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Occupational Burnout of Public Administration Employees and Its Impact on the Functioning of Their Families — an Analysis of Selected Studies

**Wypalenie zawodowe pracowników administracji publicznej i jego
wpływ na funkcjonowanie ich rodzin – analiza wybranych badań**

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Abstract

Aim. This article examines the psychological implications of occupational burnout among public administration employees, with a focus on its impact on family functioning. Drawing on selected empirical studies, the aim is to identify key antecedents and symptoms of burnout and to examine how prolonged work-related stress may disrupt family dynamics, particularly parenting and the modelling of adaptive behaviours.

Methods and materials. The article is a narrative literature review based on an analysis of national and international research findings concerning burnout in public sector occupations.

Results and conclusion. Findings indicate that burnout in public administration is a widespread and multifactorial phenomenon, driven by chronic exposure to organisational stressors such as excessive workload, time pressure, unstable regulatory frameworks, legal

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overregulation, and escalating competence demands. Additional contributing factors include limited decision-making autonomy, lack of recognition, deficient communication, and value conflicts. Psychological vulnerability—especially high neuroticism—further increases susceptibility to burnout. Quality of workplace relationships, particularly with supervisors and peers, also plays a moderating role. Critically, the effects of burnout transcend the occupational domain, adversely affecting the individual's emotional availability and relational functioning within the family system. This can impair parenting efficacy, contribute to intergenerational transmission of stress, and undermine overall family well-being. Thus, burnout among public sector employees should be conceptualised not only as an occupational health issue but also as a systemic social concern. Addressing it requires a comprehensive approach combining preventive and therapeutic interventions at both organisational and individual levels.

Keywords: public administration, family functioning, occupational stress, burnout, employee evaluation

Abstrakt

Cel. Celem artykułu jest analiza wpływu zjawiska wypalenia zawodowego u pracowników administracji publicznej na funkcjonowanie ich rodzin na podstawie wybranych badań. Przegląd literatury ogniskuje się na zdiagnozowaniu głównych przyczyn i symptomów wypalenia oraz ukazaniu jego destrukcyjnego wpływu na prawidłowe funkcjonowanie rodziny, w tym wychowywanie dzieci i kreowanie właściwych wzorców.

Metody i materiały. Artykuł ma charakter przeglądowy i opiera się na analizie wyników badań krajowych i międzynarodowych.

Wyniki i wnioski. Analiza wybranych badań implikuje twierdzenie, że wypalenie zawodowe wśród pracowników administracji publicznej jest zjawiskiem powszechnym i złożonym. Pracownicy administracji publicznej nie odbiegają w tym zakresie od innych grup zawodowych. Głównymi czynnikami ryzyka są tutaj: przeciążenie pracą, presja czasu, zmieniające się i powielane regulacje prawne i procedury, inflacja przepisów prawa oraz oczekiwań co do wiedzy i umiejętności, jakie musi przyswoić pracownik administracji publicznej, ponadto niska autonomia, brak uznania i wsparcia, niedostateczna komunikacja, a także konflikty wartości. Istotne znaczenie mają tu jednak również cechy osobowości, jak np. neurotyczność, która zwiększa podatność na wypalenie, a także jakość relacji z przełożonymi i współpracownikami. Niezależnie od powyższego wypalenie zawodowe pracownika administracji ma destrukcyjny wpływ na funkcjonowanie jego rodziny, co powoduje, że nie jest ono problemem jedynie danego pracownika, ale problemem społecznym. Zwalczanie zjawiska wypalenia zawodowego w administracji publicznej wymaga systemowego podejścia obejmującego zarówno działania prewencyjne, jak i interwencyjne na poziomie organizacyjnym i jednostkowym.

