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Foster families: a systematic review of intention and retention factors

Abstract

Background: Compared to residential care, family foster care is the preferable type of alternative care for neglected or abused children as it provides a familiar context that supports children's developmental needs. New foster families are needed to care for these children. Objective: This systematic review aims to provide a critical analysis of the literature, identifying factors that explain the intention to become and to continue as a foster family. This review was performed following the PRISMA checklist and guidelines, through a search conducted in the following databases (no restrictions were made): PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science. Study eligibility: The review includes empirical quantitative and/or qualitative studies in English, Portuguese and Spanish, with community and/or foster parents' samples and explores the factors for becoming and/or retention foster parents. Results: Forty-nine studies were included. The results revealed that the intention to become a foster parent is largely influenced by motivational factors, personal and family characteristics, individual values and beliefs, social context influences, and perceived familiarity with the child protection system. The retention of foster families is closely related to factors within the child protection system, personal or family characteristics, foster child characteristics, and placement challenges. The relationship with agencies and professional support stands out as the most important factors. Limitations and Implications: This review did not include studies focused on children with specific needs, and future research should consider the particular challenges of fostering this group. Practice implications of these findings for the recruitment, selection, and retention of foster families will be discussed.

Keywords: Foster families, Intention, Retention, Systematic Review, Abused and Neglected Children

Highlights

- Motivations, personal and family characteristics, and perceived familiarity or support from the child protection system were dimensions identified as associated with intention and retention.

- The child protection system must be prepared to support families that are highly motivated and meet the necessary conditions to foster.

- Formal support might reduce foster families' willingness to discontinue fostering.

Introduction

32   Family Foster Care (FFC) aims to provide an alternative family environment for children who were

33 neglected and/or abused and were removed from their families (Thoburn, 2010). Every child has the right to

34 effective and individualized care within a family context that addresses their specific needs, given their

35 development and permanence. Thus, for these same reasons, when this is not possible within their birth family,

36 FFC placement has been considered as preferable in comparison to residential care (Bick et al., 2017; Del Valle

37 & Bravo, 2013; Dozier et al., 2014). Several studies have stressed that FFC contributes positively to children's

38 development (Ghera et al., 2009; Humphreys et al., 2018; Kang et al., 2014; Smyke et al.,2010). Furthermore, in

39 a recent meta-analysis, Li and colleagues (2019) found that children placed in FFC presented better behavioural

40 and psychosocial outcomes comparatively to children placed in residential care. Bick and colleagues (2017)

41 considered that residential care units were not the preferable type of placement for children in care, due to

42 factors such as high child-caregiver ratio, high staff turnover, and/or lack of resources to promote children's

43 socio-emotional and cognitive stimulation.

44   Across several countries there is a consensus that children should be placed in FFC, rather than in

45 residential care (Del Valle & Bravo, 2013). Three specific countries can be highlighted as good examples of

46 having only around 5% of children in out-of-home care who are placed in residential care. These are Australia,

47 Ireland, and the USA (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2018a; Child Welfare Information

48 Gateway, 2020; Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2016). In sharp contrast, there are still some

49 countries, such as in Southern Europe, that are known for having greater percentages of residential care

50 placements (e.g., Italy with 47.4% in 2016; Palareti, 2019). Specifically, Portuguese national data reveals that a

51 mere 2.7% of children removed from their homes was placed in FFC, meaning that the vast majority of children

52 were placed in residential care (Instituto de Segurança Social [ISS], 2020).

53   Although people might have a positive opinion about foster parents and FFC, the FFC system seems to

54 be less valued compared to other social services (Leber et al., 2012). One example of this is the difficulty in

55 having enough foster parents available for the children who are in need of an out-of-home care placement. This

56 has been mentioned in different countries, including Australia, Ireland, and the USA (Colton et al., 2008). In the

57 Australian context, available foster parents have been decreasing, with a reduction of around 13% since 2012

58 (AIHW, 2018b). In Ireland, data from 2017 shows increased difficulty in recruiting general foster parents, as

59 well as foster parents specifically skilled in caring for children with complex needs. The data further shows a

60 decrease in the total number of applicants to become foster parents and in the total number of foster parents

61 (Gilligan, 2019). In the USA, Hebert and Kulkin (2018) stated that there is a shortage of qualified foster parents,

62 who have the skillset to be able to foster children with particular needs.

63   Children's social care services have the challenging task to recruit and retain suitable foster parents

64 who are able to support children with a history of adverse experiences (Bass et al., 2004; Vasileva & Petermann,

65 2016), and children who consequently might have mental health problems (e.g., mood and anxiety disorders)

66 and/or cognitive developmental deficits (Heim et al., 2010; Sinclair et al.,2005; Vasileva & Petermann, 2016).

67 In order to recruit and retain more foster parents, it is crucial to outline evidence about their motivations and to

68 understand which factors explain the intention to become and remain a foster parent (MacGregor et al., 2006;

69 Rodger et al., 2006).

70   The literature suggests that different motivations can explain the intention to become and remain a

71 foster parent – namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Sebba, 2012). Intrinsic motivation is described as the

72 most enduring type of motivation and relates to individual strengths (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). Examples of

73 intrinsic motivation for fostering children include helping children in need of care (e.g., Keys et al, 2017) and

74 protecting children from future harm (e.g., Rodger et al., 2006). This intrinsic motivation can be viewed as an

75 indicator of altruism, which is associated with greater pro-social behaviors (Bockler et al., 2016). As such,

76 altruistic motives and prosocial behaviors not only benefit others (Bockler et al., 2016; Keltner, 2014) but also

77 those who practice them. Altruistic motives to foster are positively associated with higher levels of job

78 satisfaction, which in turn is positively associated with foster parents' retention (Rodger et al., 2006; Sebba,

79 2012; Cleary et al., 2018). On the contrary, extrinsic motivation refers to rewards or expectations that yield to

80 the subject by performing a certain task (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999). This is viewed as less long-lasting and is

81 related to a lower retention rate. Examples of extrinsic motivation are a family wanting to fill the empty nest or

82 wanting to give a brother to their biological children (Andersson, 2001). The desire to counterbalance failed

83 family expansion experiences (e.g., infertility) may also be a motivation to FFC.

