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Bachelor thesis

**Organizational factors linked to the development of burnout and turnover in child
 protection professionals: a scoping review**

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Abstract

Nederlands

Uit onderzoek blijkt dat organisatorische factoren consistent verband houden met burn-out onder kinder-beschermingswerkers. De organisatorische factoren, de organisatiecultuur en -klimaat, zijn echter niet uitgebreid bestudeerd in de sociale welzijns literatuur, vooral niet op het gebied van kindweldzijn. Het doel van de huidige scoping review was om bloot te leggen wat er bekend is over de organisatorische factoren, met name de organisatiecultuur en -klimaat, in relatie tot de ontwikkeling van burn-out bij kinder-beschermingswerkers. In de review zijn drie databases gebruikt en 28 studies onderzocht. Er zijn acht subcategorieën gecreëerd door naar patronen in de bevindingen te kijken: nadruk op beloning, sociale steun binnen de werkplek, conflict tussen werk en gezin, autonomie op het werk, mogelijkheden voor ontwikkeling en promotie, werkeisen en tijdgerelateerde factoren, rolstress en werksfeer. De bevindingen lieten verschillende relaties zien tussen deze subcategorieën en de ontwikkeling van burn-out. De review belicht mogelijke richtingen voor toekomstig onderzoek.

Trefwoorden: burn-out, kindbescherming, kindweldzijn, organisatorische factoren, organisatiecultuur en klimaat, scoping review

English

Research suggests that organizational factors are consistently linked with burnout among child protection workers. However the organizational factors, organizational culture and climate, have not been extensively studied in the social welfare literature, particularly in the child welfare area. The purpose of the current scoping review was to uncover what is known about the organizational factors, specifically organizational culture and climate in relation to the development of burnout in child protection caregivers. Three databases were explored and 28

studies were investigated in the review. Eight subcategories were created by looking at patterns in the findings: emphasis on reward, social support within the workplace, work-family conflict, job autonomy, opportunities for development and promotion, work demands and time-related factors, role stress, and work atmosphere. Findings showed several relations between these subcategories and the development of burnout. The review highlights possible directions for future research.

Keywords: burnout, child protection, child welfare, organizational factors, organizational culture and climate, scoping review

Introduction

High turnover rates in child welfare have been recognized as a major problem (Shim, 2010). Child protection professionals are exposed to high levels of stress due to the unpredictable nature of their work. The excessive caseload, the exposure to traumatic experiences, the changing policies, and insufficient supervision, among other factors, have been linked to burnout among this population (McFadden, 2014). Job burnout refers to feelings of exhaustion resulting from chronic exposure to job stressors (Maslach et al., 1997). This can be a detriment to the individual well-being of a worker (Lizano & Barak, 2015) and to organizations (Shim, 2010, He et al., 2018). Previous reviews, which examined individual and organizational contributors to the development of worker burnout in child protection social work, highlighted the importance of organizational factors as major predictors of turnover - rather than individual factors (McFadden et al., 2017; He et al., 2018; Antonopoulou et al., 2017). The consequences of burnout may potentially seriously affect the performance of workers, their clients, and the larger organizations in which they interact (Maslach et al., 1997). The more staff feel burned out by work conditions, the more job stress they feel, the less satisfied they are with their job, and the less likely they are to stay at their agency (Leake et al., 2017; Chung & Choo, 2019). When high levels of burnout are found among this professional group, levels of staff turnover create an inexperienced workforce (McFadden et al., 2017).

Burnout

Burnout is defined as the experience of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can arise from long-term involvement in occupational situations that are emotionally demanding (McFadden, 2014). A widely accepted definition of burnout was proposed by Maslach et al. (1997, p.192), which includes concepts of emotional exhaustion (EE), depersonalization (DP)

and reduced personal accomplishment (PA) that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity. Similar to Maslach's definition of job burnout, Kristensen et al. (2005) focused their definition of burnout on exhaustion and fatigue. Furthermore, they invented the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) and distinguished between three sources of burnout: personal, work related, and client related. Personal burnout is general burnout experienced by an individual regardless of work experiences or occupational status (i.e. employed or unemployed). Work-related burnout refers to fatigue and exhaustion associated with an individual's work, whereas client-related burnout embodies burnout specifically linked to one's work with clients. The unique contribution of this framework is that acknowledging the source of burnout provides a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the experience of burnout and how to prevent it (He et al., 2018).

It is of great importance to take into account that burnout is one of the main predictors of turnover (Font, 2012; Kim & Kao, 2014) and affects the well-being and physical health of human service professionals (Lizano & Barak, 2015), including child protection workers. Child protection workers are particularly vulnerable to burnout due to their poor working conditions, excessive paperwork, long working hours, little opportunity for advancement and ineffective bureaucratic structures (McFadden, 2014).

Organizational culture and climate

Empirical findings indicate that organizational culture and climate are the significant factors to explaining an employees' intention to leave. Organizational culture is defined as the way things are done in an organization (Shim, 2010). Organizational climate is defined as the psychological impact of the work environment on the individual worker (McFadden et al., 2017). Investigating this topic is important, since organizational factors can relate to the development of

burnout (Kim & Kao, 2014). Findings indicate that children and families who receive services from agencies with an engaged climate are likely to receive more comprehensive and continuous services. They report more improvement in their child's psychosocial functioning than children who receive services from agencies with a stressful climate (Shim, 2010). This emphasizes the importance for further research.

