and spend time with my children, but I cannot handle all these roles at once—time is never enough." - P4

"Managing my time as both a clinical instructor and a mother is very challenging, and poor time management often leaves me feeling overwhelmed while trying to meet the needs of both my students and my children." - P5

Participant 1 felt that time was always limited as she tried to meet both her responsibilities at work and at home. She had relied on planning, routines, and small intentional actions to manage her daily roles and maintain some sense of balance, which reflected how working mothers intentionally organize their time to handle competing demands. It also showed that she made efforts to stay emotionally present in her child's life through simple but meaningful connections despite physical distance. Participant 2 experienced conflicts when

important responsibilities at work and her child's activities occurred at the same time, which made her feel that time was insufficient. She had responded by carefully organizing her day from early morning, showing how intentional planning helped her manage overlapping roles and responsibilities. It showed how the participant had to balance being a parent and a teacher, where both roles demanded attention and could not be easily separated, as supported by findings of Kelling et al., (2024) on academic parents managing competing responsibilities. Despite the pressure, it also revealed a sense of responsibility and discipline, as the participant intentionally organized her day to meet both family and work needs.

Participant 3 reflected the persistent feeling of having insufficient time, as balancing teaching, childcare, household responsibilities, and family obligations created ongoing scheduling conflicts. It showed how multiple roles continuously overlapped, making it difficult to maintain a stable routine and requiring constant adjustment of priorities throughout the day. It also highlighted how individuals in caregiving and professional roles frequently experience difficulty in achieving work–family balance because of simultaneous responsibilities (Scurry & Clarke, 2022). Furthermore, research on educators with caregiving duties emphasized that these overlapping roles often lead to continuous scheduling challenges and the need for adaptive time management strategies (Nwoko et al., 2024).

Participant 4 stated the lived experience of constant time pressure, where professional duties and family responsibilities overlap and create a sense of exhaustion and limitation. It showed the struggle to meet deadlines while also attending to household chores and caring for children, highlighting the difficulty of fulfilling multiple roles simultaneously. This aligned with findings that working mothers often experience significant work–family conflict due to competing demands that reduce available time and increase role strain (Voydanoff, 2005). It also supported research indicating that individuals in caregiving and professional roles frequently report feeling that time is insufficient because of continuous task switching between work and home responsibilities (Allen et al., 2014). Furthermore, studies on maternal workforce participation emphasized that the inability to fully separate work and family roles often leads to persistent feelings of time scarcity and emotional fatigue (Steiner et al., 2023).

Lastly, Participant 5 reflected the experience of working mothers in caregiving professions who often struggle with constant role demands that require emotional, mental, and physical effort across work and home settings. This is supported with studies of Ikpeama (2024) , and Miller & Riley (2022) , wherein academic and caregiving roles frequently overlap, creating difficulty in maintaining clear boundaries and increasing feelings of stress and overload. Furthermore, the research of Bernhardt & Recksiedler (2022) showed that nurse educators and working mothers commonly report reduced time control and heightened pressure when attempting to fulfill simultaneous responsibilities in both professional and family life.

Role Prioritization and Flexible Strategies

To cope with time limitations, participants developed strategies such as planning schedules in advance, prioritizing tasks, separating work and home roles, and adjusting schedules when emergencies occur, especially when children get sick. Participants emphasized that although both roles are important, motherhood remained their top priority. This reflected role negotiation, where participants constantly negotiated which role required immediate attention. These were the statements of the participants:

“It is difficult because you really need presence of mind, and when my child gets sick, my mind feels divided—but my child always becomes the priority.”—P6

“All my weekly activities are scheduled in advance, and I cope by prioritizing, planning, separating my roles at home and work, and focusing only on what I can accomplish each day.”—P7

Participant 6 narrated that it was hard to stay fully focused because when a child became ill, attention became split; however, the child naturally became the top priority despite everything else. It reflected the emotional and cognitive strain of balancing caregiving and professional responsibilities, where maternal instincts often override other demands, especially in urgent situations involving a child's health. This experience was supported by findings that mothers frequently experience role overload and difficulty

maintaining focus when family and work obligations overlap (Bakker & Vries, 2021). It also aligned with research showing that caregiving demands, particularly child illness, significantly disrupt cognitive concentration and increase emotional fatigue among employed parents (Voydanoff, 2005).