84   However, foster parents can be motivated by a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons

85 (MacGregor et al., 2006), and FFC calls for highly committed foster parents who are warm and affectionate with

86 children and can effectively deal with different challenges simultaneously (Herczog et al., 2001; Marcellus,

87 2010; Solomon et al., 2016). Particularly, such challenges may include regular contacts between children and

88 their birth families (Hudson & Levasseur, 2002), children's developmental problems (Dubois-Comtois et al.,

89 2015; Hambrick et al., 2016; Sawyer et al., 2007; Turney & Wildeman, 2016; Vanschoonlandt et al., 2013), or

90 feelings of grief and loss due to reunification (Wolf et al., 2013). Dealing with these challenges non-adaptively

can lead to placement disruptions (Chamberlain et al., 2006). Furthermore, becoming and remaining a foster

family is influenced by contextual factors beyond intrinsic or extrinsic motivations. Support from relatives

(Doyle & Melville, 2013) together with help, support, and partnership from professionals (Barter & Lutman,

2015; Hudson & Levasseur, 2002; MacGregor et al., 2006; Wolf et al., 2013) are determinant and will increase

the satisfaction of foster parents (Denlinger & Dorius, 2018).

It has become evident that it is crucial to recruit and retain foster parents with the needed skillset to care

for children who have been removed from their families. Several studies have been exploring factors that

contribute to the recruitment and retainment of foster parents; however, there are not systematic reviews in this

field. Evidence-based recruitment processes require an in-depth knowledge about the existing evidence, focused

on the reasons associated with becoming and retaining foster families. This review may provide an integrated

picture of the influencing factors for fostering that could guide policy and practice and enhance FFC system.

Also, future research may be informed by the gaps identified through this systematic review. As such, this study

aims to systematically review existing literature to address our main research questions: a) What factors are

associated with the intention to become a foster parent? b) What factors are associated with the retention of

foster parents? c) What are the methodological characteristics (e.g., sample, instruments, and design) of the

empirical studies developed to address those questions? Finally, based on those finding we will identify the

studies' limitations and future directions as well as the implications for practice in the FFC system.

Method

Research question and search strategies

Our research question was formulated using the SPIDER method (*Sample, Phenomenon of Interest,*

Design, Evaluation and Research Design; Cooke et al., 2012): a) *Sample:* Foster parents and general population,

older than 18 years old; b) *Phenomenon of Interest:* intention and retention factors related to being a foster

family (i.e., explanatory factors of the decision to become a foster family or to continue fostering, including

individual, social, institutional, and macrosystemic factors); c) *Design:* All designs (except case studies) and

methods were considered as long as they were empirical; d) *Evaluation*: Several outcomes were considered, in

particular the decision to become a foster parent, the intention to become a foster parent, or the intention to

continue being a foster parent. These can be measured in a dichotomous way (yes/no) or in a continuous

measure of intention; e) *Research Design*: All types of studies, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

The search was conducted in September 2018, on the following online databases: PsycArticles,

PsycInfo, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Scopus, and Web

121 of Science. The combination of the following terms was used in the search: (a) foster care OR foster families

122 OR foster parent* AND (b) motivation* OR retention OR willingness to foster* OR motivation* factors OR

123 motivation* foster OR reasons for fostering OR predict* foster* care. Specific restrictions were applied in all

124 databases: articles must be (a) published in peer-reviewed academic journals, (b) written in the English,

125 Portuguese, or Spanish language. English, Spanish or Portuguese papers were included as the authors are

126 proficient in these languages. No restrictions were applied regarding the publication date. A hand search of the

127 reference lists of previous literature reviews, and of all the articles included in these, was performed. As such,

128 some articles that were not identified by our electronic search, but which met the inclusion criteria, were

129 included. Duplicate studies were verified and removed. No registration of protocol was performed.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

131 Inclusion criteria were as follows: 1) empirical quantitative and/or qualitative studies; 2) studies

132 including a community sample where the factors for becoming foster parents were explored (i.e., what would

133 lead people to become a foster family); 3) studies with foster parents where the factors for becoming foster

134 parents were explored; and 4) studies with foster parents where the factors of retention were explored. Case

135 studies and literature reviews were excluded, as well as studies that explored motivations to become foster

136 parents of children with special needs (e.g., children with different mental and physical abilities) or specific

137 characteristics (e.g., aboriginal children). These studies about children with specific needs or characteristics

138 were not included, as the profile of these foster parents is expected to be different, and these specificities would

139 require a particular review of those articles only.

Study selection and data extraction

141 This review was performed following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-

142 Analyses (PRISMA) checklist and guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009). The retention or rejection of articles was

143 based on the sequential screening of the title, abstract, and full text. Inter-judge agreement was made by two

144 independent coders. Initially, the search yielded 3378 articles, plus, an additional 42 from a hand search of other

145 articles. After removing duplicates, a total of 2883 articles were screened on the basis of the title and abstract

146 alone. At this phase, an inter-judge agreement of 30% of articles was achieved, resulting in 96.7% in agreement.

147 All disagreement decisions were reviewed and discussed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. After

148 the initial screening, 87 articles were selected for full text analysis (eligibility). The next step included another

149 inter-judge agreement of 30% of the articles, resulting in 73% in agreement and 8% in disagreement. In 19% of

150 articles, one of the coders was undecided whether or not to include the article in the review. Disagreements and

151 uncertainties were subsequently resolved by an in-depth discussion about the specificities of those articles,

152 bearing in mind the inclusion/exclusion criteria. A total of 49 articles were included in this systematic review.

153 The flow diagram of the study selection process is displayed in Figure 1.

154   Based on our objectives, the following data extraction procedures were implemented. First, data was

155 taken from the primary studies based on an extraction sheet that included the following sections: the country in

156 which the study was conducted, research design, sample, data collection methods and instruments, and analytic

157 strategies (objective 3; Table S1). Second, all significant results (i.e., indicators on Tables 1 and 2) were

158 extracted to two spreadsheets (one for intention – objective 1; and another for retention – objective 2) and coded

159 with (+) or (-) depending on whether it is positively or negatively related to intention and retention. In order to

160 organize the amount of information that was extracted into broad factors that would allow the results'

161 interpretability (Tables 1 and 2), a qualitative analysis of these indicators was conducted. Two researchers have

162 analyzed this material, organizing those indicators into factors and subfactors, and then discussing with each

163 other and with a third researcher. All disagreements were discussed until consensus was reached.

164 <center>**Results**</center>

165   As mentioned above, 49 articles were included in this review. Information from these articles will be

166 presented according to our objectives and research questions: a) factors associated with becoming a foster parent

167 (Table 1); b) factors associated with the retention of foster parents (Table 2); and c) studies' methodological

168 characteristics (Table S1). The number of studies that identified each factor (*n*) was described on the Table one

169 and two. Note that the same article can identify more than one indicator/factor. All indicators found in the

170 reviewed studies are described and illustrate the factors identified.