The present study

The central goal of this scoping review is to gain insight into what is known about the role of the organizational culture and climate in relation to the development of burnout in child protection professionals. Therefore, the research question that will be central to this study is: *'Which organizational factors are linked to the development of burnout in child protection professionals?'* By looking at organizational factors and the potential risk and protective factors associated with it, insights can be gathered regarding the development of burnout and turnover in child protection professionals. A better understanding of organizational factors impacting the development of burnout in child protection professionals, specifically the organizational culture and climate, can improve practice and policy in the future. This will help to better inform efforts to maintain a more competent and stable workforce, which, in turn, can have a positive impact on the children and families who receive services from these child protection agencies (Shim, 2010; Maslach et al., 1997). Additionally the results of this research can give an overview of the under researched aspects of this topic, and guide future research. This study is of particular importance, since there has been little attention to the effects of organizational culture and climate on the development of burnout in the field of child protection. Organizational culture and climate have been studied mainly within the context of understanding the effectiveness of business models and the success of organizations (Ashkanasy et al., 2000). To examine this

relationship further and create an overview of the existing literature in the field, the focus of this study lies on the organizational factors, specifically the organization culture and climate, that can be linked to the development of burnout in child protection professionals.

Methodology

Study design

The present study aims to answer the research question: ‘*Which organizational factors are linked to the development of burnout in child protection professionals?*’ For the purpose of answering this question, an in-depth literature search about the organizational culture at the child protection workplace and its relation to burnout and turnover in child protection professionals has been conducted. A scoping review was chosen to explore the extent of the research area and to subsequently provide an overview of the organizational factors linked to burnout and turnover that are already known. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of this study and minimize the risk of bad or inconsistent documentation the PRISMA guide for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR), developed by Tricco et al. (2018), was followed. This method consists of a checklist of reporting items that should be present in a study to ensure transparency and completeness.

Eligibility criteria

The selection of literature was subjected to several inclusion criteria, to ensure that the studies included are eligible for answering the research question. The relevant studies had to, 1) focus on professionals or workers in child protection or child welfare work, 2) contain organizational factors, specifically the organizational culture and climate, as predictors for burnout or turnover among these professionals, 4) be peer-reviewed, 5) be published after 2010, 6) be written in either English or Dutch language. Table 1 shows the definitions of the key variables mentioned above, as adopted in this study. To ensure transparency and reproducibility a review protocol was written, outlining the review methodology for the selection procedure (see Appendix A).

Table 1*Definitions of the key variables*

Variable	Definition
Child welfare professional	Professionals who work in the field of child protection or child welfare.
Organizational factors	Organizational culture and climate, and subfactors.
Organizational culture	“The way things are done” in an organization (Shim, 2010). The norms and expectations in an organization of its employees, including constructs such as job autonomy and support (McFadden et al., 2017).
Organizational climate	Psychological impact of the work environment on the individual worker (McFadden et al., 2017). This includes dimensions such as engagement, functionality, stress (Spielfogel et al., 2016), emotional exhaustion and role overload (McFadden et al., 2017).
Burnout	The experience of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can arise from long-term involvement in occupational situations that are emotionally demanding (McFadden, 2014). The theoretical framework of Maslach et al. (1997) describes three facets of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment.

Literature about child welfare workers who were not directly related to the field of child protection as it is defined by the Dutch Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (n.d.), for example nurses, doctors, or practitioners in other disciplines, were excluded. Furthermore, articles about the experiences of students, teachers and foster parents weren't included, to ensure the specificity and feasibility of this research. The choice has been made to exclude articles about

the development of burnout during the COVID-19 lockdown, to answer the research question as broadly as possible. It's important to notice that child welfare agencies are organized differently across countries and systems. Agencies can follow a specialist or a generalist model, and vary greatly in size with regard to the number of both employees and involved families (Juhasz & Skivenesand, 2016). Due to limited resources and time, the focus wasn't on the differences between countries and cultures, but on different organizational factors in general.

Search strategy

The selection of articles has been executed through the search engine for electronic literature EBSCO. EBSCO provides articles from leading research databases, such as PsycINFO, SocIndex and MEDLINE, which all focus, amongst other research fields, on pedagogy, psychology and sociology. The abovementioned databases were used for the search. The selection of databases was influenced by previous research across available electronic databases, and relevance to the subject. PsycINFO was used to find articles in the field of psychology, SocIndex for finding articles in the field of sociology, and MEDLINE for finding articles in the medical field. These search engines were used through selecting several search terms that are in line with the research question to find the most eligible literature. The final selection consists of 'child protection' or 'child welfare' or 'youth services', and 'profession*' or 'worker', and 'burnout' or 'burn-out' or 'burn out' or 'stress', and 'organizational*' or 'workplace' or 'environment' or 'work* factors'. Appendix B shows the full search process. To operationalize certain keywords additional literature was gathered for which the snowball technique was used.

Eligibility and quality assessment

To determine the relevance and significance of the articles for the study a couple of steps were taken. After applying the final search, a total of 349 articles emerged from the databases.

After manually deleting duplicates (n = 88), the selected articles (n = 261) were screened for the inclusion criteria through 1) reading the title, 2) reading the abstract, and 3) when deemed necessary, reading the full article. The articles that proved relevant after completing the first two steps of screening were thoroughly read and evaluated, assessing the study's relevance. A study was considered relevant when it provided knowledge that could help answer the research question. The retrieved studies (n = 35) were organized and managed in RefWorks. RefWorks is a citation management tool that was used for this study to manage and categorize the retrieved articles (Roseler et al., 2019). After fully reading the retrieved studies the final study selection consisted of 28 studies. The exact steps in the screening and selection procedure can be seen in the PRISMA Flow Chart (figure 1).

To assess the quality of the studies and the risk of within study bias, the guidelines by Tong et al. (2007) have been followed. A study could've been rated as low risk of bias (+), moderate risk of bias (+/-), high risk of bias (-) or unknown risk of bias (?). If a study was rated as high risk of bias (-) it was excluded from the review. Possible biases and shortcomings of the review have been discussed in the discussion.