Słowa kluczowe: administracja publiczna, funkcjonowanie rodziny, stres zawodowy, wypalenie zawodowe, ocena pracownicza

Introduction

The phenomenon of burnout is currently recognised as one of the most serious problems affecting working people and, as such, one of the most important challenges facing contemporary societies. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) indicate that burnout is a long-term response to chronic stress resulting from misunderstandings and tensions in interpersonal relationships in a work environment. These authors distinguish three dimensions that make up the psychological profile of this phenomenon: 1) emotional exhaustion, 2) depersonalisation, and 3) reduced self-esteem, manifested mainly in the depreciation of one's achievements (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). The modern world of work is placing increasingly difficult expectations on people. Work is no longer just a source of income. It is also an important element of identity, a sense of meaning in life, belonging to a specific environment, and professional satisfaction. Nowadays, work is no longer just a means of supporting oneself and one's family; it is no longer treated as an object, but has become a *de facto* means of empowering the person performing the work.

Unfortunately, as requirements increase, so do stress and tension among employees. When prolonged and uncontrolled, the latter can lead to burnout. Although initially identified mainly among doctors and nurses, there is now no doubt that burnout can also affect other professions. A common feature of professions in which this phenomenon is noticeable is teamwork and direct contact with the recipients of the work. These include teachers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, therapists, managers and, finally, public administration employees.

This text is a review of the literature. The paper aims to analyse and systematise available publications on burnout among public administration employees and its impact on the functioning of their families. The issue discussed in the paper is considered particularly important from the perspective of scientific research and expanding knowledge in the field.

The term *burnout* was introduced half a century ago by Freudenberger (1974, 1975, 1977). Richelson then developed his concept, defining burnout as a state of exhaustion resulting from involvement in an idea or relationship that has not produced the expected results. It is the body's response to chronic stress related to work. This reaction includes emotional, cognitive and behavioural experiences, resulting in psychophysiological changes. The effects of this exhaustion affect not only the employee who experiences it, but also the entire organisation in which they work (Freudenberger

& Richelson, 1980; Heinemann & Heinemann, 2017; Kaschka *et al.*, 2011). Siegall and McDonald (2004) emphasise that prolonged exposure to such factors can lead to so-called *chronic subthreshold stress*, resulting in burnout. Staten and Lawson (2017) emphasise that constantly rising expectations and pressure at work could lead to chronic fatigue and permanent burnout.

According to Hobfoll (2011) and his definition published in Resource Conservation Theory (COR), burnout is the result of chronic stress associated with the loss of personal resources, such as energy, time or social support, as well as the inability to recover them, while having previously been significantly committed to achieving a goal. A central element of this theory is the so-called *loss spiral*, understood as a process in which the loss of resources causes further personal losses, which in turn increases the risk of burnout (Hobfoll, 2011).

According to Bakker and Demerouti (2014) and their concept contained in the Job Demands and Resources Model, every job involves certain challenges, such as time pressure, emotional strain, a specific environment, as well as specific resources, such as social support and a sense of autonomy. A high level of challenges combined with a low level of resources can lead to burnout, while increasing the level of resources can counteract the negative effects of stress and increase the employee's resilience to various types of expectations imposed on them.

It is worth emphasising that although burnout stems from factors closely related to work, its consequences go beyond the professional sphere and spill over into the private life of the employee, including their family life. As a result of burnout, an employee may experience serious mental disorders that affect their physical health. The effects also extend to the employee's relationships with those around them, especially their loved ones. It is worth mentioning here the research by Lubrańska (2012), who showed that burnout extends beyond the work environment and has a direct impact on the employee's family life. Burnout can lead to interference between the professional and private spheres, resulting in the transfer of tension and stress from work to home and, consequently, a deterioration in family relationships. Burned-out people also struggle more often with somatic complaints, which also disrupt their functioning in social and family life. The author draws particular attention to the importance of social support from close family members, but also from friends, colleagues, and superiors. According to Lubrańska, this support is one of the main resources that protects against burnout. Strong and well-functioning family relationships may act as a buffer, mitigating the effects of occupational stress and strengthening an individual's mental resilience.