171 **Factors associated with becoming a foster parent**

172   Results revealed that five main factors may influence the decision to become a foster parent (Table 1):

173 1) motivational factors; i.e., motives that guide individuals' behaviors, ranging from self-centered motives to

174 those centered on others; 2) foster parents' personal and family characteristics; i.e., personal attributes of foster

175 parents/prospective parents and characteristics of foster families; 3) values and beliefs; i.e., representations and

176 attitudes underlying the decision to become a foster parent; 4) social context influences; i.e., a set of contextual

177 and environmental circumstances that influence the decision to become a foster family; and 5) familiarity with

178 the FFC system; i.e., the extent of people' knowledge about the FFC system. Below, each of these factors is

179 described in detail.

180   **Motivational factors.** This was the most frequent factor that was identified in the reviewed studies

181   (n=29). A set of subfactors (i.e., motives) were identified: a) the desire to care and love children (n=16; e.g.,

182   Rodger et al., 2006); b) the desire to help children (n=14; e.g., López & Del Valle, 2016); c) family expansion

183   motives (n=14; e.g., Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012); d) self-centered motivations (n=8; e.g., Martin et al., 1992); e)

184   financial reasons (n= 4; e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014); and f) non-economic reasons (n=3; e.g., Cole, 2005). All

185   these sub-factors positively influenced the decision to become a foster parent.

186   **Foster parent's personal and family characteristics.** Within this factor (n=24) the following

187   subfactors were identified: a) foster family functioning (n=11; e.g., Doyle & Melville, 2013), b) failed family

188   expansion (n=11; e.g., Rhodes et al., 2006), c) personal experiences and attributes (n=5; e.g., Goodman et al.,

189   2017), and d) sociodemographic characteristics (n=5; e.g., Contreras & Muñoz, 2016). Regarding the

190   sociodemographic characteristics subfactor, studies revealed inconsistent results on age, with some studies

191   suggesting that older people were more likely to become foster parents (e.g., Contreras & Muñoz, 2016), while

192   others identified younger participants as more likely to become foster parents (e.g., Ciarrochi et al., 2012;

193   Randle et al., 2012). Personal experiences and attributes, as well as family functioning, had both a negative and

194   positive influence on becoming a foster parent. All personal experiences and attributes had a positive impact,

195   such as parental experience and having also been a foster child, with the exception of experiencing abuse,

196   neglect, and violence during childhood, which seemed to prevent this decision. In respect to family functioning,

197   having adequate financial resources (Tyebjee, 2003) positively influenced the decision to become a foster

198   parent, while being busy either with work commitments or with their own children (Randle et al., 2012) had a

199   negative impact on becoming a foster parent. Finally, failed family expansion processes positively affected the

200   decision to become a foster parent.

201   **Values/beliefs.** The values and beliefs identified in this review were (n=20): a) moral or social

202   responsibility (n=15; e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014), b) religious motives (n=6; e.g., Tyebjee, 2003), and c)

203   family-based values (n=5; e.g., Diogo & Branco, 2017). All these subfactors positively impacted the decision to

204   become a foster parent. This indicates that those who believed in moral and social responsibility and in the

205   positive influence of fostering on children were more likely to become foster parents. Also, those who ascribed

206   to 'family-based values' were more likely to become foster parents.

207   **Social context.** The subfactors identified within the social context were (n=7): a) social influence (n=5;

208   e.g., Ramsay, 1996), b) formal support (n=2; e.g., Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012), and c) social commitments (n=1;

209   Randle et al., 2012). The first and second subfactors positively affected the decision to foster, which meant that

positive social influence and supportive formal relationships were associated with becoming a foster parent. On the contrary, having other social commitments seemed to prevent people becoming foster parents.

Familiarity with the system. Finally, this factor was the least identified in the studies under analysis (n=6; e.g., Wilson et al., 2007). This factor referred to the knowledge of the child protection system and the context of FFC, which had a positive impact on becoming a foster parent.

Factors associated with the retention of foster parents

This literature review identified four distinct factors effecting the decision to continue fostering (Table 2): 1) child protection system, 2) foster parent's personal and family characteristics, 3) foster child's characteristics, and 4) placement challenges. Below, each of these factors are described in more detail.

Child protection system. Within the child protection system factor (n=15), four subfactors were identified: a) support (n=9; e.g., Geiger et al., 2013), b) relational problems with professionals (n=7; e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996), c) satisfaction as a foster parent (n=5; e.g., Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009), and d) bureaucracy (n=5; e.g., Rindfleisch et al., 1998). The subfactors bureaucracy and relational problems with professionals had a negative impact on foster families' retention, while satisfaction had a positive influence and support was identified as both positively and negatively impacting their retention.

Foster parent´s personal and family characteristics. Within this factor (n=15), five subfactors were identified: a) personal attributes/characteristics of foster parents (n=7; e.g., Broady et al., 2010), b) foster family functioning (n=7; e.g., Rhodes et al., 2003), c) sociodemographic characteristics (n=6; e.g., Maeyer et al., 2014), d) personal or family changes (n=5; e.g., Geiger et al., 2013), and e) experience as foster parents (n=2; Hendrix & Ford, 2003). Studies revealed that the personal attributes/characteristics subfactor has both a negative and positive impact on retention. For instance, greater feelings of insecurity (Broady et al., 2010) were associated with lower retention; whereas greater empathy, flexibility (Keys et al., 2017), and internal locus of control (Geiger et al., 2013) positively impacted retention. All the sociodemographic characteristics had a negative impact on retention (e.g., employment, marriage status, single parenthood), except for age (Maeyer et al., 2014). Also, both white (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) and nonwhite ethnicities (Ahn et al., 2017; Rhodes et al., 2003) had been associated with lower retention, yielding a contradictory result in the literature. Personal or family changes were negatively associated with foster parent retention. The foster family functioning subfactor impacted both positively and negatively the intention to continue to be a foster parent. If, for instance, having resources was positively associated with continuing to be a foster parent (Rhodes et al., 2003), stressful experiences in the family (Geiger et al., 2013) or receiving inadequate financial reimbursement (Rhodes et al., 2001) were

240 associated with a lower retention rate. The foster parent experience also impacted both positively and

241 negatively the intention to continue to be a foster parent, with being a foster family for more than two years

242 being negatively associated with continuing to be a foster parent (Hendrix & Ford, 2003). In opposition, feelings

243 of commitment to the foster child were associated with a higher retention rate (Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009).

