Relationships between work conditions, job satisfaction and burnout in Israeli Ministry of Education art therapists

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Plain language summary

Art therapists in the education system work within a framework that is not therapeutic in orientation and has highly specific working conditions. This study examined whether there is a relationship between working conditions; the suitability of the therapy room, the quality of the interprofessional team collaboration, and the number of clients, and between job satisfaction and burnout in 49 art therapists employed by the education system in Israel. The therapists were sent an online link from the researchers to complete self-report questionnaires at the beginning, middle and end of the academic year. We found several significant correlations between the therapists' perceptions of their working conditions and between burnout and job satisfaction. The better the perception of inter-professional team collaboration, the more job satisfaction was reported at Time 2. The better the therapists' perception of inter-professional team collaboration in the school system, the greater their sense of professional efficacy at Times 1 and 2 and the less their sense of exhaustion at Time 2. More satisfactory perceptions of the working conditions in the therapy room were associated with a lesser sense of exhaustion at Times 1 and 2. Most of the correlations between the variables emerged at Time 2, midyear. This period is characterized by more consecutive work days, which allows for more staff meetings than in the first and last trimesters of the school year, and is considered the main period for therapeutic work to take place. The

findings also show that inter-professional team collaboration affects the relationship between the number of clients and burnout from exhaustion.

Abstract

Art therapists in the education system work within a framework that is not therapeutic in orientation, a fact which has implications for their work environment. This study examined the relationships between working conditions and between job satisfaction and burnout of 49 art therapists employed by the education system in Israel. Several significant correlations between the therapists' perceptions of their working conditions and between burnout and job satisfaction were found. The better the therapists' perception of inter-professional team collaboration, the greater their sense of professional efficacy. More satisfactory perceptions of the working conditions in the therapy room were associated with a lesser sense of exhaustion. Most of the correlations between the variables emerged at Time 2, midyear. This period is characterized by more consecutive work days, which allows for more staff meetings than in the first and last trimesters of the school year, and is considered the main period for therapeutic work to take place. The findings, which partially support the hypotheses, also illustrate the moderating role of inter-professional team collaboration on the relationship between the number of clients and the exhaustion dimension of burnout.

Key Words: education system, work conditions, burnout, job satisfaction

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In recent years, growing numbers of educational institutions have integrated art therapy into the school system (Randick & Dermer, 2013). A series of recent studies has documented the advantages of this integration process such as systematic work in an accessible environment, but also the many complexities related to therapeutic practices in the schools (Snir et al., 2018). In particular, art therapists are called upon to deal with a system that by definition is not always able to provide them with the appropriate work conditions for therapeutic work. This may lead to job dissatisfaction and burnout. This study was designed to better understand the relationships between working conditions, job satisfaction and burnout in art therapists in the education system in Israel.

Working conditions

The workplace environment and working conditions are key factors affecting the way people function in their environment and their level of burnout (Chan, Wan & Kuok, 2015). Burnout models (Bakler & Demerouti, 2007; Malach-Pines, 2011; Maslach & Leiter, 2016) pinpoint four main working conditions that can lead to employee burnout: physical conditions, work structure, interactional climate with coworkers, and interactional climate with superiors.

The physical environment should ideally be adapted to employees' needs so that they can perform well on the job (Malach-Pines, 2011). Difficult physical work conditions have been reported to lead to a feeling of exhaustion (Crawford, LePine & Rich, 2010), which is a major component of burnout. Preliminary studies suggest that school art therapists are often forced to cope with poorly adapted working physical conditions such as a lack of suitable therapy rooms, the absence of the proper equipment

and insufficient amounts of art materials (Keinan, Snir & Regev, 2016). In addition, studies have noted that in the school environment there are specific problems in creating a stable therapeutic setting and maintaining client privacy given the semi-public location of the therapy rooms (Regev, Green-Orlovich, & Snir, 2015).

