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## **Societal Factors Impacting Child Welfare: Re-validating the Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale**

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# Societal factors impacting child welfare: Re-validating the Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale



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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This research examines the psychometric properties of the Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale (PCWS) by seeking to understand the differences between workers' perceptions of how society views them based upon job title by revalidating the PCWS with a sample of administrators and clinicians.

**Methods:** Confirmatory factor analysis was utilized to analyze data on 165 administrators and 153 clinical child welfare workers.

**Results:** The final model consisted of three latent variables with ten indicators related to stigma, value, and respect ( $[X^2] = 167.6$ ,  $[p] = 0.00$ ;  $[RMSEA] = 0.07$ ;  $90\% [CI]: 0.06–0.09$ ;  $[CFI] = 0.95$ ;  $[TLI] = 0.95$ ).

**Discussion:** The factors found in the previous study were confirmed using an entirely different sample of child welfare workers. The factors *value*, *stigma*, and *respect* were confirmed across the sample based upon whether the workers were administrators or clinicians. This provides reassurance that measuring how workers perceive they are viewed by those outside the child welfare system does not vary based upon job title.

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## 1. Introduction

Previous research has identified that the way in which child welfare workers believe they are perceived by society has an impact on the way in which they work and even on their intentions to remain employed (Auerbach et al., 2015; McGowan, Auerbach, Conroy, Augsberger, & Schudrich, 2010). This research looked at the workforce as a whole without regard to the various roles individuals play within their organizations; however, prior studies have indicated that job title influences individuals' beliefs, thoughts, and behavior at work (Schudrich, Auerbach, Liu, Fernandes, & McGowan, 2012; Schudrich et al., 2013).

The current study seeks to understand what differences, if any, there are between workers' perceptions of how society views them based upon job title by revalidating the Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale (Auerbach et al., 2015) with a sample of administrators and clinicians employed at twelve voluntary agencies in a large northeastern state.

### 1.1. Literature review

Over the past decade, numerous studies have explored the individual and organizational factors influencing job satisfaction, retention and

turnover in the child welfare workforce. Individual factors include education level, personal and professional commitment, work/life balance, and professional recognition (Ellett, Ellett, & Rugutt, 2003; McGowan et al., 2010; Nissly, Barak, & Levin, 2004). Organizational factors include agency culture, salary, workload, promotion potential, and support from administrators, supervisors and co-workers (Augsberger, Schudrich, Auerbach, & McGowan, 2012; Cahalane & Sites, 2008; Ellett et al., 2003; Ellett, Ellis, Westbrook, & Dews, 2007; Ellett, 2000; Kim & Kao, 2014; McGowan et al., 2010; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Nissly et al., 2004; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2007). In recent years, child welfare researchers have begun examining the influence of societal factors, such as workers' perceptions of the way they are regarded by the public, on job satisfaction, retention and turnover (Auerbach et al., 2015; Lawrence, Zeitlin, Auerbach, & Claiborne, 2015; McGowan et al., 2010; Schudrich et al., 2012).

### 1.2. Public perceptions of child welfare

The general public has limited first-hand knowledge or experience with the social work profession. Thus, media portrayals of ineffective, untrained, and even cruel social workers influence the way the public views social workers, in general, and child welfare workers, specifically. Zugazaga, Surette, Mendez, and Otto (2006) surveyed 665 Masters' level social workers in Florida using the Media Perception Scale and found that social workers felt both the news and entertainment media

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portrayed social workers negatively, with the news media portraying them more negatively than the entertainment media. The authors stress the power of the media to influence public perception: “In contemporary society, the media have a crucial role in forming and shaping public opinion” (Zugazaga et al., 2006, p. 632).

Due to the nature of their work with vulnerable children and families, child welfare workers are subject to intensified media attention, especially surrounding the death of a child in care (Briar-Lawson, Martinson, Briar-Bonpane, & Zox, 2011; Regehr, Chau, Leslie, & Howe, 2002; Thomlison & Blome, 2012). Westbrook, Ellis, and Ellett (2006) held focus groups with 21 supervisors employed in child welfare for eight years or more. Study participants “...emphasized that media attention and scrutiny of child protection services agencies and employees, and the attendant stress, was much greater today than when they were initially employed” (Westbrook et al., 2006, p. 50).

