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Organizational, Supervisory, and Team Factors that Reduce Intention to Leave Among Public Child Welfare Workers
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The Problem
- High Turnover Rates in Child Welfare
  - Average annual turnover amongst child welfare workers tends to be around 26 percent.
  - Each turnover has been shown to cost child welfare agencies 70 percent of a worker's average salary.
  - Reducing turnover by half could provide enough savings to the average child welfare agency to increase staffing levels by over 10 percent.

Existing Literature
- High turnover trends have led to recent increases in the examination of factors associated with child welfare turnover.
  - Focus on personal and organizational factors.
  - Recognized need to use multivariate analyses.

- Health science research has led in related work noting the importance of psychological safety.
  - Group member learning and performance.
  - Engagement in quality improvement work.
  - Problem-solving efficacy and system improvement.
  - Care provider engagement.

- Our Hypothesis: That team psychological safety will reduce worker psychological safety in direct service roles (n=995).

Proposed Model
- The results of confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model suggested that the Support from Supervisor and Empowering Leadership Variables should be combined in the structural model.
- Intraclass correlations (ICC) and random group resampling (RGR) statistics revealed significant within group reliability and within group agreement at the level of work-unit. These results lead to the use of a sandwich estimator to provide robust standard error estimates in the structural model.

Final Model
- As can be seen above, there is a significant and positive association between supervisory quality and psychological safety (β = .64, P < .001) as well as a significant and positive association between human resource primacy and psychological safety (β = .13, P < .001).
- The estimated R² for psychological safety in the model is .53. There is also a significant and positive association between human resource primacy and turnover intention (β = .46, P < .001, R² = .22).

Data Source and Methods
- A survey was administered statewide to public child welfare social workers with an overall response rate of 96% (n=1479).
  - Our current analysis focused on a subset of this sample; workers serving in direct service roles (n=995).
  - After confirmation of the theoretical model, data were analyzed through structural equation modeling.

Conclusion
- High turnover rates and high levels of turnover intention have characterized social work in child welfare settings for several decades.
- The current study contributes to the broader literature addressing child welfare worker turnover intention by assessing the hypothesized association between turnover intention and work-unit psychological safety.
- This study appears to be the first study of child welfare staff retention that adequately accommodates supervisory unit-level clustering of variables. This study also incorporates perceptions of organizational and unit level characteristics.