In public administration in the broad sense, excessive workload and the responsibility associated with performing duties are the first and most common risk factors. Some civil servants are burdened with an increasing number of tasks that need to be performed within rigid, regulation-bound organisational structures and under time

pressure exerted both by legal standards and by their immediate superiors. Contrary to expectations, technological development has not proved to be a remedy in this respect. As a result of this development, work has not only failed to become easier, but on the contrary, it has become more complex and requires systematic improvement of not only substantive but also strictly technical qualifications. In addition, there are demotivating factors such as frustration resulting from inequality in the allocation of tasks and remuneration of administrative staff, the need to make decisions in accordance with the instructions of superiors but contrary to their internal convictions, a low level of autonomy and a high level of subordination, and finally, a lack of personal development. The level of satisfaction and motivation of public administration employees is also negatively affected by objectively low salaries of substantive employees, lack of acceptance and appreciation from immediate superiors or even colleagues, as well as a deficit of social recognition for the results of their work. Another significant problem is the phenomenon of community breakdown, consisting of a progressive reduction in cooperation between employees and a lack of willingness to help one another, which ultimately leads to a weakening or even severing of ties and to increasing distance or even hostility between colleagues, which in turn deepens their isolation and sense of meaninglessness. Finally, the conflict of values manifested in the lack of consistency between the official mission of public administration and the reality of work in the office causes internal opposition, discord, cognitive dissonance and moral fatigue. Research by Siegall and McDonald (2004) suggests that value alignment between employees and organisations plays a key role in preventing burnout and may influence how employees allocate their time between different job responsibilities (Siegall & McDonald, 2004).

According to Weber and Jaekel-Reinhard (2000), burnout is the result of chronic work-related stress and is particularly noticeable in emotionally demanding environments (entrepreneurs, doctors, lawyers, or civil servants) with low levels of support and social acceptance. Burnout is not just a problem for the individual employee suffering from the syndrome. The consequences of this phenomenon are also felt by the organisation in which the employee works. What is more, these effects are measurable and can be seen in a decline in productivity, increased absenteeism, staff turnover and a deterioration in the working atmosphere (Haar, 2006; Weber & Jaekel-Reinhard, 2000). The roles played by HR departments in organising training, providing opportunities for professional development, and practical organisational measures such as regular breaks, meetings, team-building trips, and taking into account the individual needs of employees are crucial in combating burnout (Edmondson & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2021). Preventing burnout should begin at the organisational level, first by identifying organisational sources of stress, stimulating improvements in the quality of profes-

sional relationships, creating a culture based on mutual respect and support, and caring for mental and physical health (Bruce, 2009; Hyett & Parker, 2015).

Baka (2011) proved that difficulties in balancing work and family life are significantly connected with professional burnout. By studying teachers, he showed that difficulties in reconciling professional and family roles increase the level of exhaustion and generate distance from work. This, in turn, leads to burnout through the excessive exploitation of personal resources, such as time, physical and mental energy. Baka emphasises that environmental and personality factors jointly influence the development of burnout. The author also confirmed that a sense of self-efficacy acts as a mediator between family-work conflict and professional burnout. People who perceive themselves as effective in their actions are less prone to burnout, while those who do not see the effects of their work or whose work is devalued are more prone to burnout, especially when family responsibilities interfere with their professional tasks. The results of Baka's research confirm that burnout is not only the result of excessive work, but also a consequence of an imbalance between work and family life.

A study conducted by Haar (2006) demonstrated the impact of various types of stressors in the workplace on burnout in the context of New Zealand employees. The author divided stressors into two basic categories: 1) challenge stressors, associated with a sense of high responsibility or time pressure, perceived as opportunities for development and achievement, 2) hindrance stressors, which include bureaucracy and unclear roles, perceived as obstacles to achieving professional goals. According to Haar's concept, hindrance stressors are strongly associated with higher levels of burnout, while challenge stressors not only have less negative effects on mental health but can sometimes even increase employee engagement. The author thus highlighted the importance of distinguishing between different types of stressors, which can improve stress management and prevent burnout.