Participant 7's statement reflected that careful planning helped manage a busy routine with multiple responsibilities. By organizing tasks ahead of time and focusing on priorities, the nurse mother was able to reduce stress and avoid feeling overwhelmed. It also reflected the importance of setting clear boundaries between home and work roles while staying realistic about what can be achieved each day. By prioritizing tasks and focusing only on what can realistically be done each day, individuals are better able to handle role demands and avoid feeling overwhelmed (Allen et al., 2014). It also highlighted the importance of separating home and work roles through clear boundaries, which support better focus and emotional balance in both areas of life (Clark, 2000). Overall, having a clear plan and setting priorities helps a person handle different responsibilities more easily. It also makes daily life more manageable by reducing stress and helping them focus on what truly matters each day.

Role Strain Theory by Goode supported the main theme and explained how limited time created pressure when individuals tried to meet the expectations of both work and family roles at the same time. The use of planning, prioritization, and negotiating responsibilities reflected their efforts to reduce tension caused by competing role demands. This theory helped explain how balancing strategies were developed as a response to the strain of multiple responsibilities. This also explained how participants experienced tension when the demands of being both a professional and a mother competed for limited time and energy. The use of planning, prioritizing tasks, and negotiating responsibilities reflected strategies used to reduce pressure from overlapping roles. Overall, theory helped explain how participants managed role strain by adjusting expectations and organizing their time to cope with competing demands.

Supportive Relationships as a Pillar for Balancing Professional and Maternal Roles

This theme reflected how relationships with others shape lived experiences. Participants emphasized that relationships with colleagues, supervisors, family members, partners, and students significantly influenced their ability to balance their dual roles. Feeling supported helped lessen stress and gave them the energy to stay present and manage their roles more effectively.

Van Manen's lived relationality focuses on how our experiences are shaped through relationships with others. For the participants, support from colleagues, supervisors, family, partners, and students made a real difference in how they handled their dual roles. Feeling supported helped ease their stress and allowed them to stay more present in both work and family life. The following supporting subthemes emerged: *professional support as a buffer to work stress and family and partner support as emotional and practical anchors*.

Professional Support as a Buffer to Work Stress

Participants reported that supportive colleagues and supervisors reduced work stress and helped them manage responsibilities. Professional support systems allowed them to delegate tasks, adjust schedules, and feel understood in their situation as working mothers. However, lack of support from administration increased stress and made balancing roles more difficult. These were supported by the following statements:

"Supportive colleagues and supervisors, along with staying connected with my daughter and family, provide motivation and emotional support, helping me balance the demands of both my roles." – P1

"Support from colleagues and family gives me strength at work and at home, making it easier to balance my responsibilities as a clinical instructor and a mother." – P2

"My colleagues, supervisors, and partners form a support system that helps me delegate tasks, share responsibilities, and maintain stability, which is essential for managing both my professional and maternal roles." – P3

“Having colleagues and supervisors who understand my situation, along with my family’s concern for my well-being, helps me navigate the demands of being a single mother and a professional, even when I am exhausted.” – P4

Participant 1 stated that supportive people at work made a big difference in handling daily responsibilities. Kind colleagues and understanding supervisors helped reduce stress and made work more manageable. At the same time, staying close and connected with family gave emotional strength and motivation to continue balancing both work and home life. This was supported by studies showing that family-supportive supervisor behavior and co-worker support are strongly linked to lower work–family conflict and improved employee well-being, as they help employees manage stress and daily demands more effectively (Zhang et al., 2023). Research also highlighted that workplace social support from supervisors and colleagues plays a key role in reducing emotional strain and improving employees’ ability to balance work and family responsibilities (Kossek et al., 2011). In addition, recent evidence emphasized that supportive leadership and family-related social support at work contribute to better psychological well-being and stronger work–family balance among employees (Park et al., 2023).

