

Functionality of the Family System of professional foster Parents in the Context of socio-demographic Characteristics

E. Gazikova (Elena Gazikova), G. Sebokova (Gabriela Sebokova), J. Gabura (Jan Gabura), M. Mojtova (Martina Mojtova), M. Kozubik (Michal Kozubik)

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, SK

Original Article

E-mail address:

egazikova@ukf.sk

Reprint address:

Elena Gazikova
Department of Social Work and Social Sciences
Faculty of Social Sciences and Health Care
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
Kraskova 1
949 74 Nitra
Slovak Republik

Source: *Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention*
Pages: 8 – 17

Volume: 14
Cited references: 21

Issue: 3

Reiewers:

Michael Costello
University of Scranton school of education, USA
Gabriela Lezcano
University of California, San Francisco, USA

Keywords:

Olson's circumplex Model. Professional foster Parents. Family Cohesion. Family Adaptability. Family Communication.

Publisher:

International Society of Applied Preventive Medicine i-gap

CSWHI 2023; 14(3): 8 – 17; DOI: 10.22359/cswhi_14_3_02 © Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention

Abstract:

Objective: The aim of the present study was to analyse the perceived functionality of the family system in relation to selected socio-demographic characteristics in professional foster parents.

Design: Comparative and quantitative research.

Participants: The research sample consisted of 203 professional foster parents.

Methods: The functionality of the family system was measured using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale - FACES IV. The Family Communication Scale and Family Satisfaction Scale was administered to determine communication and satisfaction with the family system.

Results: The results indicate that professional foster parents perceive the family system as functioning, healthy, with good communication and are satisfied with its functioning. The results of the statistical analyses did not confirm the association between the perceived functionality of the family system and the number of biological children, the number of children placed in the professional foster family so far and the education of the professional foster parent. Men and women differed in their perceptions of family cohesion, with women perceiving families as more cohesive and family functioning as healthier and more functional. As the age of professional foster parents increased, the perception of the family as emotionally alienated and dissatisfaction with functioning of the family increased too. The results also indicated that professional foster parents living in a partnership/marriage perceived the family system as more cohesive than professional foster parents without a partner/spouse.

Conclusion: The results of the research indicate the importance of understanding the family system of professional foster families and are relevant to the effective application of a systems approach by social workers when working with professional foster families.

Introduction

Professional foster parents provide care for children removed from their natural family environment. The goal of professional foster parenting is not to establish a long-term relationship with the child, but to return the child to his/her biological family or to place the child in foster care or adoption (Búšová, 2008). When talking about professional foster families, it is necessary to look at them as a system that is made up of professional foster parents, their life partners, their biological children and the children placed in the professional foster families.

We take a systems approach to the family, which focuses on the processes taking place in the family and on the causes of family dysfunctions and difficulties of family members. The system provides a set of interconnected cause and effect relationships, creating an effective model for working with professional foster families. If the function of one element in the system changes, it can affect the functioning of the whole system. Thus, the family functions as a system, and therefore experts understand that effective work with the family means systemic work with the whole family (Gabura, Gažíková, 2021). According to Minuchin (2003), the professional working systemically with the family

takes into account the whole field of the family and does not get carried away with details that would limit the perception of other contexts. A professional foster family is an open system, just like a biological family. The individual elements of this open system, i.e. the subsystems, the family members, are in constant interaction (Becvar, Becvar, 2018).

In our study, we rely on the Olson's circumplex model of the couple and family system. This model describes family functioning through three basic dimensions - cohesion, adaptability and communication (Olson, 1993).

Family cohesion is defined as the physical and emotional closeness of family members. Cohesion is made up of five levels that range from alienated, somewhat interconnected, interconnected, very interconnected, and overly interconnected cohesion. According to Olson and Gorall (2006), the three middle levels form a balanced system and represent the optimal way for families to function. The two extreme levels represent an unbalanced system and point to problematic family functioning.

Family adaptability measures the quality and expression of roles, rules, organisation, and leadership in the family. A systems understanding of the family suggests that families require both sta-

bility and change, as they must meet individual needs while maintaining a sense of stability (Minuchin, 2003). Adaptability is made up of five levels and ranges from rigid, somewhat flexible, flexible, very flexible to chaotic adaptability. The three middle levels of adaptability are considered balanced and are associated with healthy development of the individual and the whole system. The two extremes represent an unbalanced system and pose a risk to healthy family functioning in the long run (Olson, & Gorall, 2003).