244 **Foster child's characteristics.** The foster child's characteristics factor (n=7) was identified as being

245 strongly related to retention, with the following subfactors: a) psychological problems (n=5; e.g., Rodger et al.,

246 2006), b) problems with the child (n=1; Ahn et al., 2017), and c) few child improvements (n=1; e.g., Broady et

247 al., 2010). Greater psychological problems and problems with the foster child in general were associated with a

248 lower retention rate, as well as was few child improvements.

249 **Placement Challenges.** This factor refers to aspects of the FFC process (n=3). Only one subfactor was

250 identified: reunification with birth family (n=3; e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996). The reunification with the

251 birth family appeared as an inconsistent result, impacting both positively and negatively the decision to continue

252 fostering, due to the perceived difficulties associated with the child leaving (Rhodes et al., 2001).

253 **Methodological characteristics of studies**

254 Looking at the context of these studies (Table S1), a considerable number were conducted in the

255 American context (n=25), while other studies were conducted in Europe (n=15), Australia (n=7) and Africa

256 (n=2). Methodologically, the large majority of these reviewed studies were cross-sectional (n=45), and merely

257 four were longitudinal. Twenty studies followed a quantitative design, and 17 followed a qualitative design.

258 Twelve studies followed a mixed-methods design, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative

259 methodologies. Considering the data collection methods, most of the studies used questionnaires (e.g., Ahn et

260 al., 2017) and interviews, in-person or via telephone (e.g., Daniel, 2011). In fewer number, studies used

261 observational methods, e.g. clinical observation (Grigore, 2016) and ethnographic observation (Swartz, 2004),

262 focus groups (e.g., Spielfogel et al., 2011), and agency records (Triseliotis et al., 1998).

263 The sample size significantly varied across studies ranging between 8 and 1974 participants. Most of

264 the studies (92%) used a sample of foster families. Specifically, the majority (n=37) examined current foster

265 parents (e.g., Broady et al., 2010; Doyle & Melville, 2013), whereas other studies (n=4) included both former

266 and current foster parents (Ahn et al., 2017; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rhodes et al., 2001; Rindfleisch et al.,

267 1998). Only one study examined former foster parents (Triseliotis et al., 1998), and two examined future foster

268 parents (Baum et al., 2001; Tyebjee, 2003). A very small number used community samples (n=4) (Ciarrochi et

269 al., 2012; Contreras & Muñoz, 2016; Goodman et al., 2017; Randle et al., 2012). Lastly, one study examined

270   both current foster parents and a community sample (Kuyini et al., 2009). Regarding the articles with foster

271   family samples, most articles did not specify the type of foster family (i.e., kinship or non-kinship foster family;

272   n=25) (e.g., Ahn et al., 2017; Baum et al., 2001). Some included mixed samples (i.e., both kinship and non-

273   kinship; n=12) (e.g., Cole, 2005; Inch, 1999), six articles examined non-kinship foster care (e.g., Diogo &

274   Branco, 2017; Doyle & Melville, 2013), and two articles analyzed merely kinship foster care (Gleeson et al.,

275   2009; Kuyini et al., 2009).

Discussion

277   This current systematic review aimed to critically analyze the existing literature to identify factors that

278   contributed to the intention and retention of foster parents. A total of 49 articles were identified and summarized

279   according to the study's sample, context, and main findings. Results will be discussed by integrating and

280   organizing findings that focus on becoming a foster family and foster family retention according to common and

281   interrelated domains: motivations, personal and family characteristics, and child protection system related

282   dimensions (i.e., familiarity with and support from the child protection system).

283   Evidence indicates that the decision to become a foster parent is primarily related to motivational

284   factors. Both extrinsic and intrinsic factors were identified, and although extrinsic motives like family expansion

285   (e.g., Cole, 2005) and financial reasons (e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014) were reported, most studies focused on

286   intrinsic motives (e.g., desire to care and love children or desire to help children; Rodger et al., 2006; Tyebjee,

287   2003). We know that in the context of fostering children, being guided by intrinsic motivation, in comparison to

288   extrinsic motivation, leads to higher levels of job satisfaction. This is even more critical as higher levels of

289   satisfaction are associated with a greater retention rate (Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Cleary et al., 2018). Besides

290   that, the desire to care, love, and help children was mostly identified within the motivational factor, which can

291   be framed within the literature on altruism (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012). Altruism is seen as a disposition to seek

292   and increase the welfare of others (Batson & Powell, 2003). Some findings propose that altruism could be

293   associated with greater prosocial behavior, and that prosocial behavior might significantly benefit others

294   (Böckler et al., 2016; Keltner, 2014).

295   In addition to this perspective, different motivations for being a foster family can be observed in two

296   distinct groups. One group characterized as having child-centered motivations and the other as being more

297   self/family-oriented (Rhodes et al., 2006). When analyzing the data, child-centered motivations narrowly stand

298   out, being mentioned in 23 of the analyzed articles while the self/family-centered motivations were identified in

299   21 articles. This shows that child-centered motivations are more referred to than the needs of the family itself.

300   Child-centered needs include, for example, the need to protect and prevent children from harm (Rodger et al.,

301   2006) or the desire to provide children with a positive family experience (e.g., Tyebjee, 2003). In contrast,

302   motivations centered on the family or self refer to family expansion, wanting to be loved by a child (e.g.,

303   Maeyer et al., 2014), or even financial reasons (e.g., Howell-Moroney, 2014). Being a foster family, in addition

304   to helping these children, can also enable a sense of personal achievement (Martin et al., 1992).

305   Furthermore, foster families' personal and family characteristics were also identified as being relevant

306   to the decision of becoming a foster parent. The cases of failed family expansion – particularly childlessness,

307   infertility, and unsuccess in adopting a child – can increase the likelihood of fostering children (e.g., Dando &

308   Minty, 1987). On the contrary, having biological children seemed to prevent individuals from becoming foster

309   parents. However, failed family expansion, despite being related to family characteristics, can also be

310   understood and categorized as a motivational factor, therefore a combination between wanting a larger family

311   and to care for children (e.g., Kozlova, 2013; Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006). It can be argued that the

312   intention to foster based on a failed family expansion might be related to the fulfillment of individual needs

313   instead of being focused on the best interest of children (the latter of which should be central to the fostering

314   role). An inconsistent result was identified in relation to age, with some studies reporting that the older the

315   people were, the greater their predisposition to become foster parents (e.g., Contreras & Muñoz, 2016), while

316   other studies reported the opposite finding (i.e., when people are younger their predisposition to become a foster

317   parent increases) (e.g., Randle et al., 2012). These divergent results could be explained in light of the family

318   lifecycle (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989). On one hand, younger people are more focused on establishing a career

319   and obtaining financial independence, which might undermine their ability to become a foster parent. Moreover,

320   family life cycles are changing, e.g., late home-leaving, delay in autonomy processes and the postponement of

321   family formation (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2011). This can weaken

322   the willingness to become a foster parent. On the other hand, people in later life might need to take care of their

323   grandchildren or deal with disabilities and with the decline of abilities (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989), which can

324   negatively influence their time and capacity to care for a foster child.