Participant 2 stated that having supportive people around made it easier to handle both work and family duties. Encouragement from colleagues and family helped her feel stronger and more capable in managing the demands of being both a clinical instructor and a mother. The study of Gerald et al. (2024) highlighted that supportive relationships at work, especially from colleagues and supervisors, are linked to better psychological well-being and lower levels of burnout among working professionals. In addition, findings by Leung et al., (2020) emphasized that family support plays a crucial role in strengthening coping capacity and helping individuals maintain balance between professional and caregiving responsibilities.

Participants 3 and 4 highlighted that having supportive people around them made it easier to manage their many responsibilities. With help from colleagues, supervisors, partners, and family, they were able to share tasks, get understanding from others, and felt less alone in handling both work and motherhood. This kind of support also helped them stay more stable and cope better, especially during tiring and stressful days. This was supported by recent research showing that social support in the workplace, especially from supervisors, colleagues, and partners, reduces work–family conflict and improves employees’ ability to manage multiple roles effectively (Noor et al., 2019). This kind of support system helped maintain balance, emotional strength, and stability in both professional and personal life.

Family and Partner Support as Emotional and Practical Anchors

Family members, husbands, and house helpers were identified as major sources of emotional and practical support. They helped with childcare, household responsibilities, and emotional encouragement. Participants emphasized that without family support, balancing motherhood and clinical instruction would be very difficult. Relationships therefore functioned as support systems that enabled them to sustain both roles. The following were the statement of the participants:

“Positive relationships with students, colleagues, and family give me emotional strength and motivation, but unsupportive supervision increases stress and makes it harder to balance my roles effectively.” – P5

“My family is always supportive, but lack of support from school management causes stress and conflicts, affecting my ability to balance my responsibilities at work and home.” – P6

“My husband and house helper provide essential support at home, while supportive colleagues make work lighter, allowing me to manage both my responsibilities as a mother and a clinical instructor.” – P7

Participants 5, 6, and 7 shared that relationships at work and at home played an important role in how they managed their responsibilities. Participant 5 expressed that positive relationships with students,

colleagues, and family gave her emotional strength and motivation, but unsupportive supervision increased her stress and made balancing her roles more difficult. This suggested that while personal encouragement helped sustain her emotionally, weak leadership at work disrupted her ability to function smoothly across roles. These findings are supported by recent literature highlighting that social support from supervisors, colleagues, and family is strongly associated with reduced work–family conflict and improved well-being among working individuals (Noor et al., 2019).

Participant 6 also explained that although her family remained supportive, the lack of support from school management created pressure and conflict, which affected her overall ability to manage both work and home responsibilities. This reflected how workplace systems and leadership behavior significantly influenced her stress levels, even when family support was present. This aligns with the study of Geraldles et al. (2024), where coworker support contributes to improved coping and reduced workload pressure in demanding work environments. Family support has also been found to strengthen emotional resilience and help individuals manage caregiving responsibilities more effectively (Leung et al., 2020). Moreover, workplace flexibility and shared responsibility systems are linked to better work–life integration outcomes (Kossek et al., 2011). Therefore, positive social interactions at work enhance motivation and psychological well-being.

Participant 7 described that practical and emotional support from her husband, house helper, and colleagues made her workload lighter and more manageable, allowing her to function better in both motherhood and her role as a clinical instructor. This indicated that shared responsibilities and teamwork, both at home and at work, helped reduce burden and improve her overall balance. The experiences of all three participants showed that balance was not only dependent on personal effort but was strongly shaped by the presence or absence of support systems in both home and workplace settings. Research by Allen (2014) also confirmed that supportive environments reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction among professionals with dual roles. This highlighted that consistent support from both work and family is essential in helping individuals manage multiple responsibilities with less stress and greater balance.

Theory of Caring by Swanson helped explain how feeling supported and valued made it easier to manage the responsibilities of being both a professional and a mother. It emphasized that caring was built through meaningful relationships, understanding, and emotional connection with others. The support from colleagues, supervisors, and family reflected how caring interactions helped sustain motivation and emotional strength in both work and home roles.