Public perceptions of child welfare workers influence organizational policy and practice. On an organizational level, negative attention influences agency climate, which can result in a culture of tension, fear and distrust (Chibnall et al., 2003; Ellett et al., 2007). It may also influence human resource decisions such as the hiring and firing of agency staff (Ellett et al., 2007). On a practice level, negative attention impacts individual decisions workers make regarding children and families on their caseload (Chibnall et al., 2003). For example, a worker may advocate placing a child in out-of-home care as a “safer” placement option than preventive services in the home (Shdaimah, 2010).

Child welfare workers' perceptions of how the public views their role and work is also related to job satisfaction and turnover. In a study of voluntary child welfare workers, McGowan et al. (2010) found that participants considering leaving their jobs perceived the public (i.e. media, government, family, friends) to have more negative views of their work compared to participants not considering leaving. The *Perceptions of Child Welfare Scale* (PCWS) used to measure public perceptions in McGowan et al. (2010) and other studies (Auerbach, McGowan, Augsberger, Strolin-Goltzman, & Schudrich, 2010; Lawrence et al., 2015) is comprised of three latent variables: *stigma*, *value* and *respect*, and fourteen indicators of these variables (Auerbach et al., 2015).

### 1.3. Job category and job satisfaction

The research incorporating societal factors looks at child welfare workers in general but does not account for potential differences due to job category. Based on surveys with 925 public child welfare staff workers, Strand and Dore (2009) found that managers had significantly higher job satisfaction than supervisors and line staff. On several measures of job satisfaction (e.g. supervision, regard for co-workers, pay, and communication), supervisors had the lowest level of job satisfaction. The authors' note that supervisors in the agency are primarily responsible for ensuring that line staff adhere to court-mandated review criteria, which can take away from their “customary supervisory role of teaching and mentoring line staff which is what provides intrinsic satisfaction to those occupying that role” (Strand & Dore, 2009, p. 396). Because managers are responsible for meeting child welfare mandates, they may not be able to empathize with supervisors' frustration surrounding bureaucratic paperwork, which may result in supervisors feeling “unsupported and unfairly burdened” (Strand & Dore, 2009, p. 396).

Similarly, in a study of turnover among rural and urban child welfare staff, Aguiniga et al. (2013) found that supervisors were more likely to report intent to leave the organization compared to line staff. While job category has been found to influence job satisfaction and intent to leave, researchers note that job satisfaction and intent to leave may have more to do with organizational factors than job title alone (Aguiniga, Madden, Faulkner, & Salehin, 2013; Schudrich et al., 2012; Schudrich et al., 2013).

### 1.4. Study rationale

In recent years researchers have begun examining the role of public perceptions on child welfare workers' job satisfaction and intent to leave. Auerbach et al. (2015) developed the PCWS, which was validated on a sample of voluntary child welfare staff. As a result of the validation, the scale was reduced to three latent variables with a total of 14 items. The present study contributes to the literature by revalidating the PCWS with a sample of administrators and clinicians employed at twelve voluntary agencies in a large northeastern state, specifically looking for potential differences in this scale due to job role.

## 2. Methods

The Institutional Review Boards at The University at Albany and Yeshiva University approved this study.

### 2.1. Sampling

Data for this study was obtained from a sample of 930 child welfare workers employed in voluntary child welfare agencies. The sample represented the various roles of staff within the agencies including administrators, supervisors, clinical workers, educators, and child care workers.

Voluntary agencies in this locale are private agencies that are under contract with the public child welfare system to provide preventive and other child welfare services such as foster care. All workers in these agencies were invited, but not required, to participate in the study. Study participants completed the pencil and paper survey in groups without administration present and were assured confidentiality by the researchers. Participants were informed that they did not have to complete the survey at all and/or could partially complete the survey. Participants were provided a meal upon entering the data collection room as an incentive to participate. Ultimately, a response rate of 84% was achieved.

### 2.2. Measurement

Data collected included demographic information, workers' perceptions of how they thought the outside world viewed their work and workers' perceptions regarding job satisfaction.

Prior to validation (Auerbach et al., 2014), the original PCWS was a 29-item Likert scale. Items probe the worker on his or her perceptions of how those outside of child welfare view the work they do. Examples of items include, “The media provides a balanced view of our work,” “Government officials understand the needs of child welfare workers,” and “Most people blame the child welfare worker when something goes wrong with a case.” Items in the PCWS are recorded on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The scale is scored by adding all items after reverse scoring negative ones.