325   Another interesting result suggests that former foster children (e.g., Martin et al., 1992) are more likely

326   to be foster parents; however, some studies highlighted that having adverse childhood experiences was

327   associated with lower willingness to foster (e.g., Goodman et al., 2017). Research has highlighted the negative

328   impact of adverse childhood experiences on adulthood (Hughes et al., 2017), but this effect has also been proved

329   to be attenuated by protective factors (Sciaraffa et al., 2018). For instance, having contact with parenting styles

that are positive can enhance positive results that in turn last until adulthood (Hamilton & Harris, 2018). This is aligned with research conducted by Vanderfaeillie and colleagues (2013), which associates a positive FFC system experience with children's positive outcomes. In fact, children learn from interacting with others, reproducing behaviors by observing, as described by the social learning theory (Bandura, 1971). Thus, a positive FFC experience could be associated with positive parenting of a foster child in the future. Therefore, this explains that having a challenging childhood (Dando & Minty, 1987) and growing up in a foster family (Peake & Townsend, 2012) increases the motivation to care for children. Moreover, this could also be viewed in light of the importance given to one's role in society; that is, the need to give back the benefits once received from society as a child. This idea is defended by the Resource Theory, which, as stated by Cox and colleagues (2003), is based on the principle of sharing resources with someone who has fewer resources. In other words, having adequate resources, such as time and space, is imperative when considering whether or not to become a foster parent (Migliorini et al., 2018).

FFC requires foster families to be able to adapt their previous routines and functioning to receive children. Therefore, if difficulties are perceived at this level, some potential foster parents may consider that they do not have the adequate resources, which reduces their likelihood of fostering children. Furthermore, personal attributes (e.g., Keys et al., 2017) such as being empathic and flexible, having an internal locus of control, and having a higher perceived self-efficacy were identified as being important for the retention of these foster parents. As previously mentioned, foster families must have skills and specialized knowledge to take care of these children (Herczog et al., 2001; Marcellus, 2010) and to be able to address complex needs (Solomon et al., 2016). This finding suggests that foster parents need to have a specific profile to deal with the challenges of fostering (e.g., empathic skills, flexibility), and those people should be privileged in the recruitment processes. By contrast, some sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., Ahn et al., 2017), such as being employed, a single parent, retired, or chronically ill, had a negative influence on retention. This is because these people already have some challenges that might prevent them from continuing to foster. Work-family conflicts have also been studied over the years and it is known that being employed can have implications in family functioning (Judge et al., 2006). Depending on the flexibility, working hours, and work-related stress, employment can limit the parental involvement with children (Fraenkel, 2003). Finally, illness is challenging, and retirement might be too, especially considering those who are not financially stable and those for whom the retirement was undesired or forced (Walsh, 2016). These factors may undermine the willingness to continue fostering.

359   In this sense, the child protection system must be prepared to support families that are highly motivated

360   and meet the necessary conditions to foster, so that retention can be enhanced. Retention seemed to be lower

361   when foster parents experienced problems with the services/agencies (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) and

362   professionals (e.g., poor communication and few contacts), whereas feelings of being supported by the agency

363   or other foster parents (Blackburn, 2016) had a positive impact on foster family retention. Given that FFC is

364   composed of a variety of challenges for the birth families, foster children, and foster parents, these supportive

365   practices are crucial (Wolf et al., 2013) and are associated with greater foster parent satisfaction (Denlinger &

366   Dorius, 2018).

367   Further, the choice to be a foster parent corresponds with holding certain values and beliefs about social

368   responsibility. Findings from this review suggested that becoming a foster parent could derive from moral and

369   social responsibility perceptions (e.g., "wanted to do something for the community" or "wanted to fulfill a

370   societal need") (Cole, 2005). Theoretically, this sense of community includes the need to feel connected with

371   others and doing something for the community facilitates one's personal growth, which is also related to lower

372   levels of mental, social, and health problems (Hyde & Chavis, 2008). Evidence on social wellbeing proposes

373   that individual wellbeing is also composed of feeling accepted by others, contributing to and feeling part of the

374   community (Keyes, 1998). Furthermore, this finding is also consistent with the literature that suggests that a

375   psychological sense of community is positively related to prosocial behaviors (Hackett et al., 2015).

376   Finally, being familiar with the child protection system (Ramsay, 1996), knowing a foster family, or

377   being encouraged by a spouse or others (Doyle & Melville, 2013) were also recognized as important factors to

378   become a foster family. This highlights the need to spread accurate knowledge about the FFC system, given that

379   misconceptions or lack of information about the system can undermine the effort to recruit families (Leber et al.,

380   2012). This dissemination of accurate information should include data on foster children's developmental

381   trajectories and mental health difficulties. Foster children's characteristics were described as reducing the

382   intention of foster parents to continue fostering (Rhodes et al., 2001), which points out the negative impact of

383   children's behavioral and emotional problems on the fostering role (Sawyer et al., 2007). Due to their previous

384   adverse experiences (e.g., child abuse and neglect), foster children are more prone to having developmental

385   difficulties, such as mental health problems (Heim et al., 2010; Sinclair et al., 2005; Vasileva & Petermann,

386   2016). Specifically, externalizing problems are prevalent in this population (Vanschoonlandt et al., 2013), which

387   leads to greater challenges for foster parents and subsequently can contribute to disruptions in placements

388 (Chamberlain et al., 2006). Therefore, not only may this influence the decision to become a foster parent but

389 could also reduce retention.

390   Lastly, placement challenges also influenced foster parent retention (e.g., Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996).

391 Studies pointed to conflicting findings regarding the effect of reunification on foster family retention. Some

392 evidence suggested that it undermined foster parents' retention, and others reported that it enhanced their

393 willingness to continue fostering. This could be explained by inaccurate or unavailable information about

394 permanency planning and reunification. When reunification occurs, it is often experienced as undesirable.

395 Worries about children's development and the return to the same undesirable environment might lead to feelings

396 of loss and grief. Nonetheless, foster parents need to be able cope with these feelings (Wolf et al., 2013).

397 Therefore, it is important for foster and birth families to have a close and supportive relationship, allowing foster

398 families and birth families to have an insight into the child's permanency plan and consequent reunification.