Material Objects as Facilitators and Reflectors of Balancing Motherhood and Clinical Instruction

Participants described how both professional tools and household objects played significant roles in managing their dual responsibilities. The presence and use of these objects reflected how mothers organized their lives and adapted their environment to support both their professional duties and caregiving roles. These tools made tasks more manageable and saved time and effort, especially when handling multiple responsibilities at once. Material objects were not just tools but also symbols of responsibility, organization, emotional comfort, and role identity.

Van Manen’s lived materiality refers to how everyday objects and tools shape and support lived experience. For the participants, professional tools and household items helped them manage their roles as both mothers and workers. These objects made daily tasks easier, saved time, and supported their ability to juggle multiple responsibilities. They also carried meaning, reflecting responsibility, organization, comfort, and identity in their dual roles. These were the supporting subthemes that emerged: *professional tools facilitate efficiency and task management; household objects support emotional well-being and role adaptation.*

Professional Tools Facilitate Efficiency and Task Management

Participants identified laptops, lesson plans, online platforms, nursing equipment, and internet connectivity as important tools that helped them perform their teaching and clinical responsibilities efficiently. However, these tools also sometimes extend work into personal time, reducing time available for family. Thus,

material objects both helped and complicated their work–life balance. These were the statements of the participants:

“My laptop helps me prepare lessons and presentations efficiently, but sometimes the extra time spent preparing or improvising leaves me with less time and energy to connect with my daughter.” - P1

“I often use syllabus, lesson plans, checklists, and basic nursing equipment during clinical duty; these tools help me stay organized and guide my students properly.” - P2

“Online learning platforms, presentation software, and assessment tools allow me to deliver content effectively and evaluate student performance, maximizing teaching efficiency.” - P4

“Laptops, cellphones, and classroom TVs, along with stable Wi-Fi, make teaching and communicating with students and family easier; without these, I would have to improvise and spend extra time and money.” - P7

Participants 1, 2, 4, and 7 shared that different tools and technologies played an important role in helping them manage their teaching and clinical responsibilities more efficiently. Participants 2, 4, and 7 explained that laptops, lesson plans, checklists, syllabus guides, online platforms, presentation software, assessment tools, and classroom technologies helped them organize lessons, deliver content effectively, and guide students in a more structured way. These resources improved their confidence and made their work more systematic, allowing them to handle academic and clinical tasks with greater ease and accuracy. At the same time, participants also pointed out some challenges linked to the use of these tools, particularly when work extended beyond normal hours. Participant 1 shared that while her laptop improved productivity, it also required extra preparation time, which reduced her opportunities to connect with her daughter. Participant 7 also noted that without access to stable Wi-Fi and classroom devices, she would have needed to improvise, leading to more time, effort, and financial cost. Overall, while technology clearly supported efficiency and organization in teaching, it also sometimes increased workload demands that affected work–life balance.

Recent literature supported the experiences of Participants 1, 2, 4, and 7 by showing that digital tools such as laptops, lesson planning systems, and presentation software improve teachers’ efficiency by helping them organize content and deliver instruction more systematically (Tondeur et al., 2021). In addition, research explained that ICT integration in education supports workload management and improves instructional delivery, but it can also extend working hours due to increased preparation demands (Esteve- Mon et al., 2023).

Evidence further showed that while digital tools strengthen communication and teaching effectiveness, they may also blur work–life boundaries, especially for educators balancing family responsibilities (Sobral et al., 2025). Moreover, another study indicated that insufficient access to stable internet and functioning devices can increase stress and require additional time for improvisation in teaching activities (Singh & Thurman, 2023). Similarly, research by Ibrahim et al. (2025) also emphasized that technology improves collaboration and instructional planning but may increase cognitive load when used extensively in teaching tasks. Additionally, Martinez-Perez et al., (2022) suggested that digital teaching tools enhance lesson delivery and student engagement, contributing to more efficient classroom management, which aligns with Participant 4’s statement.

Other studies noted that while ICT use supports flexibility in teaching, it can also create expectations for constant availability beyond working hours (Wang & Yu, 2024). Research also confirmed that digital literacy tools enhance teacher productivity and instructional accuracy in both classroom and clinical teaching settings (Mc Kenney & Voogt, 2012). Furthermore, Sharma & Yadav (2025) emphasized that technology improves access to educational resources but may increase workload pressure when tasks accumulate digitally. Overall, these findings suggest that while ICT integration offers significant benefits in teaching, its effectiveness depends on maintaining a balance that prevents overload and preserves well-being.