It is also worth noting that the World Health Organisation (WHO) officially recognises burnout as a syndrome resulting from chronic stress at work. At the same time, the WHO acknowledges that the measures taken so far to eliminate this undesirable phenomenon are insufficient. Furthermore, burnout is listed in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a phenomenon affecting health and contact with the healthcare system (World Health Organization, 2019). According to the ICD-11, burnout is a phenomenon conceptually related to chronic stress in the workplace. It is characterised by three dimensions: 1) feelings of exhaustion, 2) increased mental distance from work and colleagues, as well as feelings of negativity/cynicism towards the idea of work, and 3) reduced professional efficiency (World Health Organization, 2019).

This is a review article. The literature selection was based on an analysis of research papers available in scientific databases such as PubMed and Google Scholar. The inclu-

sion criteria were: original empirical research, systematic reviews and meta-analyses in Polish and English. Forty publications were analysed, focusing on the latest findings and significant areas in the field.

Review of Research on the Public Administration Sector

The problem of burnout is increasingly affecting employees in the public administration sector. Przychocka and Lewiński (2024) point out that until recently, this professional group was overlooked or marginalised in research on burnout. Meanwhile, administrative workers are also exposed to this phenomenon, as well as chronic stress, procedural pressure, lack of influence on decisions that affect them personally, and insufficient support and appreciation.

Brijová, Mlynárová, Mlynár, Birknerová, and Uher (2022) researched the links between burnout, the personality traits of individuals experiencing burnout, and the factors determining burnout among public administration managers. They put forward the thesis that burnout is one of the most significant threats to modern organisations. This phenomenon affects not only the helping professions but also, and perhaps especially, managers, particularly those who work under significant pressure, in complex organisational structures and decision-making departments, and who have a high level of responsibility, as is the case in public administration (Brijová *et al.*, 2022). The study involved 226 managers from various public administration bodies at different levels (national, regional and local). The researchers used three tools: the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the NEO-FFI personality questionnaire, and a proprietary set of measures of burnout factors such as fatigue, stress, conflict, depression, and self-criticism. The results of this study showed that the most disturbing element of burnout among the employees surveyed was emotional exhaustion. At the same time, this exhaustion exceeded the threshold considered to be a symptom of burnout. Depersonalisation was on the verge of this threshold. As a result, some of the respondents began to distance themselves from their work and colleagues. At the same time, the respondents reported a high level of professional fulfilment. This, in turn, may indicate that administrative employees identify strongly with their professional role and have a certain resistance to burnout despite the heavy workload. From the above, it can be concluded that an employee's personality traits also have a significant impact on their susceptibility to burnout. Neuroticism proved to be the strongest correlation, as people with a significant level of this trait experienced fatigue and conflicts more often, were more susceptible to stress and tended to be self-critical, resulting in lower self-esteem. There was also a strong link between neuroticism and all measured burnout indicators. Interesting results were found for people who were agreeable, conscientious,

open to experience and extroverted—they experienced burnout symptoms much less frequently and at the same time reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Such individuals were also better psychologically adapted to cope with the demands of administrative work. They demonstrated greater flexibility, commitment, and emotional resilience. The researchers also found that the specific work environment in public administration causes numerous difficulties, such as rigid legal procedures, limited decision-making power of individuals (even when they hold managerial positions), constantly changing laws, legal inflation, insufficient incentive systems and often very limited influence on shaping one's working conditions. These factors can cause a deepening sense of frustration, especially in people with low mental resilience. The researchers recommend that a balance between work and private life be maintained at the individual level. They also recommend physical activity, avoiding stimulants and positive thinking (Brijová *et al.*, 2022). At the organisational level, they suggest introducing solutions such as regular performance reviews, clear remuneration rules, adaptation training, mentoring programmes, and creating conditions for better communication and integration within teams (*e.g.*, trips and integration meetings). Finally, the authors indicate that burnout in public administration is a real and genuinely threatening phenomenon, and its development depends both on the individual characteristics of a given person and on the environment, organisation and climate in which the work is performed. The authors emphasise that neuroticism significantly increases the risk of burnout, while traits such as conscientiousness, systematicity and extroversion have a protective effect. The research findings may prove useful not only for diagnosing the *status quo* of public administration employers but also for planning effective strategies to prevent burnout and support the mental health of managers in public administration (Brijová *et al.*, 2022).