Family communication is a facilitating dimension because it helps family members to adjust their level of cohesion and adaptability according to changing situational or developmental conditions. It contains several elements of communication that are applied in the family system. These include listening skills, communication skills, a tendency toward self-disclosure, clarity, effective problem-solving skills, the abil-

ity to stay on topic, and respect and respect for the communication partner (Olson, 1993; Olson, Gorall, 2003). Olson's circumplex model has been used in a number of research studies that have focused on perceiving family functioning from the perspective of parents (Boyras, Sayger, 2011; Gupta, Bowie, 2016; Lei, Kantor, 2020). Research focusing on the family functioning of children in foster care and their foster carers has been conducted by Stone and Jackson (2021).

The aim of the present study was to analyse the perceived functionality of the family system in relation to selected socio-demographic characteristics in professional foster parents.

Methods

Research sample

The research sample consisted of 203 respondents working as professional foster par-

Table 1 Descriptive characteristics of socio-demographic variables of professional foster parents

	n	M	SD	skew	kurt
Age of PFF	203	48.43	9.02	-0.40	-0.30
Number of biol. children	203	2.05	1.38	1.62	8.11
Number of children in the PFF	203	7.25	6.76	2.67	10.48
Duration of carrying out professional foster parenting	203	7.47	5.31	0.50	-0.12

Table 2 Descriptive characteristics of socio-demographic variables of professional foster parents

		N	%
Gender	Male	20	9.9%
	Female	183	90.1%
Education	Secondary school without diploma ("maturita")	23	11.3%
	Secondary school with diploma ("maturita")	147	72.4%
	University	33	16.2%
Status	With a partner	155	76.4%
	Without a partner	48	23.6%
Residence	Urban area	64	31.5%
	Rural area	139	68.5%
Does the partner carry out professional foster parenting too?	Yes	33	16.3%
	No	170	83.7%

ents. The mean age of respondents was 48.43 years ($SD=9.02$), they had an average of 2 biological children ($SD=1.38$), and by the time of the research they had practised professional foster parenting for an average of 7.47 years ($SD=5.31$) and had had an average of approximately 7 children placed ($SD=6.76$).

They were mostly women ($n=183$, 90.1%), with a secondary school diploma (called “maturita” in the Slovak Republic) ($n=147$, 72.4%), living with their life partner/spouse ($n=155$; 76.4%) in a rural area ($n=139$, 68.5%), while their life partner/spouse did not usually carry out professional foster parenting with them (83.7%).

More detailed descriptive characteristics are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Research methods

Family system functioning was measured using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale (FACES IV) self-report questionnaire (Olson, 2010) that allows to determine the manifestations of a balanced (functional) and unbalanced (dysfunctional) family system. Family communication was measured using the Family Communication Scale (Olson, Barnes, 2010) that allows to determine positive aspects of communication - the ability to exchange emotional and factual information between family members, and the level of satisfaction and perceived ease with family communication. Finally, the Family Satisfaction Scale (Olson, 2010) was used to measure the extent to which family members feel satisfied with cohesion, adaptability, and communication. All questionnaires are part of the Family Assessment Package currently available from Life Innovations, Inc.

Dimensions of family system functioning observed:

- **Balanced cohesion** - measures the ability of family members to maintain both mutual cohesion and autonomy, to engage in joint and individual activities, to spend appropriate amounts of time together, to make decisions together and support each other.
- **Balanced adaptability** - measures the ability of family members to balance between stability and change, the degree of democratic leadership, involvement of all family members in decision-making, flexibility of roles and rules.