Job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1985). The JSS is designed to measure job satisfaction in human service organizations by assessing nine aspects of job satisfaction: (1) pay, (2) promotion potential, (3) supervision, (4) fringe benefits, (5) contingent rewards (appreciation and recognition), (6) operating procedures, (7) coworkers, (8) nature of work, and (9) communication. It is a 36-item self-report questionnaire that uses a 6-point Likert scale with items ranging from 1 = disagree very much to 6 = agree very much, with some items reverse scored. Each of the subscales incorporated four items. Reported reliability for this scale is high with total satisfaction coefficient alpha = 0.91. Coefficient alphas for the subscales range from 0.60 (coworkers) to 0.82 (supervision). The only modification was to use a 4-point rating scale ranging from 1 = agree strongly to 4 = disagree strongly, with some items reverse scored. This modification was made so the JSS could use the

same format as other scales in the survey. Other research indicates that this modification does not impact reliability (Auerbach et al., 2010; Augsberger et al., 2012; McGowan et al., 2010; Schudrich et al., 2012; Schudrich et al., 2013).

In the current study job satisfaction was measured by a total of each of the subscales.

### 2.3. Model specification

The purpose of this confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was to confirm the existence of the three latent exogenous variables, identified in previous research, based upon job roles (Auerbach et al., 2014). As a result, the authors considered for inclusion in the final model each of the previously identified subscales in the PCWS. In this case, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to identify the best-fitting model for this data. Because the sample consisted of clinical workers and administrators from the same agencies, it was assumed that they shared many of the same work experiences. As a result, we used a group model assuming invariance (i.e., equal unstandardized coefficients) for the latent constructs *respect*, *value*, and *stigma* between the groups (Kline, 2011). Although in this type of analysis coefficients are compared across groups, it is considered a single model.

## 3. Results

As mentioned, the purpose of this study is to validate the Perception of Child Welfare Workers scale on another sample. A total of 318 workers were included in the final analysis including 165 administrators and 153 clinical workers.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), a form of structural equation modeling (SEM), was utilized to validate the PCWS. CFA is a model that examines the relationship between observed indicators and latent constructs (Brown, 2006; Kline, 2011). It is theoretically driven and is frequently used to examine the psychometric properties of measurement instruments (Brown, 2006). Analysis was conducted with MPlus 7 using the weighted least squares with missing values (WLSMV) estimator (Muthen & Muthen, 2010).

In general, SEM can be used to confirm an a priori model, test alternate models, or generate models (Joreskog, 1993). Use of SEM for model generation has three requirements (Kline, 2011). First, the model should be theoretically logical; next, the model should be “reasonably parsimonious,” (p. 8), and, finally, the model should statistically fit the data. Model generation is the most commonly used application of SEM. In this study, the model generating form of SEM was employed by re-specifying the initial model based upon the theoretical concepts identified in the literature.

Criterion validity assesses the relationship of a studied measure to a known predictor (Rubin & Babbie, 2013). In this study, the authors assessed the validated model for criterion validity by examining the relationship of identified dimensions of the PCWS to workers' job satisfaction and whether or not the participants were administrators or clinical workers, as the literature suggests a relationship between perceived public perceptions of child welfare workers and various aspects of job satisfaction (Ellett et al., 2007; Zugazaga et al., 2006).

### 3.1. Description of the sample

As is common in child welfare, the majority of the workers in the sample were female ( $n = 215$ ; 68.47%). The workers were predominantly white ( $n = 248$ ; 81.6%). Half (50.9%) were married, and the next largest group (36.5%) was never married. In terms of education, 63.8% held a bachelors' degree or higher, with 24.1% of the final sample holding a Master's in Social Work. The largest group of workers ( $n = 66$ ; 22.6%) had a salary of over \$50,000 per year. Household income for the workers was higher with the largest group of workers having household income of greater than \$70,000 per year ( $n = 120$ ; 44.1%) while the next largest group ( $n = 37$ ; 13.56%) had a total household income between \$35,000 and \$45,000. The average age of respondents was 38.2 years ( $SD = 13.0$  years).