Eldor (2018) attempted to explain how psychological support and compassion shown to employees by their superiors affect their psychological well-being and professional effectiveness in the public sector. The study was conducted in an Israeli social security institution and involved 166 employees from the broader public sector, their immediate supervisors and 333 citizens (clients of these institutions). This allowed data to be obtained from three independent sources and compared with each other. Compassion and stress were measured in the first phase of the study, while the consequences of work, including social engagement, burnout, knowledge sharing and readiness for civic behaviour, were assessed retrospectively after six months. Based on the research, it was found that compassion and psychological support from supervisors significantly increase employee engagement and reduce symptoms of burnout. The empathetic approach of management made employees more willing to share knowledge, demonstrate a creative approach to their tasks and exhibit a higher level of so-called *civic behaviour in the organisation*, such as a willingness to help or go

beyond their basic duties. Eldor (2018) also points out that compassion and empathy act as a kind of “buffer” in stressful work situations, as they reduce their negative effects on the employee’s psyche. Interestingly, a transfer effect of compassion has also been observed, whereby employees who experienced empathy from their superiors were more likely to show compassion towards customers, which in turn led to increased trust in public institutions, as confirmed by citizens’ assessments (Eldor, 2018).

Reference should also be made to research conducted by Basińska and Gruszczyńska (2019) on the relationship between emotional balance and the level of burnout among public administration employees. The study focused on analysing the balance (proportion) of positive and negative emotions, referred to as positivity. The study also attempted to demonstrate the impact of this balance on two main dimensions of burnout—exhaustion and detachment from work. The results of this study indicate that professional burnout should be seen as the result of chronic work-related stress, which consumes a lot of physical, emotional and cognitive energy. This stress also results in a deepening emotional distance from both work duties and colleagues. Similar conclusions were reached by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001), who treat burnout as a consequence of an unfavourable relationship between the expectations placed on an employee and the opportunities available to them. Importantly, they also indicate that the relationship between positivity and burnout is not linear but curvilinear, which means that positivity (the predominance of positive emotions over negative ones) protects against burnout only up to a certain point. As soon as the level of positivity exceeds a certain threshold, this rule can be reversed, paradoxically causing an increase in exhaustion and distance from duties and colleagues. Basińska and Gruszczyńska point to a similar phenomenon, suspecting that this may be related to the suppression of negative emotions, which in turn limits the ability to respond adequately to life’s problems and depletes mental resources (Basińska & Gruszczyńska, 2019). The authors also noted that in the longitudinal model, which included a four-month interval between measurements, there was an excessively high level of positivity, which could lead to exhaustion. In contrast, the balance between positivity and detachment was linear, meaning that higher positivity was associated with lower levels of detachment. Based on the above, the authors conclude that maintaining a consistently high level of positive emotions can be a burden for administrative employees, especially in a specific, bureaucratic work environment that does not allow for the open expression of negative emotions.