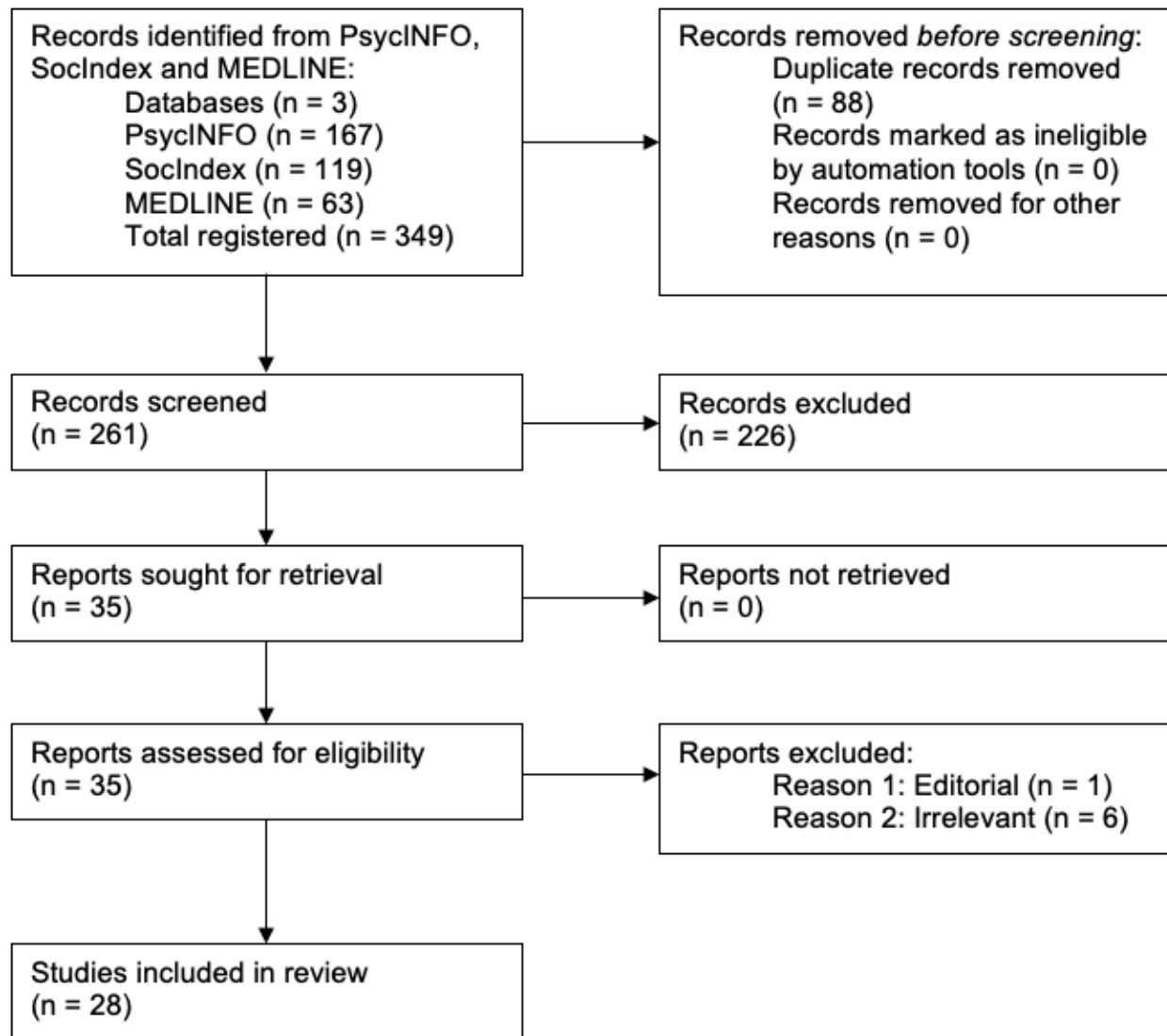
Data extraction and analysis

An overview of all the relevant descriptive information of each article was made in Excel. The information of each article included the author, the year, the publisher, the methodology, the geographical location, the abstract by the author, the main findings and the limitations (see Appendix C for the Excel template). The articles were analyzed by using a deductive approach and were categorized in terms of organizational factors that were linked to the development of burnout or turnover: organizational climate and organizational culture. Eight subcategories (work demands and time-related factors, social support within the workplace, role

stress, job autonomy, emphasis on reward, opportunities for development and promotion, work-family conflict, and work atmosphere) were created by looking at patterns in the findings.

Figure 1

Study Selection Process, Illustrated by the PRISMA Flow Chart (Page et al., 2021)



Results

The results were categorized into subfactors related to organizational culture and climate. Table 2 provides an overview of the findings. The subfactors that were found are: work demands and time-related factors, social support within the workplace (from coworkers, the organization and supervisors), role stress (including role overload, role conflict, role clarity and role ambiguity), job autonomy (for example inclusion in decision making), emphasis on reward (tangible and intangible rewards), opportunities for development and promotion, work atmosphere (for example workplace discrimination and safety experiences), and work-family conflict.