Administrators were older with a mean of 42.2 years ( $SD = 13.0$  years) compared to clinical workers with a mean of 33.8 years ( $SD = 11.2$  years). This difference was statistically significant ( $t = 5.9$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ;  $df = 301$ ). A larger proportion of administrators (39.5%) were male as compared to only 23.0% of clinical workers being male (Fisher's exact = 0.002). Finally, as expected, administrators had higher salaries with 38.1% of them earning more than \$50,000 compared to only 6.9% of clinical workers ( $X^2 = 55.7$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ).

For slightly over half of the sample ( $n = 164$ ; 52.6%), this was their first job in child welfare. The majority ( $n = 207$ , 67.1%) of participants said that child welfare was not their first choice of fields in which to work. Still, over three-quarters ( $n = 235$ , 78.1%) would make the same decision to take their current job if they could turn back the clock. A larger proportion of clinical workers, 59.5%, indicated child welfare was their first choice of fields in which to work compared to 40.6% of administrators (Fisher's exact = 0.015).

Table 1 describes the sample in detail.

### 3.2. SEM results

As in the previous validation of the PCWS, the three latent constructs *respect*, *value*, and *stigma* were confirmed in this study for both

**Table 1**  
Characteristics of the sample.\*

Demographic	Clinical				Administrators				Test statistic
	n	%	Mean	SD	n	%	Mean	SD	
Age			33.85	11.19			42.18	13.30	$t = -5.88^*$
Gender									Fisher's exact = 0.002
Female	117	76.97			98	60.49			
Male	35	23.03			64	39.51			
Race/ethnicity									$X^2 = 6.57$
White	117	80.69			131	82.39			
Black	12	8.28			15	9.43			
Hispanic	5	3.45			4	2.52			
Asian	1	0.69			0	0			
Other	10	6.90			9	5.66			
Education									$X^2 = 13.36^*$
Social work degree	51	34.23			26	16.45			
No social work degree	98	65.77			132	83.55			
Total job satisfaction			95.29	12.18			99.18	11.22	$t = -2.52^*$

\* Denotes  $p \leq 0.05$ .

**Table 2**  
Standardized estimates for exogenous covariates on latent variables by group.

Latent variables	Covariates	Standardized estimates (sig) (SE)	
		Administrators	Clinical workers
<i>Respect</i>			
PCW10	The work I do is valued by others.	0.76 (0.00) (0.04)	0.72 (0.00) (0.05)
PCW5	People make me feel proud about the work I do.	0.88 (0.00) (0.03)	0.78 (0.00) (0.04)
PCW2	People feel that child welfare work is important.	0.77 (0.00) (0.04)	0.81 (0.00) (0.04)
<i>Value</i>			
PCW19	Most people blame the child welfare worker when something goes wrong with a case.	0.68 (0.00) (0.08)	0.63 (0.00) (0.07)
PCW6	People just don't understand what you have to go through to work in child welfare.	0.52 (0.00) (0.07)	0.42 (0.00) (0.07)
PCW17	Government officials only pay attention to our work when there is a serious incident.	0.69 (0.00) (0.08)	0.67 (0.00) (0.08)
<i>Stigma</i>			
PCW25	I feel uncomfortable admitting to others that I am a child welfare worker.	0.58 (0.00) (0.07)	0.58 (0.00) (0.05)
PCW27	Most of my friends and family act like they don't want to know anything about my work.	0.62 (0.00) (0.05)	0.54 (0.00) (0.05)
PCW7	When people find out I am a child welfare worker, they seem to look down on me.	0.90 (0.00) (0.04)	0.75 (0.00) (0.05)
PCW26	People look down on my work because of the types of clients I serve and the needs they have.	0.67 (0.00) (0.05)	0.72 (0.00) (0.06)

administrators and clinical workers. However, the total number of items was reduced to 10.

The first latent factor, *respect*, was made up of three observed variables. Factor loadings for this subscale ranged from a low of 0.72 (“The work I do is valued by others”) for clinical workers to a high of 0.88 (“People make me feel proud about the work I do”) for administrators. As displayed in Table 2, all relationships were significant at the  $p = 0.00$ -level.

The second latent factor, *value*, consisted of four items. Factor loadings for this construct ranged from 0.63 (“Most people blame the child welfare worker when something goes wrong with a case”) for clinical workers to 0.69 (“Government officials only pay attention to our work when there is a serious incident”) for administrators. All relationships were significant at the  $p = 0.00$ -level.