It is also worth mentioning the research conducted in 2018–2020 by Bąk and Wawrzyniak (2021), which seems to be the most comprehensive analysis of the diversity of burnout among public administration employees in Poland. This research was based on over 19,000 public administration employees. The aim of the study was not only to determine the scale of burnout, but also to identify differences between individual

regions and diagnose dependencies on characteristics such as gender and age. The study used a mental health self-assessment tool in which burnout was rated on a scale of 0 to 7, with a score of 4 or higher indicating the presence of burnout. The results showed that over 31% of public administration employees experience burnout, with more than half of them exhibiting severe symptoms. The highest level of burnout was recorded in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship (39.7%), while the lowest was in the Łódź Voivodeship (16.4%). Significant differences were also noticeable in relation to the relationship between burnout and age, as well as gender. For example, in the Silesian Voivodeship, the highest level of burnout (most often rated at 7) was found among men aged 40–59. In their conclusions, the authors emphasised that occupational burnout is one of the most serious contemporary health threats, affecting not only employed individuals but also the functioning of public institutions and, consequently, social life. It was also noted that the spatial variation of this phenomenon may be related to local working conditions, the level of workload and access to psychological support. They emphasise that identifying groups at particular risk, including middle-aged men in the Silesian Voivodeship, may allow for the precise targeting of preventive measures and increased support for employees in specific regions.

Kryshtanovych, Akimova, Akimov, Parkhomenko-Kutsevil, and Omarov (2022) addressed the issue of creative burnout among public education workers in Ukraine. The authors point out that the problem of professional burnout is becoming increasingly relevant in the context of contemporary social changes and growing expectations towards teachers. For this reason, this problem should be treated as a serious challenge to the mental health of public sector employees. The authors surveyed 250 employees working in 10 educational institutions. The results showed that 22.79% of respondents had a high or very high level of burnout, with symptoms of psycho-emotional exhaustion and personal withdrawal being the most prevalent (29.76% each). Burnout manifested itself in these employees through, among other things, distancing themselves from students, their parents and other employees of these institutions. A lack of motivation to perform tasks and a negative attitude towards their competencies were also noted. It was also noted that this condition was exacerbated by factors such as chronic stress, high levels of anxiety, lack of social support, including from employers, and excessive workload. Attention was also drawn to cognitive and social functioning disorders resulting from chronic mental tension (Kryshtanovych *et al.*, 2022).

Finally, in recent research from 2024, Tsipouri, Xanthopoulou, Sahinidis, Patitsa, Chalaris, and Kalogiannidis (2024) conducted an analysis of occupational stress and burnout among local government employees in Greece, focusing on the municipality of Xanthi. The study was based on structured interviews with 42 local government employees. It aimed to identify sources of stress, psychological effects and possible solutions from the employees' perspective. Among the main causes of stress, the re-

spondents mentioned staff shortages, ineffective management and unclear job roles (Tsipouri *et al.*, 2024). Burnout manifests itself through emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and a reduced sense of professional achievement. The identified causes have intensified their impact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, according to the respondents, disrupted the established rhythm of the office's functioning and thus significantly worsened working conditions. The findings confirm that internal factors related to work organisation, including management style and the quality of relationships between employees and between employees and employers, have a significant impact on stress levels and thus on the risk of burnout. Organisational strategies such as support from leaders, clear definition of roles and responsibilities, and promotion of work-life balance are important in preventing burnout (Tsipouri *et al.*, 2024).

The Impact of Burnout Among Public Administration Employees on the Functioning of Their Families

Burnout, a chronic state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced sense of personal achievement, is also a cause of disturbances in the private life of employees, particularly in the family. An increasing number of studies confirm that the consequences of burnout spill over into the family sphere, negatively affecting communication with closest family members, the quality of relationships and the overall mental well-being of the employee (Allgood *et al.*, 2024; Halbesleben *et al.*, 2009; Hill *et al.*, 2008).

Allgood, Jensen, and Stritch (2024), studying public administration employees in the US during the COVID-19 pandemic, found that conflict between work and family was a significant predictor of burnout. It has been proven that the higher the level of conflict between work and family life, the stronger the symptoms of burnout.