Table 2

Number of articles found referring to organizational culture and climate, classified from most to least findings per factor

Factor	Number
Work demands and time related factors	23
Social support within the workplace	21
Role Stress	12
Job autonomy	11
Emphasis on reward	8
Opportunities for development and promotion	8
Work atmosphere	8
Work-family conflict	6

Work demands and time-related factors

Twentythree studies explored the relation between work demands and the development of burnout (McFadden et al., 2017; He et al., 2018; Beddoe et al., 2021; Leake et al., 2017; Baugerud et al., 2018; He et al., 2013; McFadden, 2020; Bowman, 2022, Györi & Perpék, 2021; Hopkins et al., 2010; Johnco et al., 2014; Shim, 2010; Shim, 2012; Chung & Choo, 2019; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Kim & Kao, 2014; Kim & Hopkins, 2016; Lizano & barak, 2015, Boyas et al., 2011; McFadden et al., 2018; Kothari et al., 2021; Lizano & Barak, 2012; Font, 2012). Depending on the study in focus, work demands include: job stress, workload/caseload, and time pressure. Workload and job demands are strongly correlated with feelings of exhaustion (one of the components of burnout) (McFadden et al., 2017; He et al., 2018; Baugerud et al., 2018; He et al., 2023; McFadden, 2020; Györi & Perpék, 2021; Hopkins et al., 2010; Johnco et al., 2014; Shim, 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019; Kim & Hopkins, 2016; Boyas et al., 2011; McFadden et al., 2018; Kothari et al., 2021; Lizano & Barak, 2012). The three subfactors (job stress, workload and time pressure) are presented below.

Job stress

Findings from fifteen studies suggest that the relationship between job stress and job burnout is generalizable in the child welfare sector (McFadden, 2020; Boyas et al., 2012; He et al., 2018; He et al., 2023; Leake et al., 2017; Bowman, 2022; Hopkins et al., 2010; Johnco et al., 2014; Chung & Choo, 2019; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Kim & Kao, 2014; Kim & Hopkins, 2016; Lizano & Barak, 2015; Boyas et al., 2011; Lizano & Barak, 2012). Job stress has been used as a key predictor of job burnout among child welfare workers in both cross-sectional (Boyas et al., 2012; He et al., 2018; He et al., 2023; Chung & Choo, 2019; Boyas et al., 2011) and longitudinal studies (Lizano & Barak, 2012; Lizano & Barak, 2015), with individuals who

experience higher rates of job stress reporting higher rates of burnout. The more staff feel burned out by work conditions, the more job stress they feel, the less satisfied they are with their job, and the less likely they are to stay at their agency (Leake et al., 2017; McFadden, 2020; Hopkins et al., 2010; Kim & Kao, 2014; Boyas et al., 2011). In line with this are the results of Antonopoulou et al (2017), which showed that the least stressed employees rated their working conditions the highest (compared to the more stressed employees). Examples of stress predictors are system problems. For example, in a study of Johnco et al. (2014) workers reported issues with inadequate policies and procedures (paperwork issues, outdated systems, remote access issues) and collaboration with courts that lead to job stress.

Workload

Ten studies found a relation between workload and the development of burnout (Baugerud et al., 2018, McFadden et al., 2017; McFadden, 2020; Bowman, 2022; Johnco et al., 2014; Shim, 2010; Shim, 2012; Kim & Hopkins, 2016; McFadden et al., 2018; Kothari et al., 2021). Unmanageable caseload was a key predictor of dissatisfaction and intention to leave (Kothari et al., 2021). It's important to note that caseload and workload are often used interchangeably in the literature even though they are different constructs. High caseloads involve increased paperwork and other case management responsibilities that often increase workloads, which may require overtime to control the accumulation of cases to a reasonable number (Kothari et al., 2021). Excessive workload has been expressed as a feeling that work-related demands are beyond human limits (McFadden et al., 2017), contributing to a context of fear about professional error or omission (McFadden et al., 2018). In a study of McFadden (2020), interviews with child protection caregivers revealed that caregivers experienced sadness at not being allowed to do the job they were trained to do because of

workload pressures, structural demands and paperwork. People who left the job had unanimously wanted to leave due to the pressures of the job, even when positive relationships (with colleagues and managers) were present (McFadden, 2020). Remarkable are the results of Kim & Kao (2014). In their study they found an unexpected negligible effect of caseload (measured by the number of cases or clients) on turnover intention. Caseload itself wasn't related to turnover intention, but perception of caseload size and satisfaction of caseload size was.

Time pressure

The demand of time constraints are associated with job burnout (He et al., 2018; Beddoe et al., 2021; Győri & Perpék, 2021; Johnco et al., 2014; Kothari et al., 2021). Beddoe et al. (2021) investigated the element of time and found it to be inversely linked to a sense of satisfaction with the degree of control. For example, too much time spent in prolonged sessions of case management was experienced as oppressive and constricting: 'wasted time'. Time was positively linked by social workers and managers to satisfaction when it is seen as invested in quality: 'thinking time' (Beddoe et al., 2021). Findings of Győri & Perpék (2021) suggest that the lack of time (due to too many administrative tasks and too many clients) is a predictor of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization symptoms. In line with this are the findings of Johnco et al. (2014). In their study workers reported, in addition to their high workload, overtime issues, where they were required to justify overtime and felt judged by management as not managing their time well, tending to work for free rather than deal with the hassle of turning in overtime hours.

Another time issue is that of travel. Given that caseworkers spend a lot of time visiting clients at their homes, greater geographic spread of clients likely makes work-related travel particularly demanding. Studies have shown that time spent commuting to work was associated

with stress, fatigue, health problems, and concentration difficulties (Johnco et al., 2014; Kothari et al., 2021).

Social support within the workplace

Depending on the study in focus, support within the workplace was framed as colleagues/collegiate support, organizational support, social support, peer support, administrative support, supervisor support, and coworker support. Although the included studies framed support differently, a closer look shows that, in the context of the workplace, they all could be categorized under three main support types: coworker support, organizational support, and supervisor support. These three are presented below.

According to Alloway & Bebbington and their buffer theory of social support (cited in Nielsen et al., 2023), receiving social support should lessen the impact of psychosocial adversity on health and well-being. Twelve studies support the claim that social support can reduce or even prevent burnout (Olaniyan et al., 2020; He et al., 2018; Hamama, 2012; Lizano & Barak, 2012; Baugerud et al., 2018; Bowman, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2023; Johnco et al., 2014; Shim, 2010; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Lizano & Barak, 2015; Kothari et al., 2021).