- **Intertwined cohesion** - measures excessive emotional closeness and dependence of family members, lack of independent, non-family interests, activities, friends and individual time spending of family members, demanding loyalty.
- **Alienated cohesion** - measures emotional alienation of the family members, low involvement in family life, high individual independence, individual activities, interests and time-use, and inability to support each other.
- **Rigid adaptability** - measures rigidity in family decision making, roles and rules, autocratic leadership and control by one family member - the leader.
- **Chaotic adaptability** - measures unreliability and unpredictability of leadership, ambiguity of rules, roles and tasks, impulsivity in decision making and shifting of responsibilities among family members.
- **Flexibility, Cohesion and Whole Circumplex Model Relative Scores** - determines the overall level of functionality/dysfunctionality of the family system. The lower than 1 - the more unbalanced, unhealthy, dysfunctional the system is, the higher than 1 - the more balanced, healthier, more functional the system is.
- **Family communication** - measures the positive aspects of family communication, the ability to exchange emotional and factual information between family members, and the degree of satisfaction and perceived non-coercion with family communication
- **Family Satisfaction** - measures the extent to which family members feel happiness and fulfilment in the family. Participants comment on their level of satisfaction with three dimensions of family functioning - cohesion, adaptability and communication.

Statistical analysis

SPSS 21 software was used for statistical data processing. In the first step, the descriptive characteristics of the family system dimensions were computed across the entire sample, and we verified that the variables meet the conditions of a normal distribution by means of the skewness and kurtosis distribution indicators. We then focused on analysing differences in the dimensions of family functioning with respect to socio-demographic characteristics. Due to the fail-

ure to meet the normal distribution conditions, nonparametric tests were used.

Results

The results showed that most of the family system dimensions examined are not normally distributed. Respondents scored higher than average on the balanced cohesion, communication, and satisfaction scales and, conversely, scored

lower than average on the unbalanced dimensions of chaotic adaptability and alienated cohesion. Overall, the mean and median values show that respondents reported higher than mean values in the balanced dimensions and lower than mean values in the unbalanced dimensions (Tab. 3).

The results of Spearman's rank order analysis showed (Tab. 4) that the age of the professional foster parent was statistically significantly

Table 3 Descriptive characteristics of dimensions of family functioning in the whole sample

	n	M	SD	Md	skew	kurt
Balanced cohesion	203	31.78	3.40	33	-1.41	2.47
Balanced adaptability	203	29.63	3.64	30	-.94	1.86
Intertwined cohesion	203	15.06	3.83	15	.91	3.39
Alienated cohesion	203	12.56	4.22	12	1.53	4.35
Rigid adaptability	203	17.23	4.61	18	.18	.16
Chaotic adaptability	203	11.61	4.41	11	1.63	4.29
Ratio cohesion score	203	2.42	0.62	2.42	0.08	-0.13
Ratio adaptability score	203	2.17	0.60	2.15	0.79	1.13
Total ratio score	203	2.30	0.55	2.28	0.21	0.19
Family communication	203	44	5.94	46	-1.17	1.01
Family satisfaction	203	43.87	6.26	45	-1.69	4.77

Table 4 Correlation of age, number of biological children, children placed in the PFFs, and length of professional foster parenting and family system dimensions

	Age	Biol. children	Children in the PFF	Length of professional foster parenting
Balanced cohesion	-0.13	-0.01	-0.07	-0.11
Balanced adaptability	-0.15*	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03
Intertwined cohesion	0.10	0.01	-0.09	0.00
Alienated cohesion	0.25**	0.14	0.08	0.19**
Rigid adaptability	-0.07	0.08	-0.09	0.01
Chaotic adaptability	0.16*	0.09	0.01	0.10
Ratio cohesion score	-0.26**	-0.09	-0.02	-0.16*
Ratio adaptability score	-0.13	0.13	0.03	-0.07
Total ratio score	-0.22**	-0.12	0.00	-0.14*
Family communication	-0.14*	0.00	-0.06	-0.16*
Family satisfaction	-0.21**	-0.08	-0.08	-0.18*

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

negatively but weakly correlated with balanced adaptability ($r=-0.15^*$), and positively weakly correlated with alienated cohesion and chaotic adaptability ($r=0.025^{**}$ and $r=0.16^*$, respectively). The relationship with the ratio score reflecting the overall level of functionality also proved significant; both the cohesion ratio score and the overall system ratio score correlated weakly negatively with age.

A negative statistically significant, weak relationship was also observed between age and family communication and satisfaction ($r=0.14^*$ and $r=0.21^{**}$, respectively).

Neither the number of biological children nor the number of children placed in the PFF so far was related to perceptions of family functioning.

The length of carrying out professional fos-

ter parenting was statistically significantly too, positively weakly correlated with alienated cohesion and negatively correlated with cohesion ratio scores, total ratio scores, and communication and satisfaction. However, the relationships were weak to insignificant ($r=-0.14$ - -0.18).