Halbesleben, Harvey, and Bolino (2009) analysed the relationship between professional commitment and work-family conflict. The authors noted that excessive commitment to work leads to a strain on personal resources, which results in a reduction in the ability to fulfil family roles and, consequently, deepens burnout. Transferring stress and frustration from work to family life can deteriorate relationships with partners and children (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2009).

Hill, Jacob, Shannon, Brennan, Blanchard, and Martinengo (2008) analysed the impact of flexible working conditions on preventing burnout and on family life. The study found that employees who have more freedom to regulate their working hours and the ability to tailor their professional responsibilities to their family needs experience less stress and, as a result, are less likely to show symptoms of burnout.

Flexible working conditions thus contribute to better family relationships and reduce tensions and conflicts between work and private life (Hill *et al.*, 2008).

Tabernacka (2019) in her study in the field of burnout syndrome in public administration reveals that burnout has a significant impact not only on the professional functioning of an individual, but also on their private life, including family life. Burnout is not only a problem for the individual, but also for their environment. The author emphasises that professional stress can affect family and social relationships, especially if the organisation does not recognise the individual as an employee and does not provide them with adequate support. The author draws particular attention to the destructive impact of rigid personnel policies, a directive style of management, rigorous monitoring and meticulous micromanagement of the process of performing duties instead of assessing specific work results. Referring to the research of Maslach and Leiter (2011) also emphasised that burnout is the result of the breakdown of a community of trust, which is evident, among other things, in frequent conflicts at work and a lack of employee engagement in mutual relations, which in turn translates into the employee's social life. Burnout is also the result of job instability resulting from the so-called *spoils system*, in which employment depends on unpredictable decisions dictated by short-term political considerations, which results in the breakdown of social bonds between employees. Lack of stability, excessive workload, lack of even potential opportunities to participate in shaping the way work is done, and the breakdown of a community based on trust in the workplace are factors that increase the risk of burnout and the transfer of tensions from work to the family environment. Tabernacka (2019) notes that an organisational climate based on mutual support and respect for the private life of employees, including the inviolability of their private time, is crucial in preventing burnout.

Mickiewicz, Babska, Günther-Jabłońska, and Głogowska (2016), studying the phenomenon of professional burnout among family assistants, found that it is not only related to their professional functioning but can also have a negative impact on their private lives, including family relationships. Psychophysical exhaustion, a sense of professional ineffectiveness, frustration and disappointment, which are the main dimensions of burnout, often lead to reduced job satisfaction and, as a consequence, increase the risk of transferring tension to personal life. Interestingly, the authors associate high social competence, especially in terms of relationships with close family members and assertiveness, with an increased level of protection against burnout. People with such resources are less likely to experience emotional stress that can negatively affect their family life and, as a result, function better at work.

Bombiak (2015) points out that stressors such as excessive responsibilities, lack of autonomy, or low support from superiors, which are typical of work in public administration, can lead to chronic stress and burnout. In turn, the consequences of occupational stress often spill over into family life, disrupting the work-life balance

and thus significantly reducing the time and attention devoted to relationships with family members (Bombiak, 2015).

Conclusion

Burnout is one of the most serious health challenges. According to the classic theory of Maslach and colleagues (2001), it is a three-dimensional syndrome comprising emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced sense of personal accomplishment. With the increase in employers' expectations of employees in both the private and public sectors, the risk of burnout is becoming more and more common. It no longer affects only medical professionals, entrepreneurs, managers or lawyers, but also public administration employees who work in conditions of increasingly complex legal regulations, bureaucratic restrictions, lack of appreciation for their work, unclear division of roles and low agency (Przychocka & Lewiński, 2024).

The research results mentioned above also clearly confirm that professional burnout has a powerful, multidimensional impact on family functioning. Public administration employees struggling with chronic occupational stress and symptoms of burnout, such as emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced sense of agency, are more likely to experience tensions in family relationships, communication difficulties and a decline in the quality of family life (Allgood *et al.*, 2024; Hill *et al.*, 2008).