Coworker support

Thirteen studies investigated the influence of coworker support on retention, burnout and turnover (Olaniyan et al., 2020; He et al., 2018; Beddoe et al., 2021; Hamama, 2012; Baugerud et al., 2018; McFadden, 2020; Nielsen et al., 2023; Hopkins et al., 2010; Johnco et al., 2014; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Kim & Kao, 2014; Boyas et al., 2011; Kothari et al., 2021). Four studies found coworker support to reduce experiences of stress, burnout, turnover, while serving as a source of strength and increasing retention (Olaniyan et al., 2020; He et al., 2018; Johnco et al., 2014; Kothari et al., 2021). However, lack of support, assistance, and guidance from

coworkers, supervisors, and management were found to contribute to stress (Johnco et al., 2014) and turnover (Kothari et al., 2021). The importance of feeling that colleagues and managers were understanding of work pressures, as well as willing to give guidance and practical support in crises, was perceived as critical (McFadden, 2020). However, it's important to point out that perhaps increased feelings of support from coworkers may be associated with unfavorable workplace norms of engaging in adverse behaviors, such as intent to leave (Boyas et al., 2011).

Organizational support

Fifteen studies investigated the influence of organizational support (the extent to which an organization provides the resources, communication, reinforcement, and encouragement, to enable employees to improve well-being) on retention, burnout and turnover (Olaniyan et al., 2020; Travis & Barak, 2010; Hamama, 2012; Baugerud et al, 2018; McFadden, 2020; Bowman, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2023; Johnco et al., 2014; Shim, 2010; Shim, 2012; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Kim & Kao, 2014; Kim & Hopkins, 2016; Kothari et al., 2021; Lizano & Barak, 2012). A common finding of all studies was that perception of organizational support influences workers' decision to stay or leave. Lizano & Barak (2012) explored the impact of organizational support on burnout among child welfare workers. They found a significant positive relationship between workers' perception of organizational support and depersonalization (one of the three sub-categories of burnout). Meaning that less support was related to more burnout (depersonalization). Johnco et al. (2014) found that a supportive environment at an organizational level contributed to worker retention, feeling loyal to the agency and committed to one another.

Supervisor support

Seventeen studies explored the influence of supervisor support on retention, burnout and turnover (Olaniyan et al., 2020; He et al., 2018; Travis & Barak, 2010; Beddoe et al., 2021; Hamama, 2012; Baugerud et al., 2018; McFadden, 2020; Bowman, 2022; Nielsen et al., 2023; Hopkins et al., 2010; Johnco et al., 2014; Chung & Choo, 2019; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; Kim & Kao, 2014; Lizano & Barak, 2015; Boyas et al., 2011; Kothari et al., 2021). He et al. (2018) found supervisory support to be negatively related to work-related burnout, indicating that supervisor support is a key resource in coping with burnout. It's plausible that unpleasant supervisory contact may lead to increased notions of emotional exhaustion (Boyas et al., 2011; Hamama, 2012). Findings of Hamama (2012) showed that workers experienced a stronger sense of burnout when their organization manager was less supportive. In a study of McFadden (2018) the absence of positive relationships at work with managers contributed to staff exiting the job. Beddoe et al. (2021) found supervision to sometimes be a source of stress and anxiety. Their findings suggest that, in reality, formal supervision sessions may not create a safe place for containing reflective conversations unless there is significant commitment to making 'space' for them. In this way, supervision is an extra burden, to be endured and which cuts across the employees' time to do their work (Beddoe et al. 2021), and associated with increased perceptions of burnout (Boyas et al., 2011).

However, contrary to the earlier findings in the literature, two studies didn't show a relation between supervision and lower levels of job withdrawal or actual organizational exit (Hopkins et al., 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019).

Role stress

One of the most common risk factors for the development of burnout in child protection professionals are role related stressors at work (Chung & Choo, 2019). Depending on the study in focus, role related stressors were framed as role ambiguity, role clarity, role conflict, role overload, and role strain. Role ambiguity and role clarity are terms used to describe the lack of clarity with regard to behavior in a job and define the extent to which workers are uncertain about aspects of their job (Font, 2012). Role conflict is defined as the extent to which workers are faced with competing values and demands in the functions of their work (Travis & Barak, 2010). Role overload reflects the perception that the demands of one's work role exceeds personal resources (Chung & Choo, 2019). These are all types of role strain.

Role overload was found to have indirect effects through emotional exhaustion on intent to leave (Chung & Choo, 2019; Hopkins et al., 2010). Burnout was found to be associated with role conflict and role strain (Baugerud et al, 2018; Bowman, 2022; Glisson et al., 2012). Furthermore, a positive relationship between intention to leave and role stress (role ambiguity and role conflict) was found in four studies (Travis & Barak, 2010; Kim & Kao, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2010; Shim, 2012). Employees who had a heightened sense of psychological well-being were less likely to report having intentions to leave (Travis & Barak, 2010). A functional climate, with role clarity as a subfactor, was found to be associated with child welfare workers' job satisfaction (Kim & Hopkins, 2016). Interesting is the mediating effect of supervision on role conflict and role ambiguity. Hamama (2012) found that when an individual is experiencing a high level of role stress (role conflict and role ambiguity), the supervisor can be an important coping resource. The study of Lizano & Barak (2015) confirms this: when the moderating effect

of supervisory support is taken into account, role conflict and role ambiguity do not predict burnout.

Job autonomy

Job autonomy refers to the extent to which employees can control their working conditions and the freedom they have in performing their jobs. Four studies show that child protection professionals enjoy flexibility and autonomy in conducting their work. This may give them a sense of control over their work that may act as a buffer against burnout (Baugerud, 2018; Font, 2012; Antonopoulou et al., 2017; McFadden et al., 2018), since the experience of control is a key factor regarding successful coping with stressors (Nielsen et al., 2023). In other words, lack of control and autonomy may be risk factors for developing burnout.