The final latent factor, *stigma*, consisted of four items with factor loadings ranging from a low of 0.54 (“I feel uncomfortable admitting to others that I am a child welfare worker”) for clinical workers to a high of 0.90 (“When people find out I am a child welfare worker, they seem to look down on me”) for administrators. Like the other factors, all relationships were significant at the  $p = 0.00$ -level.

For the administration group, the correlation between the latent constructs *respect* and *value* was 0.71 and for the clinical workers the correlation was 0.79. For administrators the correlation between *respect* and *value* was 0.04, and it was 0.27 for clinical workers. Finally, for

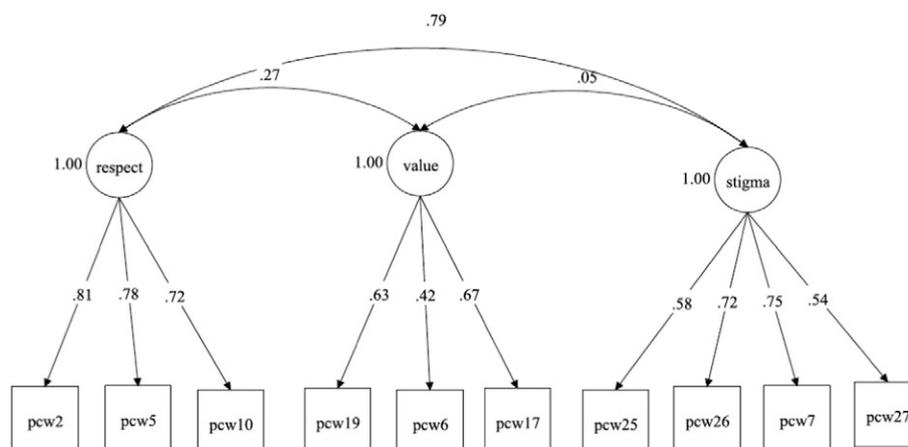
administrators, the correlation between *value* and *stigma* was 0.10 and it was 0.05 for clinical workers.

As mentioned, a group analysis assuming invariance (i.e., equal unstandardized coefficients) comparing administrators to clinical workers, except for  $X^2$ , fit statistics could only be calculated for the entire model. Fit statistics for this model suggested that the data fit the model well, although the  $X^2$  was significant ( $X^2 = 167.6$ ;  $df = 88$ ;  $p = 0.00$ ). The  $X^2$  contribution was 82.8 for administrators and 84.8 for clinical workers respectfully. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), a measure of badness-of-fit, was 0.07 with a 90% confidence interval ranging between 0.06 and 0.09, which is considered an acceptable range (Kline, 2011).

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was used to assess the model's goodness-of-fit. CFI values greater than or equal to 0.95 are considered to be indicative of a good fitting model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The CFI for this model was 0.95.

The Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI) was also used to assess the model's goodness-of-fit. This index is often used in combination with RMSEA and CFI to confirm the goodness-of-fit of SEM models in social work research (Bowen & Guo, 2012). Similar to the CFI, values greater than or equal to 0.95 are considered to be indicative of a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The TLI for this model was 0.95.

Given the excellent fit of this model the hypothesis that the latent factors are invariant between groups is confirmed. The best fitting



**Fig. 1.** CFA results for clinical workers.

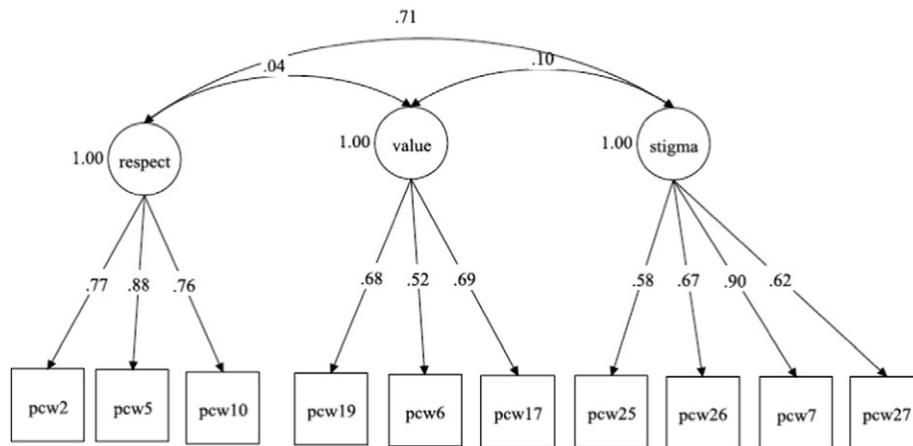


Fig. 2. CFA results for administrators.

model for both groups was comprised of three factors consisting of three observed variables for both *respect* and *value* and four observed variables for *stigma*. These are displayed separately for each group in Figs. 1 and 2.