Household Objects Support Emotional Well-being and Role Adaptation

Household objects such as cleaning supplies, gadgets, and home environments reflected their role as mothers and homemakers. Some participants described their home environment as a source of motivation and emotional comfort. Objects therefore symbolized responsibility, care, organization, and emotional connection within the household. These were the statements of the participants:

“Cleaning supplies and clothes represent the on-going effort required to keep my home organized, reminding me of the physical and emotional energy invested in family care.”–P3

“I allow my children to use my gadgets when needed, which helps maintain connection and shared responsibility at home.” - P4

“Objects around me at work and home mirror the flexibility, resourcefulness, and problem-solving needed to manage both motherhood and clinical instruction effectively”. -P5

“A well-kept household and renovated surroundings provide positive vibes that motivate me to return home.”– P6

Participants 3, 4, 5, and 6 shared how objects and home conditions reflected their daily experiences and responsibilities as working mothers and clinical instructors. Participant 6 expressed that having a clean and a well-kept home created a positive feeling that motivated her to return home, showing how a pleasant environment contributed to her emotional comfort and sense of relief after work. Participant 3 explained that cleaning supplies and clothes represented the continuous effort needed to maintain an organized household, reflecting the physical and emotional energy she invested in caring for her family. This suggested that everyday household items reminded her of the constant responsibility involved in balancing home duties.

Participant 4 shared that allowing her children to use her gadgets helped maintain connection and shared responsibility at home, showing how resources were used not only for work but also for family bonding. Meanwhile, Participant 5 described that objects at work and home reflected her flexibility, resourcefulness, and problem-solving skills in managing both roles, indicating how her environment mirrored her ability to adjust and cope with different demands. These statements showed that material things and surroundings were closely connected to their roles, responsibilities, and emotional experiences in balancing work and motherhood.

These experiences are supported by recent literature emphasizing that the home environment and surrounding material conditions influence emotional well-being, motivation, and the sense of comfort after work, especially among working mothers balancing multiple roles (Bian & Sukor, 2024). A study by Pwavra et al. (2025) also shows that everyday household objects and routines reflect ongoing caregiving labor and the continuous effort required to maintain family functioning, which can shape how individuals perceive responsibility and emotional investment in home life. Furthermore, evidence suggests that flexibility and resourcefulness in managing both work and home environments are closely linked to how individuals adapt to work–family demands and maintain role balance (Bernhardt & Recksiedler, 2022). This showed that the home environment and everyday objects played an important role in shaping emotional well-being and in supporting the balance between work and family responsibilities.

The Theory of Caring by Swanson supports the theme and explains that caring was expressed not only through relationships but also through meaningful actions and the use of resources that support the well-being of others. The participants’ use of tools, gadgets, and household items reflected how they extended care in both their professional and maternal roles. This theory helped explain how these material objects supported caregiving practices while also symbolizing the continuous effort to care for family and students.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded the following:

1. Nurse mothers experienced significant physical exhaustion as they balance demanding nurse educator duties with caregiving responsibilities at home. The continuous strain of work and motherhood often left them feeling fatigued, yet they persisted in fulfilling both roles.
2. Nurse mothers navigated multiple physical environments, moving between the hospital, school, and home, each with its own set of expectations and demands. The distance between these spaces and the time spent traveling influenced how they manage their responsibilities. Their sense of space was often divided, as they remained mentally and emotionally connected to their children even while physically present at work, highlighting the challenge of being in one place while thinking of another.
3. Their daily lives involved constant role-shifting, moving back and forth between professional and maternal responsibilities. Time became a critical challenge, requiring careful management to meet the demands of both spheres.
4. Support systems played a vital role in helping nurse mothers cope. They relied on family members and other supportive relationships to assist with childcare and household responsibilities, which enabled them to sustain their dual roles.
5. Nurse mothers used available resources and everyday objects creatively to manage their responsibilities more efficiently. These practical strategies helped them navigate the complexities of balancing work and home life.