399 Moreover, this relationship may contribute to the diminishing of some challenging behaviors from the foster

400 children when adjusting to the foster home.

401 **Limitations and future directions**

402   This literature review summarizes relevant findings from a range of studies; however, some limitations

403 of the reviewed studies must be considered. Although most of the studies were quantitative, they were mostly

404 descriptive in nature and did not provide meaningful data about what factors were strongly associated with

405 intention and retention to be a foster parent. Forty-five of the studies were cross-sectional, so results should be

406 interpreted carefully to avoid causal inferences. Moreover, additional longitudinal studies are required. Also,

407 most of the studies focused on female foster parents; however, evidence suggests that the fathers' involvement is

408 important for children's development (e.g., behavioral, social, and cognitive) and wellbeing (Heslop, 2019).

409 This indicates that it is important for male foster parents to be involved in research and evaluative processes in

410 order to obtain a reliable picture regarding motivations, feelings, and experiences from different foster parents in

411 the FFC system. Moreover, most studies do not specify the type of foster families included in the sample or

412 include mixed samples. As such, greater clarity is needed for future research regarding the description of foster

413 families, given that recruitment, preparation, and training involves different challenges for kinship carers and

414 non-kinship carers. It may also be possible to separately analyze kinship and non-kinship families if they are

415 both included in the study and the results are discussed. Besides that, few studies included former foster parents,

416 which may be an important population to consider when analyzing factors of retention. For that reason, future

417 research should include foster parents that are no longer fostering and analyze their reasons to discontinue

418   fostering, which might inform foster family programs. Also, for future research, further reviews should include

419   terms like "breakdowns" or "failure", providing more consistent insight into factors associated with foster parent

420   retention. Few studies focused on community samples; however, this could provide further innovative insight

421   for the purposes of foster parent recruitment. Finally, this systematic review also had some limitations, namely,

422   the exclusion of studies that focused on children with specific needs. Considering that foster children have some

423   developmental and health needs, it would be important to explore factors explaining the willingness to foster

424   children with specific needs (e.g., with HIV or fetal alcohol spectrum disorder).

425   **Implications for practice in the FFC system**

426   This systematic review offers an important insight into the recruitment and retention of foster families.

427   Recruitment campaigns should emphasize the intrinsic motivational factors and the resources needed to provide

428   quality FFC. Also, strategies appealing to moral responsibility, as well as to the difference that individuals could

429   make in children's lives, could be used in the context of recruitment. Considering that having adequate

430   knowledge about the FFC system was important in decisions to foster, efforts must be made to disseminate

431   accurate information. As such, providing reliable information allows people to acquire an in-depth

432   understanding of this public problem, which may enable them to make informed decisions. Further, this process

433   of recruitment should be informed by the need to engage people who are empathic and flexible and who exhibit

434   mostly an internal locus of control.

435   Regarding the retention of foster parents, support is needed from services and agencies. Not only close

436   and warm relationships between professionals and foster families are relevant to help them adequately deal with

437   those diverse challenges (e.g., children's behavioral problems, the relationship with birth family), but also

438   specific training is needed. This should specifically include training on empathic relationships to prevent

439   significant problems between foster families and agencies/services, and initial and continuous training to

440   support foster parents so they can continue to develop their skills and acquire specialized knowledge. Receiving

441   training throughout the fostering experience is important, particularly on educational strategies, expectations of

442   the foster child and FFC system, and promoting positive attitudes towards the foster child's family and their life

443   history (Amorós & Palacios, 2004; Schoemaker et al, 2020). For instance, *PRIDE Model of Practice* (from

444   Child Welfare League of America and FosterParentCollege.com) has been adopted worldwide to support foster

445   families. This model considers foster families as important agents in the child protection system, particularly

446   agents who develop competencies related to children's protection and developmental needs, build quality

447   relationship with birth families and work with the professional team as a member (for more information see

448   https://www.cwla.org/pride-training/). This specific training opportunity may allow foster parents to feel more

449   confident in their ability to deal with FFC challenges. Furthermore, an efficient participation processes should

450   be adopted, allowing foster parents to be involved in the decisions related to the placement. They should be

451   informed and engaged in permanency planning, should be aware of the reunification process, and should have

452   adequate support to deal with their losses during this process. This support might might increase their

453   willingness to continue fostering.

454   **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

455   Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

456

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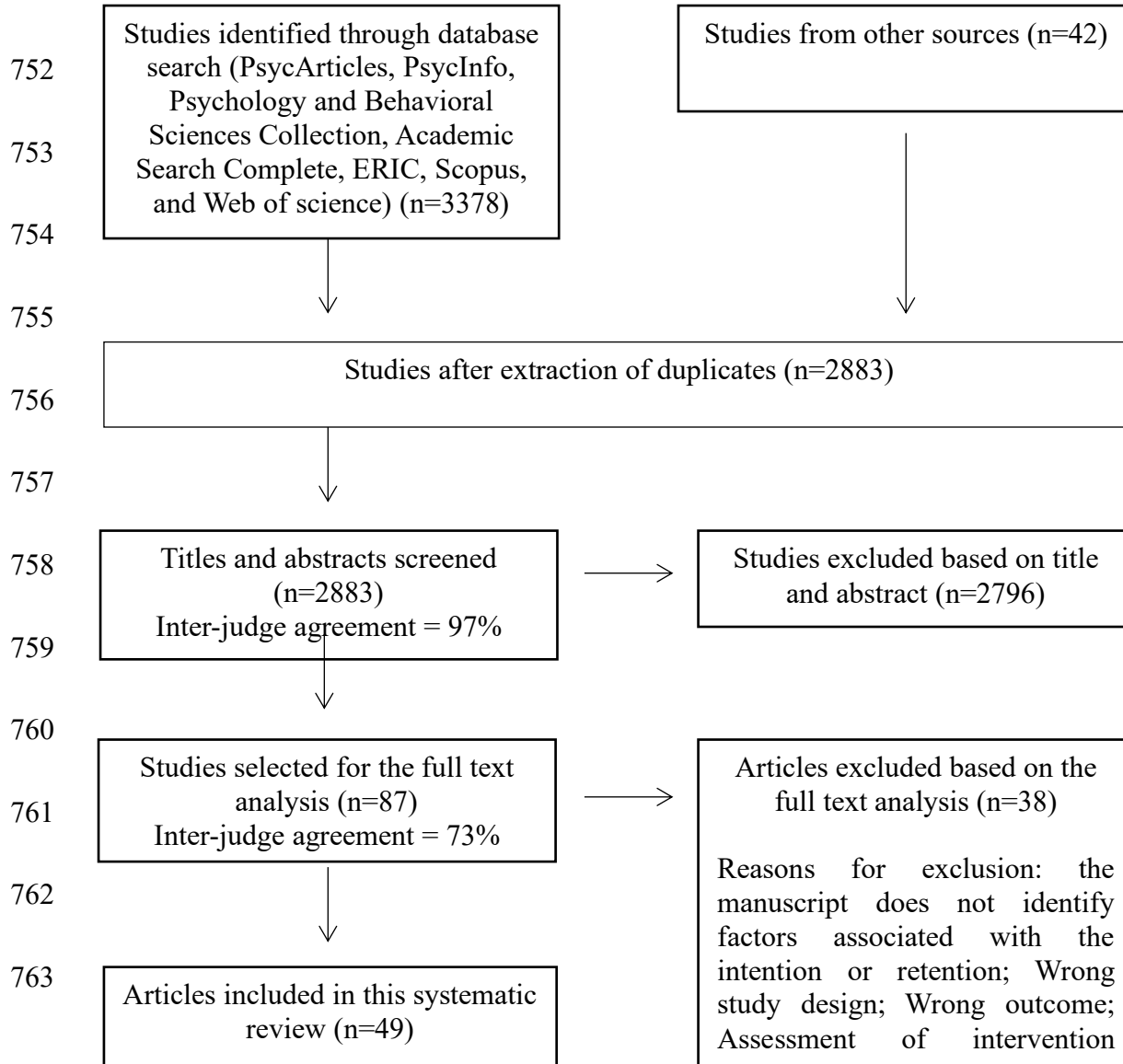736