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test showed (Tab. 5) that men and women differed statistically significantly in their perceptions of balanced cohesion, with women perceiving families as more cohesive ($p < 0.01$). Differences also emerged in the ratio scores, women perceived family functioning in terms of cohesion, adaptability and the whole system as healthier/more functional than men ($p < 0.05$). In terms of substantive significance, there were small differences ($r=0.16$ - $r=0.21$).

Table 5 Gender differences in the functioning of the PFF

	Gender	n	M	SD	Md	U	sig
Balanced cohesion	Male	20	29.85	3.54	30	1,078.50	0.002
	Female	183	31.99	3.33	33		
Balanced adaptability	Male	20	28.10	4.54	28	1,386.50	0.74
	Female	183	29.79	3.5	30		
Intertwined cohesion	Male	20	16.20	5.55	15	1,677.50	0.54
	Female	183	14.94	3.60	15		
Alienated cohesion	Male	20	14.15	5.89	13	1,430.00	0.12
	Female	183	12.38	3.98	11		
Rigid adaptability	Male	20	18.70	5.70	18	1,578.50	0.31
	Female	183	17.07	4.46	17		
Chaotic adaptability	Male	20	13.00	6.03	12	1,496.50	0.18
	Female	183	11.45	4.19	11		
Ratio cohesion score	Male	20	2.12	0.59	2.07	1,253.00	0.021
	Female	183	2.45	0.61	2.43		
Ratio adaptability score	Male	20	1.90	0.59	1.69	1,231.50	0.016
	Female	183	2.20	0.60	2.21		
Total ratio score	Male	20	2.01	0.56	1.89	1,196.50	0.011
	Female	183	2.33	0.54	2.33		
Family communication	Male	20	43.10	6.17	45.5	1,644.00	0.454
	Female	183	44.11	5.92	46		
Family satisfaction	Male	20	42.55	6.02	42.5	1,536.00	0.236
	Female	183	44.02	6.28	46		

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test showed (Tab. 6) that professional foster parents living with a partner/spouse rate the family system as more cohesive ($p < 0.01$) and overall more functional ($p < 0.05$) compared to professional foster parents without a partner. However, in terms of substantive significance, the differences are small ($r = 0.15-0.18$).

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test showed no statistically significant differences in the dimensions of the family system with respect to residence of the PFF, to carrying out professional foster parenting by the partner, and to education.

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to analyse the perceived functionality of the family system

in relation to selected socio-demographic characteristics in professional foster parents. The socio-demographic characteristics examined were gender, age, marital status, residence, education, length of time carrying out professional foster parenting, number of biological children, number of children placed in the professional foster family, and carrying out professional foster parenting by the partner.

Overall, the professional foster parents rated the functioning of the family system as functional and healthy, with a good level of communication, and they were satisfied with the functioning of the family. Similar results were reported by Tramonti et al. in their research. (2019), where a balanced family system was confirmed in the families studied. We see our results as positive, as a functioning professional foster family sys-

Table 6 Differences in family functioning due to marital status

	Status	n	M	SD	Md	U	sig
Balanced cohesion	Without a partner	48	30.65	3.95	31	2,804.50	0.009
	With a partner	155	32.13	3.15	33		
Balanced adaptability	Without a partner	48	28.73	4.12	29	3,145.00	0.104
	With a partner	155	29.90	3.44	30		
Intertwined cohesion	Without a partner	48	15.17	3.75	15	3,697.50	0.949
	With a partner	155	15.03	3.87	15		
Alienated cohesion	Without a partner	48	13.54	4.58	13	3,079.50	0.070
	With a partner	155	12.25	4.08	11		
Rigid adaptability	Without a partner	48	17.75	3.70	19	3,337.50	0.281
	With a partner	155	17.07	4.86	17		
Chaotic adaptability	Without a partner	48	11.40	3.90	11	3,693.50	0.940
	With a partner	155	11.67	4.57	11		
Ratio cohesion score	Without a partner	48	2.25	0.61	2.21	2,907.50	0,022
	With a partner	155	2.48	0.61	2.43		
Ratio adaptability score	Without a partner	48	2.03	0.48	2.07	3,247.00	0.183
	With a partner	155	2.21	0.63	2.19		
Total ratio score	Without a partner	48	2.14	0.51	2.12	2,961.50	0.033
	With a partner	155	2.34	0.55	2.36		
Family communication	Without a partner	48	43.02	6.34	45.5	3,233.50	0.169
	With a partner	155	44.32	5.8	46		
Family satisfaction	Without a partner	48	42.48	7.77	43.5	3,287.00	0.221
	With a partner	155	44.30	5.67	46		