### 3.3. Criterion validity

To assess for criterion validity, the authors first created subscales for the validated constructs of the PCWS. To create each of the subscales, a mean for the items in each construct was created for each respondent. Therefore, total scores on each subscale could range from one to four. To measure total job satisfaction, each subjects' responses to the JSS were added together. Scores could range from a low of 36 to a high of 144. For the total sample, the mean level of job satisfaction was 97.32 (SD = 11.83) with a minimum score of 65 and a maximum score of 134. Additionally, clinical workers were coded as 0 and administrators were coded as 1.

Three models were generated using multiple regression with total job satisfaction as the dependent variable and each of the PCWS subscales, one for each model, as predictors along with job title (administrator vs. clinical workers). Results are displayed in Table 3.

Each of the predictors in each of the models was statistically significant as was each of the total models themselves. For the *respect* subscale, each unit increase in respect was associated with a nearly 8-point increase in total job satisfaction when shifting from being a clinical worker to becoming an administrator. The entire model was significant, as illustrated in Table 3. For the *value* subscale, each unit increase in value was associated with a 3.05 increase in total job satisfaction when shifting from being a clinical worker to becoming an administrator. This model was also significant, as illustrated in Table 3. Finally, for the *stigma* subscale, each unit increase in stigma was associated with an 8.32-point increase in total job satisfaction when shifting from being a clinical worker to becoming an administrator. Again, this model was significant, as illustrated in Table 3.

## 4. Discussion

Findings from this research add to the literature in a number of ways. Most importantly, they confirm the findings from previous research validating this scale demonstrating that workers' perceptions of how those outside the child welfare system view them is, indeed, made up of three constructs: *value*, *stigma*, and *respect* (Auerbach et al., 2014). High factor loadings and small standard errors ranged from 0.03 to 0.08 for the three latent factors are suggestive of convergent validity. Furthermore, low correlations between the latent factors imply that they are independent of each other, which is indicative of discriminant validity.

The outcome of this research was a more parsimonious scale, which reduced the number of items in two of the subscales, *value* and *respect*, from the previous validation study (Auerbach et al., 2015). For the *value* subscale three items were dropped from the previously validated instrument. They are, "Most people think that child welfare workers do too little to help the children and the families who are their clients," "The government should take more responsibility for improving child welfare services," and "Most people wonder how I can do this kind of work." For the *respect* subscale, one item, "Most people respect you for your choice to work in child welfare," was removed from the final model. A ready-to-use copy of the complete validated scale is included in Appendix A.

It is promising that the factors found in the previous study were confirmed using an entirely different sample of child welfare workers despite the workers being employed in different settings. Additionally, in this research, the factors *value*, *stigma*, and *respect* were confirmed across the sample based upon whether the workers were administrators or clinicians. This study, then, provides reassurance that measuring how workers perceive they are viewed by those outside the child welfare system does not vary based upon job title.

Individual items associated with the *respect* subscale were related to the value and importance workers believe that society places on their work. Individual items associated with the *stigma* subscale were related to the degree to which workers believe others look down on their work. Finally, individual items associated with the *value* subscale were related to attention received by child welfare workers.

The results of the three regression models indicated a significant relationship between each of the identified factors in the PCWS and overall job satisfaction regardless of job role with one exception. When controlling for respect, being an administrator was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction, although it approached significance ( $p = 0.06$ ). In all cases, however, the regression models were significant indicating the predictive nature of each of the subscales to overall job satisfaction

Table 3  
Predicting total job satisfaction from each subscale of PCWS.