A review of studies indicates that it is impossible to attribute burnout to a single, specific cause, as it is a multifactorial phenomenon. It is determined by both individual characteristics (*e.g.*, neuroticism—Brijová *et al.*, 2022) and the work environment (*e.g.*, directive management style, excessive workload, and unpredictable HR policy—Tabernacka, 2019; Tsipouri *et al.*, 2024). Empirical research confirms that organisational factors such as a lack of clear rules and division of roles, excessive control, low levels of recognition, and the breakdown of interpersonal relationships can significantly increase the risk of burnout (Bruce, 2009; Hyett & Parker, 2015). The research by Eldor (2018) is particularly valuable, as it showed that compassion from superiors not only reduces burnout and stress but also increases employee engagement and effectiveness in the public sector. What is more, empathy acts as a kind of buffer in difficult situations and can spill over into the relations between officials and citizens, improving the quality of service provided to applicants and the atmosphere and working climate in the office.

All the studies discussed confirm the thesis that burnout is a systemic phenomenon that requires a holistic approach, both at the individual level (prevention, development of emotional resilience, psychological support) and at the organisational level (management style, structural changes, work culture). Specific intervention strate-

gies and recommendations implemented consistently and coherently can significantly reduce the negative effects of burnout in public administration.

It should be noted that the contemporary context of management in administration is not conducive to employment stability. Makasheva, Makasheva, Gromova, Ishtunov, and Burykhin (2016) note that the unfavourable socio-economic situation, as well as international and political tensions, mean that managers employed in administration are increasingly experiencing feelings of depression, uncertainty, overstimulation, and mental overload.

Allgood, Jensen, and Stritch (2024) have shown that conflict between professional duties and family life is a strong predictor of burnout among public administration employees. This can be observed primarily in crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In turn, research conducted by Halbesleben, Harvey, and Bolino (2009) demonstrates that uncontrolled professional commitment leads to the depletion of personal resources, resulting in increased conflicts with loved ones and a weakening of roles played within the family. According to Mierzejewska, Wasilewski, and Jankowski (2021), burnout leads to emotional withdrawal, irritability and growing conflicts in relationships with loved ones, even though the direct source of these conflicts is the work environment and not the family. In response to the above, Hill and colleagues (2008) emphasise the importance of organisational flexibility as a protective mechanism that creates opportunities to adapt work to family needs. This possibility reduces stress and improves the quality of an employee's private life.

The conclusions drawn from the analysed studies are consistent: burnout affects not only the individual but also their social environment, including, in particular, the family in which the employee functions daily. This leads not only to personality disorders in the public administration employee but also to dysfunction in their family. Protective factors such as flexible working conditions, supportive immediate superiors, and support from colleagues can limit the transfer of stress from work to family life and thus to social life. In this context, counteracting burnout is seen as part of a broader strategy of caring for the well-being not only of employees but also of their families and, indirectly, of society as a whole.

Concluding, burnout is a significant threat to the effectiveness of public administration employees. This is even more evident as the expectations placed on employees increase, organisational pressure grows, and the social and political situation becomes unstable (Basińska & Gruszczyńska, 2019; Kryshchanovych *et al.*, 2022; Tabernacka, 2019). Employees experiencing chronic stress are at risk of emotional exhaustion, distancing themselves from their work and colleagues, and are also prone to a reduced sense of professional achievement. Burnout is also facilitated by factors such as lack of support and social acceptance, unclear division of roles in the workplace, and insufficient autonomy (Tsipouri *et al.*, 2024). Burnout translates into the functioning of a pub-

lic administration employee in their family, which in turn affects their relationships and communication with their closest relatives. This disrupts the creation of appropriate role models for the developing personalities of the youngest members of the family. Further empirical research should be combined with practical organisational interventions, focusing on building a work environment that protects against burnout, treats employees as subjects rather than objects, and affirms not only employee efficiency but also their mental well-being and proper functioning in social life, including, in particular, in the family.

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