tem is crucial for the harmonious development of children placed in these families. Kelly (2017) points out that these children are among the most vulnerable groups as most of them experienced maltreatment, substance abuse by the parents, poverty and neglect in their original families. As a result of neglect, children placed in foster families often suffer from mental health issues (Jaffee, 2017). The results of Szcześniak & Tulecka's (2020) research on the functioning of the family system showed that life satisfaction is positively and significantly correlated with cohesion, adaptability, and communication. On the other hand, our results related to a functional and healthy family system of professional foster families may be biased due to the respondents' desire to show family functioning in a better light, which may be based on the fact that professional foster parents are employees of the Centres for Children and Families and their activities are regularly monitored.

The results of statistical analyses did not confirm any differences in the perception of the functionality of the family system with respect to education, i.e. professional foster parents are satisfied with their family system regardless of their education. On the contrary, several authors have pointed out in their research the association between the level of education and the functioning of the family system from the parents' perspective, in favour of parents with higher education (Koutra et al., 2013; Lei, Kantor, 2020; Pereira, Texeira 2013). Similarly, differences in perceptions of family functioning with respect to residence and whether the spouse of the professional foster parent is carrying out professional foster parenting too have not been confirmed.

The research results confirmed significant associations between perceptions of the family system and the age of professional foster parents. The older the professional foster parent, the greater the perceived emotional alienation of family members, low involvement in family life, high individual independence, individual activities, interests and time spending, and inability to support each other. Related to this was less satisfaction with family functioning. However, the relationships are weak overall, indicating that age explains only 6.3% and 4.4% of the variability in perceived family cohesion and satisfaction with family functioning, respectively. This is

also related to the increasing age of biological children and children placed in professional foster families who are gradually becoming independent, which may be perceived as emotional alienation by professional foster parents.

Differences in perceptions of the family system with respect to the gender of professional foster parents were demonstrated, which corresponds with the results of the research by Popelka and Shebokova (2015), which confirmed gender differences, with women showing higher scores on family cohesion compared to men. In contrast, Pereira and Texeira (2013) and Saroura and El Keshky (2021) did not observe differences in family system cohesion and adaptability between genders. It was also confirmed in our research that women perceived family functioning as healthier and more functional than men. Family cohesion is the emotional bond that family members feel for each other. At one extreme end of the cohesion dimension, there is an exaggerated identification with the family that can make contact with the outside world problematic; at the other extreme, there are strictly autonomously living family members who are relationally unconnected. Oscillation around the centre of the continuum of cohesion and independence includes individuals who live somewhat independently of their family and at the same time manage to be relationally and instrumentally connected to their family (Gabura, Gažíková, 2021).

Differences have also been demonstrated with respect to the marital status of professional foster parents. Professional foster parents living in a partnership/marriage rated family cohesion of family members as higher than professional foster parents without a partner/spouse. Overall, professional foster parents living in a partnership/marriage perceived family functioning as healthier and more functional than professional foster parents without a partner/spouse. Similar results were also noted by Lei and Kantor (2020) in their research, with respondents who lived with a partner or spouse scoring higher on cohesion and adaptability. Also Wagner et al. (2010) found that families that were made up of only one parent were perceived as less cohesive than families with both parents.

A strength of our study is the research focus on professional foster parents' perceptions of the

functionality of the family system, which has not previously been a focus of studies in the area of family system research. Another strength is that almost one-third of all professional foster parents in the Slovak Republic participated in the research. Its limitation is the absence of studies focusing on the functioning of the foster family system. Another limitation can be considered to be the online form of data collection, where it is not certain that professional foster parents filled in the questionnaires independently and did not subjectively “embellish” their answers in favour of a functioning family system.

Conclusion

The results of our study showed that professional foster parents perceive the family system as functioning, healthy, with good communication and are satisfied with its functioning. Perceptions of the functioning of the family system are not influenced by socio-demographic characteristics other than age, gender and marital status. Women in partnerships perceive families as more cohesive; on the contrary, the perception of the family as emotionally alienated increases with age. The results contribute to a better understanding of the functioning of the professional foster family system.