		Coefficient	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Model 1	Respect	7.95	1.36	5.85	0.00	5.27–10.62
	Administrator	2.74	1.47	1.87	0.06	−0.15–5.63
	$F = 20.85$ ; $p = 0.00$ ; adjusted $R^2 = 0.15$					
Model 2	Value	3.05	1.48	2.05	0.04	0.12–5.98
	Administrator	3.72	1.55	2.41	0.02	0.67–6.78
	$F = 5.40$ ; $p = 0.01$ ; adjusted $R^2 = 0.04$					
Model 3	Stigma	8.32	1.50	5.56	0.00	5.37–11.26
	Administrator	4.14	1.46	2.83	0.01	1.26–7.02
	$F = 19.15$ ; $p = 0.00$ ; adjusted $R^2 = 0.14$					

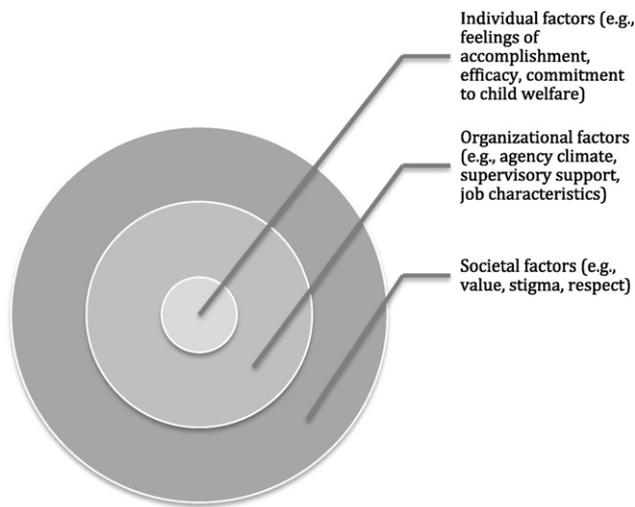


Fig. 3. Individual, organizational and societal factors related to child welfare workers' job satisfaction.

regardless of job role. This indicates good criterion validity for the PCWS.

This study also adds to the literature by confirming that workers' perceptions of how they are respected are important to them in a substantive way. In previous research, workers' perceptions of respect were significantly predictive of their intentions to remain employed and were associated with other workforce outcomes including willingness to do assigned tasks and engagement on the job (Abd-Elmotaleb, Saha, & Hamouda, 2015; Augsberger et al., 2012). This highlights the need to study the impact of perceived respect in future research with child welfare workers.

With regard to the job satisfaction literature, previous research has identified both individual and organizational factors related to job satisfaction (Barth, Lloyd, Christ, Chapman, & Dickinson, 2008; Dickinson & Perry, 2003; Landsman, 2001). Findings from this study (e.g. the relationship between job satisfaction and how workers believe they are perceived by those outside the child welfare system) suggest a more complex relationship between individual, organizational and societal factors and overall job satisfaction, as illustrated in Fig. 3.

#### 4.1. Limitations

A significant limitation to this study is that all workers in the sample were employed in voluntary agencies. While the previous validation study used a completely different sample, those workers were also employed in voluntary agencies. Therefore, there is no way to tell if the findings from this study would be applicable to those employed in public agencies as previous research has indicated that these workforces possess different characteristics (Auerbach et al., 2010). Therefore, we recommend replicating this study with a sample of workers employed in public child welfare settings.

Prior research has focused mainly on individual and organizational factors impacting job satisfaction. The revalidation of the PCWS provides researchers a useful measure of workers' understanding of how they believe those outside the child welfare system view their work. It offers insight into the influence of various factors including stigma, value and respect. Additionally, it is important to understand that the PCWS can be used effectively for both clinicians and administrators.

## Appendix A. Perceptions of child welfare

The purpose of this survey is to gain your perception of the general public's view of child welfare workers.

Below is a list of statements about how various individuals and groups perceive child welfare. For each statement, please indicate if you: Strongly disagree (SD); disagree (D); agree (A) strongly agree (SA).

	SD	D	A	SA
1. People feel that child welfare work is important.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. People make me feel proud about the work I do.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. People just don't understand what you have to go through to work in child welfare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. When people find out I am a child welfare worker, they seem to look down on me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The work I do is valued by others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Government officials only pay attention to our work when there is a serious incident.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Most people wonder how I can do this kind of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I feel uncomfortable admitting to others that I am a child welfare worker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. People look down on my work because of the types of clients I serve and the needs they have.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Most of my friends and family act like they don't want to know anything about my work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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