Perceived involvement in vital organizational processes may result in positive worker outcomes (Travis & Barak, 2010). As employees experience support in this process, they will be more likely to remain employed with their current organization. However, the experience of support does not necessarily keep employees; rather those outcomes are a product of being included in decision making (Travis & Barak, 2010). Inclusion in decision making was found to be significantly related to the development of burnout in several studies (Kim & Kao, 2014; Gyóri & Perpék, 2021; Glisson et al., 2012; Antonopoulou et al., 2017). Workers who were included in decision making were more likely to speak up about challenges in their job, seeking positive change (Travis & Barak, 2010) and less likely to exhibit turnover intention (Kim & Kao, 2014).

In contrast with above-mentioned findings, Hopkins et al. (2010) found inclusion in decision making to be associated with more job withdrawal, job search behavior and turnover. They found that if decision making didn't translate to sufficient changes in the workplace, it

could be perceived by workers as a futile waste of time (Hopkins et al., 2010). In a study of Boyas et al. (2011) being part of decision making and having some influence on what happened in the organization contributed to increased perceived emotional exhaustion and depersonalization.

Emphasis on reward

Emphasis on reward is categorized in tangible (i.g. financial rewards) and intangible rewards (i.g. feeling validated). Intangible rewards are defined as non-material forms of recognition and motivation, while tangible rewards are rewards that can be seen and quantified (i.g. salary). In eight studies an effect of emphasis on reward in relation to burnout and turnover was found (Shim, 2010; Travis & Barak, 2010; Hopkins et al., 2010; Shim, 2012; Johnco et al., 2014; McFadden et al., 2018; Font, 2012; Kim & Kao, 2014). Public child welfare employees with clearer and more effective incentives and rewards for job performance have less intention to leave than those with less clear and effective incentives and rewards (Shim, 2010). Intangible rewards were found to relate to burnout in a study of Travis & Barak (2010) and Johnco et al. (2014). When employees felt that they weren't heard or validated they became discontent and critical of their organization. This was associated with increased employee turnover and intentions to leave (Travis & Barak, 2010), while those workers who felt that they were recognized and appreciated by their organization were more likely to stay employed (Johnco et al., 2014).

Tangible rewards were found to be related to burnout and turnover in five studies (Hopkins et al. 2010; Shim, 2010; Shim 2012; Johnco et al., 2014; Font, 2012). Johnco et al. (2014) described a lack of incentives (e.g. bonuses, free ticket to local events) to be a predictive factor for burnout. Higher salaries were related to lower levels of work withdrawal, decreased

intention to leave (Hopkins et al. 2010; Shim, 2010; Shim 2012; Johnco et al., 2014), and negative predictors for burnout (Font, 2012). In the study of Kim & Kao (2014) salary didn't emerge as an important predictor of turnover intention. However financial reward, as measured by satisfaction level of pay and benefits, did have a sizable influence on turnover intention (Kim & Kao, 2014). Hopkins et al. (2010) found salary level to be a statistically significant factor, but it didn't increase or decrease the actual odds of exiting the organization in their study.

Opportunities for development and promotion

Opportunities for development and promotion refer to opportunities for growth and advancement within the organization. Employees in a positive organizational climate feel that they have the ability to accomplish many worthwhile tasks in their current position (Shim, 2010). When encouraged to develop and gain enjoyment from their work, employees are more likely to stay in their position (Shim, 2012), and the lack of advancement opportunities in the work environment is a predictive factor for turnover (Font, 2012). In line with this are the findings of Gyóri and Perpék (2021). They found that a lack of opportunities for workers to get promoted and limited development opportunities in the profession lead to reduced personal accomplishment (one of the three subcategories of burnout). Furthermore, Antonopoulou et al. (2017) found that child welfare workers reported higher job stress due to organizational factors such as perceived workplace opportunities. According to Hopkins et al. (2010) perceived job opportunities (at other organizations) were also significantly associated with job search behavior.

A broad theme that emerged in the study of Johnco et al. (2014) was that of opportunities within the organization. The availability of new positions, and the experience and knowledge gained in their position contributed to the retention of employees. Kim & Hopkins (2016)

confirm this: opportunities for growth and advancement were associated with rural child welfare workers' job satisfaction.

Work atmosphere

Work atmosphere, depending on the study in focus, was framed as the physical and emotional space of the work environment. A good work atmosphere encourages work efficiency and can prevent or remedy reduced personal accomplishment (Győri & Perpék, 2021). Public child welfare agencies are able to decrease employee's turnover through creating a positive organizational culture and climate, focussing on reducing employees' emotional exhaustion (Shim, 2010). For example, Hamama (2012) found that levels of burnout were lower when work conditions, specifically the physical dimension (crowdedness, relaxed atmosphere in the room, noise, privacy), were better. Focussing on the atmosphere in the room: Beddoe et al. (2021) suggested that the place in which supervision takes place has influence on the effectiveness of it. They found an unpleasant room, in which the sessions take place, to be a barrier for effective supervision.

Part of a good work atmosphere is safety. Safety concerns at the workplace, arguably one of the unique predictors among child welfare workers, were found to be highly related to turnover intention (Kim & Kao, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019). Chung & Choo (2019) found safety concerns to be a significant risk factor for the development of emotional exhaustion. In line with that, Győri and Perpék (2021) found that an unsafe environment led to higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation symptoms. According to Hopkins et al. (2010) and He et al. (2023) workplace discrimination can be related to safety concerns. Race/being a person of color was found to be a contributor to job search behavior. Persons of color in this sample worked primarily in larger agencies in urban areas where safety

concerns were reported the highest (Hopkins et al., 2010). In a study about workplace discrimination among child welfare caseworkers, staff members who identified as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) were more likely to be targeted by workplace discrimination and to experience negative well-being consequences than their white counterparts (He et al., 2023). Independent of racial and ethnic identities, perceptions of discrimination were significantly associated with poorer job satisfaction and psychological safety and greater burnout (He et al., 2023).

Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict refers to the interrole conflict that occurs when the demands of work and family are contradictory (Lizano & Barak, 2015). Within the child welfare workforce the stress caused by work-family conflict may subsequently relate to the development of burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) (Lizano & Barak, 2012; Lizano & Barak, 2015; Johnco et al., 2014; Baugerud et al., 2018; Bowman, 2022). Workers were found to have difficulties limiting the impact of work on their personal life (Johnco et al., 2014). Excessive workload that spills into the weekend and evenings impact the personal and family life of many child protection professionals. This wasn't perceived as sustainable long-term and contributed to both their desire to leave and actually leaving (McFadden, 2020).

Interesting is the mediating effect of supervisory support on the role of work-family conflict. Work-family conflict led to greater levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization among those workers who felt less supported by supervisors (Lizano & Barak, 2015).

Discussion

This study sought to contribute to a better understanding of the organizational factors that relate to the child welfare professional turnover and burnout phenomenon, which can have a devastating impact on agencies, workers, and their clients. A systemized search resulted in 28 articles from different countries, which used different methodologies and studied different child protection systems. The majority of the results come from the United States of America and the literature search was performed just in English language. The included studies focussed on different organizational factors that were related to the development of burnout in child protection professionals.

First, regarding work demands and time related factors, it's essential to mention that it seems that the actual workload/caseload itself is not precisely the contributing factor towards burnout. Rather, the contributing factor seems to be the inability to cope with it in a suitable way, mainly when workload is excessive and time is limited (Johnco et al., 2014; Kim & Kao, 2014).

Second, the impact of social support at work needs further research, due to the existence of contradictory and inconclusive results. While some authors argue that social support at work acts as a buffer against burnout (Olaniyan et al., 2020; He et al., 2018; Johnco et al., 2014; Kothari et al., 2021; He et al., 2018), there is evidence suggesting that the lack of social support is not directly related to burnout development (Font, 2012; Hopkins et al., 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019). In some cases it was found to even contribute to the development of burnout (Boyas et al., 2011; Hamama, 2012; Beddoe et al., 2021). The feeling that coworkers and managers were understanding of job pressures, and also wanted to give guidance and practical support seemed to be of particular importance (McFadden, 2020; Johnco et al., 2014). Furthermore, unpleasant supervisory contact could be related to increased notions of emotional exhaustion (Boyas et al.,

2011; Hamama, 2012). It's important to note that two studies didn't find a relation between supervision and lower levels of job withdrawal (Hopkins et al., 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019). This could possibly be explained through the particular supervisors studied in these particular organizations and their child protection systems.

Third, role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict were found to be related to the development of burnout. Interesting was the mediating effect that was found of the supervisor on role stress (Hamama, 2012; Lizano & Barak, 2015). However, some studies suggest that even though positive relationships with coworkers and managers were present, workers had still wanted to leave due to the pressures of the job (McFadden, 2020). This suggests that the effect of job pressure outweighs the effect of social support.

Fourth, the experience of control within an organization was found to be a successful factor in coping with stressors (Nielsen et al., 2023). Remarkable were the contradictory results regarding inclusion in decision making. While some authors argue that inclusion in decision making acts as a buffer against burnout (Kim & Kao, 2014; Gyóri & Perpék, 2021; Glisson et al., 2012; Antonopoulou et al., 2017), others suggest that it leads to more emotional exhaustion (Hopkins et al., 2010; Boyas et al., 2011). This contrast could be explained by the impact that employee's decisions have on the actual changes in the workplace. If these changes don't happen, inclusion in decision making could be perceived as a futile waste of time and an extra task on an already very long to-do list (Hopkins et al., 2010).

Fifth, the intangible rewards, getting validation and recognition from the organization, were found to be negatively related to the development of burnout (Travis & Barak, 2010; Johnco et al., 2014). Furthermore, tangible rewards, like salary and benefits were also found to be negatively related to burnout development.

Sixth, a lack of advancement opportunities in the work environment was found to be a predictive factor for turnover and reduced personal accomplishment (Font, 2012; Győri and Perpék, 2021; Antonopoulou et al., 2017).

Seventh, the importance of a good working atmosphere was emphasized in the results. This was evident from the importance of the physical working space (Hamama, 2012; Beddoe et al., 2021), as well as the emotional one (Kim & Kao, 2014; Hopkins et al., 2010; Chung & Choo, 2019). Feelings of unsafety and being discriminated against were found to be related to the development of burnout (Győri and Perpék, 2021; Hopkins et al., 2010, He et al., 2023).

Finally, the stress caused by work-family conflict was found to be related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation (Lizano & Barak, 2012; Lizano & Barak, 2015; Johnco et al., 2014; Baugerud et al., 2018; Bowman, 2022). Interesting was the mediating effect of supervisory support on the role of work-family conflict (Lizano & Barak, 2015). This stresses the importance of supervisory support in preventing burnout.

Strengths and limitations

Overall, this review provides a holistic overview of the existing recent literature of the possible contributing organizational factors towards the development of burnout in child protection professionals. The inclusion of only articles published between 2010 and 2024 ensures the relevance of this study. Furthermore, the inclusion of only peer-reviewed articles (scientific evidence) adds more credibility.