Funding

This paper was written as part of the project VEGA No. 1/0868/21 The use of selected elements of the systems approach in the context of professional families.

References

1. BECVAR R J, BECVAR D S (2018) Systems Theory and Family Therapy: A primer. Hamilton Books. 106 p.
2. BOYRAZ G, SAYGER T V (2011) Psychological Well-Being Among Fathers of Children With and Without Disabilities: The Role of Family Cohesion, Adaptability, and Paternal Self-Efficacy. *American Journal of Men's Health* 5(4): 286-296. DOI: 10.1177/1557988310372538.
3. BUSOVA K (2008) Professional surrogate parenting - the family environment in residential care. *Educator*, LVI(6): 12-16.
4. GABURA J, GAZIKOVA E (2021) Theoretical background and methods of work with the family. *Nitra: FSVaZ UKF v Nitre*, 392 p.
5. GUPTA G, BOWIE C R (2016) Family cohesion and flexibility in early episode psychosis. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*. 1-7. DOI: 10.1111/eip.12384.
6. JAFFEE S R (2017) Child maltreatment and risk for psychopathology in childhood and adulthood. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, 13, 525–551. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032816-045005>.
7. KELLY W (2017) *Understanding Children in Foster Care: Identifying and addressing what children learn from maltreatment*. Palgrave Macmillan. 232 p.
8. KOUTRA K, TRILIVA S, ROUMELIOTAKI T, LIONIS CH, VBONTZAS A N (2013) Cross-cultural Adaptation and Validation of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales IV Package. *Journal of Family Issues*, 34(12): 2-26. DOI: 10.1177/0192513X12462818.
9. LEI X, KANTOR J (2020) Study on Family Cohesion and Adaptability of Caregivers of Children with ASD and Its Influencing Factors. *Social psychology and society* 11(3):70-85. DOI: 10.17759/sps.2020110305.
10. MINUCHIN S (2003) *Families & Family Therapy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
11. OLSON D H (1993) Family Continuity and Change. A Family Life-Cycle Perspective. In: Brubaker TH (Ed.). *Family Relations. Challenges for the Future*. USA: SAGE Publications, Inc., pp.17-40.
12. OLSON D H (2010) *FACES IV Manual*. Minnesota: Life Innovations, Inc.
13. OLSON D H, BARNES H (2010) *Family Communication*. Minnesota: Life Innovations.
14. OLSON D H, GORALL D M (2003) Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems. In: Walsh F (Ed.). *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity*. The Guilford Press, pp. 514–548. DOI: 10.4324/9780203428436_chapter_19.
15. OLSON D H, GORALL D M (2006) *FACES IV and the Circumplex Model*. Minnesota: Life innovations, Inc.
16. PEREIRA G M, TEIXEIRA R J (2013) Por-

- tuguese validation of FACES-IV in adult children caregivers facing parental cancer. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 35(3): 478-490. DOI: 10.1007/s10591-012-9216-4.
17. POPELKOVA M, SEBOKOVA G (2015) The family system and its place in adolescent development. Nitra: University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra. 137 p.
 18. SAROUR E O A, EL KHESKY E S (2021) Investigating the Psychometric Properties of Arabic Version of the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale IV (FACES IV) in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Family Issues* 0(0): 1-21. DOI: 10.1177/0192513X211033936.
 19. STONE K J, JACKSON JO (2021) Linkin Foster Family Characteristics and Mental Health Symptoms of Youth. *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 30, 2792–2807. DOI: 10.1007/s10826-021-02107-x.
 20. SZCZESNIAK M, TULECKA M (2020) Family Functioning and Life Satisfaction: The Mediatory Role of Emotional Intelligence. *Psychology Resaerch and Behavioral Management* 13: 223-232. DOI: 10.2147/PRBM.S240898.
 21. TRAMONTI F, PETROZZI A, BURGALASSI A, MILANFRANCHI A, SOCCI C, BELVISO C, MAINARDI C, ALBANESI G, GUGLIELMI P (2019) Family functioning and psychological distress in a sample of mental health outpatients: Implications for routine examination and screening. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*. 1-6. DOI: 10.1111/jep.13253.