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750   Figure 1. Flow diagram (based on PRISMA; Liberati et al., 2009)

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| Studies identified through database search (PsycArticles, PsycInfo, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Academic Search Complete, ERIC, Scopus, and Web of science) (n=3378) | Studies from other sources (n=42) |

Studies after extraction of duplicates (n=2883)

| Titles and abstracts screened (n=2883) Inter-judge agreement = 97% | Studies excluded based on title and abstract (n=2796) |

| Studies selected for the full text analysis (n=87) Inter-judge agreement = 73% | Articles excluded based on the full text analysis (n=38) Reasons for exclusion: the manuscript does not identify factors associated with the intention or retention; Wrong study design; Wrong outcome; Assessment of intervention |

Articles included in this systematic review (n=49)

Table 1. Factors to become a foster family

Factors to become a foster family	Sub-factors	Indicators
Motivational factors (n=29)	Desire to care and love children (n=16) [+]	Protect and prevent children from harm (Gleeson et al, 2009; Rodger et al., 2006) [+] Provide a home for children (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Maeyer et al., 2014; Nowak & Piver, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Nurture children (Dando & Minty, 1987) [+] Provide love for children (Baum et al., 2001; Daniel, 2011; Grigore, 2016; MacGregor et al., 2006; Maeyer et al., 2014; Martin et al., 1992; Rhodes et al., 2006; Swartz, 2004) [+] Provide children with a positive family experience (Inch, 1999; Tyebjee, 2003; Wilson et al., 2007) [+]
	Desire to help children (n= 14) [+]	Help under-privileged children (Gilligan, 1996; Kozlova, 2013; López & Del Valle, 2016; Swartz, 2004) [+] Help and make a difference (Inch, 1999; Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Help children with special problems (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Help children in need (Keys et al, 2017; MacGregor et al., 2006; Tyebjee. 2003) [+] Help another child (Broady et al., 2010; Daniel, 2011) [+] Rescue abused or neglected children (Cole, 2005) [+]
	Family expansion (n=14) +	Desire to adopt (Nowak & Piver, 2008; Rhodes et al., 2006) + Want a larger family and want to care for children (Andersson, 2001; Baum et al., 2001; Cole, 2005; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Kozlova, 2013; Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; Rodger et al., 2006) + Re-do previous parenting (Dando & Minty, 1987; Inch, 1999; Martin et al., 1992; Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012) +
	Self-centered motivations (n=8) +	Need something in my life (Broady et al., 2010) + Satisfy the ambitions and personal desires as a carer (Diogo & Branco, 2017) + Want to be loved by a child (Macgregor et al., 2006; Maeyer et al., 2014; Martin et al., 1992; Migliorini et al., 2018) + Sense of personal achievement (Martin et al., 1992) + Want to have companionship (Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006) + Adding meaning to life (Tyebjee, 2003) +
	Financial reasons (n=4) [+]	Wanted to increase family income (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Howell-Moroney, 2014) Monetary compensation combined with being an at-home parent (Swartz, 2004) Allocated financial reward (Kirton, 2001)

	Non-economic reasons (n=3) [+]	Non- Economic reasons (Cole, 2005; Inch, 1999; Kirton, 2001) [+]
Personal/family characteristics (n=24)	Family functioning (n=11) [+ and -]	Having adequate financial resources (Ciarrochi et al., 2012; Goodman et al., 2017; Tyebjee, 2003) [+] Financial challenges (Randle, et al., 2012) - Family changes (Grigore, 2016) [+] Family climate (Goodman et al., 2017) [+] Having own children (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016; Goodman et al., 2017) - To provide significant relationships to their own child (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Maeyer et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2007) [+] High number of children at home (Goodman et al., 2017) - Lack of space, time, home stability, or energy to share with a child (Baum et al., 2001) - Have the time and the space to foster a young person (Doyle & Melville, 2013; Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] Work-family challenges (Randle, et al., 2012) -
	Failed family expansion (n=11) [+]	Childlessness/ Infertility (Andersson, 2001; Broady et al., 2010; Dando & Minty, 1987; Keys et al, 2017; Kozlova, 2013; Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; Tyebjee, 2003) [+] Want to adopt but had not been able to (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rindfleisch et al., 1998; Rodger et al., 2006; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+]
	Personal experiences and attributes (n=5) [+ and −]	Past experiences of abuse and neglect (Goodman et al., 2017) [-] Empathic attributes (Ciarrochi et al., 2012; Inch, 1999) [+] Hope (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [+] Parental experience (López & Del Valle, 2016) [+] Had been a foster child (Martin et al., 1992) [+]
	Sociodemographic characteristics (n=5) [+ and -]	Gender (female) (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016) [+] Academic Social Sciences Background (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016) [+] Older Age (Contreras & Muñoz, 2016; Goodman et al., 2017) [+]; (Ciarrochi et al., 2012; Randle et al., 2012) [-] Retirement (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) - Widowed (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [+] Higher educational status (Ciarrochi et al., 2012) [−] Unemployment (Grigore, 2016) [+]
Values/ Beliefs (n=20)	Moral/ social responsibility (n= 15) [+]	Social engagement/commitment (Cole, 2005; Doyle & Melville, 2013; Inch, 1999; López & Del Valle, 2016; Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012) [+] Help the community/society (Andersson, 2001; Dando & Minty, 1987; Daniel, 2011; Howell-Moroney, 2014; MacGregor et al., 2006; Maeyer et al., 2014; Martin et al., 1992; Nowak & Piver, 2008; Swartz, 2004; Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Social identity (Migliorini et al., 2018) [+]
	Religious motives (n=6) [+]	Fulfilment religious beliefs (Howell-Moroney, 2014; Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; Tyebjee, 2003)