The present scoping review has some limitations. First, most of the studies included in this review come from the United States of America, making findings more applicable to their child protection system. Another limitation is that a lot of the included studies had cross-sectional designs. This doesn't allow for any conclusions about causal effects and means

we have to be careful with interpreting the data. Third, a lot of studies used self-report surveys, which could hamper the internal validity of the findings. There is the possibility of subjective interpretations, common method variance and response set tendencies. With a lot of the studies there might also be the risk of negative experiences being the main motivator to participate in the study. This is potentially skewing the data. Furthermore, individual factors of the professionals were not examined. It may be that these factors add explanations for the variance in the sense of burnout. Finally, according to the aims of this study, the search focussed only on studies exploring the effect of organizational factors on the development of burnout in child protection professionals. Although the strategy appears to be clear, some studies might have been excluded even though they included child protection professionals in their sample. This may have occurred if studies had been unclear about the composition of their sample data.

Recommendations for policy, practice and research

The results can help agencies, administrators and staff to form effective approaches for retaining healthy child welfare professionals and build and maintain a more stable workforce. Ultimately a stable workforce means a more effective one for the clients it serves (Shim, 2010; Maslach et al., 1997).

Recommendations for policy and practice

Within policy there must be room for control and flexibility for the professional with appropriate rewards for the job they're performing. If the professional experiences control and autonomy this may act as a buffer against burnout and increases their satisfaction in the job. Receiving adequate rewards for the hard work these professionals perform helps to retain staff and prevent burnout among workers. Furthermore, policy should focus on a manageable workload. If employees perceive their workload as manageable they are less likely to develop

burnout. This is of importance for a well-functioning practice with little staff turnover. A practice with more experienced and happy employees is better able to help the children and families they serve. To help organizations in achieving this ideal the focus should be on creating positive relationships with coworkers and managers in the workplace. This helps professionals to feel emotionally supported and competent in their job. Positive relations with coworkers and managers can prevent burnout. Supervision sessions that support the professional and don't take up too much of the already little time available are beneficial to the organization as a whole. Furthermore, supervision can have a mediating effect on the role of work-family conflict on burnout development. These supervision sessions should take place in a space where the worker feels safe and heard. On top of that, agencies as a whole should foster a work environment in which all employees feel safe, despite their race or skin color, to maximize worker well-being and minimize turnover.

Recommendations for research

Since a lot of the literature is based on child welfare systems in the United States, future research should focus on different child welfare systems in different countries. This allows policy to be better applied to specific child welfare systems in the future. Furthermore, future research should focus on the interrelations between individual factors (i.e. job tenure, education level, gender etc.) and organizational factors to create a more complete overview of all the possible factors contributing to burnout in the child welfare workfield. To better understand the causal relation between the variables, upcoming studies on organizational factors and burnout should examine the associations between the variables using longitudinal data. The main focus should be on the effects of social support and inclusion in decision making on burnout development, due to the found contradictory and inconclusive results.

Conclusion

In view of the impact of burnout on the individual well-being and health of workers (Lizano & Barak, 2015), and the following impact of turnover on the effectiveness of organizations (Shim, 2010), efforts should be geared toward raising awareness about the organizational factors that contribute to burnout. Especially as it relates to the risks identified in the present scoping review. Due to this complex field with many interrelated factors, it's important that a multi-faceted approach to burnout prevention is adopted by child welfare agencies that are at high risk of staff burnout, to create a positive organizational climate and culture (Shim, 2010), and prevent burnout and staff turnover (Travis et al., 2015; McFadden et al., 2017).

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Appendix A

Review protocol

The sources had to be peer-reviewed and published after 2010. The studies selected were limited to English or Dutch language. To be included, papers had to focus on professionals in child protection or child welfare work. This was the first criterion that was looked at. The next criterion that was taken into account was that the study had to contain information about the development of burnout or stress in these child protection professionals or the intention to leave. Furthermore, the article had to contain organizational factors that could be related to the development of burnout, stress or the intention to leave.

Appendix B

Search query

Database	Search	Hits
PsycINFO	(child protection or child welfare) AND (burnout or burn-out or burn out or stress) AND (culture or cultural or ethnicity or identity or values)	150
PsycINFO	(child protection or child welfare or youth services) AND (burnout or burn-out or burn out or stress) AND (culture or cultural or ethnicity or identity or values)	277
PsycINFO	(child protection or child welfare or youth services) AND (profession* or worker) AND (burnout or burn-out or burn out or stress) AND (organizational* or workplace or environment or work* factors)	167
SocIndex	(child protection or child welfare or youth services) AND (profession* or worker) AND (burnout or burn-out or burn out or stress) AND (organizational* or workplace or environment or work* factors)	119
MEDLINE	(child protection or child welfare or youth services) AND (profession* or worker) AND (burnout or burn-out or burn out or stress) AND (organizational* or workplace or environment or work* factors)	63

The term ‘youth services’ was added to broaden the search and find more relevant articles. The search ‘culture or cultural or ethnicity or identity or values’ was changed to ‘organizational* or workplace or environment or work* factors’ to have a more specific search. The terms ‘profession* or worker’ were added to find less articles about the effects of burnout on children and more about the development of burnout in the professional. Finally the search was done in three databases: PsychINFO, SocIndex and MEDLINE, to find as many relevant articles as possible.

Final search (PsycINFO):

<https://exports.ebscohost.com/sdc/271746ec-ce6a-4f76-9625-21cef721d1fa.zip>

Final search (SocIndex):

<https://exports.ebscohost.com/sdc/a80b3835-0d5e-4db4-9a12-69f93caff036.zip>

Final search (MEDLINE):

<https://exports.ebscohost.com/sdc/e2fb1070-5857-4e7a-9de1-346936c4e2e5.zip>

Appendix C

Excel template overview

Nr	Author(s), year of publication	Title	Publisher	Methodology	Participants	Geographical location	Abstract	Main findings	Limitations
1	Authors name	Full title		Framework			Full abstract by author	Types of organizatio nal factors	Limitations of the study