

Exploration of child protection professionals and their work-life balance

Glenn Dalton(1658942)

Supervisor Name: (Vanessa Long)

Abstract

This research project set out to explore the personal experiences of child protection professionals and their work-life balance. Semi-structured interviews were adopted in order to gather the data. The sample size consisted of 8 participants. The aim of this research was to add to the body of literature on this topic. The research aimed to add to the literature by gathering the personal experiences of these participants and try and discover what effects their work-life balance.

Introduction

There has been minimal research carried out in Ireland with regard to work-life balance and child protection workers. This research explores the personal experiences that child protection workers experience with regards to their work-life balance



This study tried to gather an insight into child protection workers experiences with regard to their work-life balance. This research was interested in the factors that contributed to their experiences of their work-life balance. Previous research in this field found that child protection workers often do not have a good balance between work and personal life roles and duties (Kalliath, 2012).



Method

The researcher deemed a qualitative approach to be the most appropriate design to adopt to conduct this research. This was deemed the most appropriate as by adopting a qualitative approach the participants are able to express their own personal experiences on the topic of work-life balance

The researcher used semi-structured interviews to gather rich in-depth qualitative data. Each interview was recorded on a Philips professional grade Dictaphone. Each interview was then transcribed verbatim and computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) was used to assist the researcher in analysing the data. The software the researcher used was N-vivo 10.

The method adopted to analyze the data was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allowed the researcher to identify, analyze and report any re-occurring themes that emerged from the data that was collected.

Results

The main focus of this research was to gather the personal experiences of the child protection professionals. After thematically analyzing the 8 interviews, three main themes emerged, these 3 main themes had a further three sub-themes. The first theme that emerged was work-life balance and the subthemes under this was personal life, working at home and burn out. The second theme was stress and the subthemes under stress was workload, contact, and lack of resource. The third theme was job satisfaction and the three subthemes under job satisfaction was unpredictability, personal achievement and peer support.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to explore the personal experiences of professionals in child protection and their personal experiences with regard to their work life balance. The researcher was specifically interested in what the participants felt about their work life balance and what were the factors that played a role in their work life balance. The research successfully gathered the necessary data to analyse how the participants felt about it and what factors contributed to their work life balance. It emerged from analysing the data that participants felt they did not have a very good balance between their professional and personal lives. It was found that there was a number of factors that contributed to this. The main factors that contributed to this was the workload and that they had to often bring work home which directly impacted their work-life balance

References

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