		Spiritual and religious calling (Nowak & Piver, 2008; Rodger, et al., 2006) [+]
	Family based values (n=5) [+]	Keep the extended family together (family union) (Gleeson et al., 2009; Kuyini et al, 2009) [+]
		Family context as a preferable development context (Diogo & Branco, 2017; Swartz, 2004) [+]
		Family responsibility/obligation (Lopéz & Del Valle, 2016) [+]
Social context influences (n=7)	Social influence (n=5) [+]	Encouraged by intimate partner/relatives (Maeyer et al., 2014; Martin et al., 1992; Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012; Ramsay, 1996) [+]
		Encouraged by acquaintances (friends, agency workers, fellow students) (Doyle & Melville, 2013; Ramsay, 1996) [+]
		Introduced to foster care by other foster parents (Martin et al., 1992) [+]
	Formal support (n=2) [+]	Emotional support from social workers (Metcalfe & Sanders, 2012) [+]
		Instrumental support (Blackburn, 2016) [+]
	Social commitments (n=1) [-]	Busy with family/friend commitments (Randle et al., 2012) -
Familiarity with the system (n=6)	Familiarity with the system (n=6) [+]	Previous familiarity with fostering or with a foster child (Maeyer et al., 2014; Rhodes et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 2007) [+]
		Newspaper or a television advertisement (Ramsay, 1996) [+]
		Direct or indirect contact with residential care or child protection system (Diogo & Branco, 2017) [+]
		Knowledge on foster care (Randle et al., 2012) [+]

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Table 2. Factors associated with families' retention

Factors of Retention	Subfactors	Indicators
Child protection system (n=15)	Support (n=9) [+ and -]	Telephone helplines (Blackburn, 2016) [+] Emotional, instrumental and organizational support (Geiger et al., 2013; MacGregor et al., 2006; Mihalo et al., 2016) [+] High levels of satisfaction with social work support (Ramsay, 1996) [+] Inadequate/lack of agency support and services (Geiger et al., 2013; Rhodes et al., 2001) [-] Support from other foster parents (MacGregor et al., 2006; Rindfleisch et al., 1998) [+]
	Relational problems with professionals (n=7) [-]	Conflict with professionals (Ahn et al., 2017; Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rodger et al., 2006) - Difficulties of communication with professionals (MacGregor et al., 2006; Randle et al., 2016; Rhodes et al., 2001; Spielfogel et al., 2011) [-]
	Satisfaction as a foster carer (n=5) [+]	Satisfaction with foster experience and responsibility (Denby et al., 1999; Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009; Geiger et al., 2013; Randle et al., 2016) + Satisfaction with the service (Triseliotis et al., 1998) +
	Bureaucracy (n=5) [-]	Agency red tape (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rindfleisch et al., 1998; Rodger et al., 2006) [-] Lack of involvement of foster parents in the permanency planning (Rhodes et al., 2001) – Lack of accurate information about the children (MacGregor et al., 2006) -
Personal/ Family characteristics (n=15)	Personal attributes/characteristics (n=7) [+ and -]	Empathy (Keys et al, 2017) [+] Flexibility (Keys et al, 2017) [+] Hardiness (Hendrix & Ford, 2003) [+] Insecurity perceptions (Broady et al., 2010) - Internal locus of control (Geiger et al., 2013) [+] Perceived self-efficacy (Geiger et al., 2013; Whenan et al., 2009) [+] Internal and external locus of control (Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009) [+] Want to adopt but had not been able to (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) –
	Family functioning (n=7) [+ and -]	Family resources (Rhodes et al., 2003) [+] Re-parenting (Rhodes et al., 2006) [+] Closeness to the biological and foster children (Rhodes et al., 2006) - Lack of economic resources (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Geiger et al., 2013; Rindfleisch et al., 1998) -

Factors of Retention	Subfactors	Indicators
		Inadequate financial reimbursement as a foster carer (Rhodes et al., 2001) - Stressful experiences in the family (Geiger et al., 2013; Triseliotis et al., 1998) -
	Sociodemographic characteristics (n=6) [+ and -]	Older Age (Ahn et al., 2017; Maeyer et al., 2014) [+] White race (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) - Non-white race (Ahn et al., 2017; Rhodes et al., 2003) - Employment/ work challenges (Ahn et al., 2017; Triseliotis et al., 1998) - Higher educational status (Ahn et al., 2017) - Marriage status (Ahn et al., 2017) - Retirement or illness (Triseliotis et al., 1998) – Single parenthood (Geiger et al., 2013; Rhodes et al., 2003) -
	Personal or family changes (n=5) [-]	Impact of fostering on their own families (Geiger et al., 2013; Triseliotis et al., 1998) [-] Changes in personal circumstances (Ahn et al., 2017; Ramsay, 1996) [-] Adopted a child (Ahn et al., 2017; Triseliotis et al., 1998) [-] Conflict between foster children and their own children (Rhodes et al., 2001) -
	Experience as foster family (n=1) [-]	More than two years as foster families (Hendrix & Ford, 2003) [-] Commitment to the children (Eaton & Caltabiano, 2009) [+]
Child's characteristics (n=7)	Psychological problems (n=5) [-]	Children's difficult behaviors (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Denby et al., 1999; Rhodes et al., 2001; Rodger et al., 2006; Triseliotis et al., 1998) [-]
	Problems with the child (n=1) [-]	Lack of accurate information about children's needs (Ahn et al., 2017) [-] Conflict with children (Ahn et al., 2017) [-]
	Few child improvements (n=1) [-]	Few children progressions (Broady et al., 2010) [-]
Placement Challenges (n=3)	Reunification with biological family (n=3) [+ and -]	Children return to bad situations (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996) -; (Rindfleisch et al., 1998) [+] Difficulty seeing children leave (Rhodes et al.,2001) - Problems with children's birth parents (Denby & Rindfleisch, 1996; Rhodes et al., 2001) -

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