Burnout related to the work structure is thought to manifest on two levels. The first is related to the characteristics of the job itself, such as a disproportionate workload (Decuir & Vega, 2010), work hours, time pressure, the number of treated clients (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) and their range of problems (Malach-Pines, 2011). The second relates to the psychological impact of work, which on the positive side can enable individuals to feel valued and a sense of self-accomplishment, such as a sense of mastery at work (Steel, Macdonald, Schroder & Mellor-Clark, 2015), self- expression and a sense of meaning in the workplace (Malach-Pines, 2011). Negative psychological impact includes vagueness in job definition, a lack of clarity at work (Kim, Jeong & Ko, 2013), and the prevalence of conflicts in general and conflicts between work values, individual values and organizational values, which may cause a worker to feel alienated in the workplace (Maslach & Leiter, 2008). In previous studies, art therapists who work in the education system reported that they need to handle a large caseload and a lack of definition of their role in the education system (Adoni- Kroyanker, Regev, Snir, Orkibi, & Shakarov, 2018). Workload problems include insufficient hours of therapy given the large number of clients demanded by the school system (Snir et al., 2018), working in several schools concurrently, and the need to demonstrate flexibility in fulfilling duties of an educational nature at the expense of personal time (Regev et al., 2015). The literature also suggests that conflicts and unrealistic expectations may arise from clashes between

the orientation of the educational system toward scholastic achievement and the orientation of therapy toward the resolution of the students' individual problems at a deeper level. (Moriya, 2006).

The nature of the interaction between workers and their colleagues (Malach-Pines, 2011), the ability or lack thereof to work as part of a team and acquire a sense of social support vs. isolation in the workplace (Gam, Kim & Jeon, 2016; Maslach & Leiter, 2008) can all affect burnout (Chang, 2014; Kim, 2016). Art therapists who work in the educational system describe workplace difficulties such as communication problems related to the differences in professional 'languages' between the art therapists and the educational staff (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2018) which can create additional difficulties when attempting to integrate into the system. They also describe tensions in the workplace as a result of perceived unequal workload, expectations of immediate and measurable changes for clients in therapy, and pressure to share confidential information about clients with the educational staff (Snir et al., 2018).

The interaction between worker and staff and the level of support that they can offer can also lead to burnout (Crawford et al., 2010) when staff are perceived as manifesting a lack of gratitude (Kim, 2012). Together with the need for art therapists to be acknowledged by school management staff, principals often report that therapists are not adequately committed to the school's academic objectives and are insufficiently adapted to the system's needs (Snir et al., 2018).

Given such challenging work conditions and the few studies devoted to field explorations of burnout in art therapists in the school system, the current study examined

the relationships between work conditions, job satisfaction and burnout in art therapists working in the Ministry of Education in Israel.

Job satisfaction and burnout

Job satisfaction is defined as an enjoyable or positive emotional state when employees are content with their work and their work experience. Job satisfaction related to people's feelings that they are involved in their work (Locke, 1976), that the work they do has value, and that their job generates a sense of pleasure and accomplishment (Adeyoyin, Agbeze-Unazi, Oyewunmi, Adegun & Ayodele, 2015). Job satisfaction is defined as employees' feeling about their work in relation to the working conditions and the rewards related to the job (Mangaleswarasharma, 2017). Job satisfaction contributes to employee motivation and promotes positive performance in the workplace (Olaniyan & Hystad, 2016).

Burnout is defined as a psychological syndrome (Maslach & Leiter, 2016) with physical and behavioral manifestations (Bakker & Costa, 2014) that is experienced as a feeling of mental, physical and emotional exhaustion caused by constant mental stress (Malach-Pines, 2011). According to Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001), burnout at work is manifested in three interrelated key dimensions. The first is exhaustion; namely, the depletion of emotional and physical resources, particularly in workplaces that involve contact with people, and as a result of the emotional strain on the employee. The second is cynicism (de-personalization); the development of a negative or cynical attitude. The employee experiences emotional and cognitive negative detachment from work as a defense mechanism that enables him/her to cope with exhaustion. The third is professional inefficacy, a negative self-evaluation and perceived lack of professional accomplishment. In questionnaires on burnout in previous studies and in the current

study, the dimension of professional inefficacy was re-worded to express a positive dimension (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) to reflects the employee's perception of his/her ability to contribute to the workplace, achieve work objectives and meet professional expectations.

Several studies on burnout have shown that tangible and discernible progress on the part of clients and their contribution to work, autonomy and job security, organizational structure and positive work atmosphere contributed to therapists' job satisfaction (Davies, Edgar & Debenham, 2016; Kim, 2012; Scanlan & Still, 2013). More generally, associations have also been reported between job satisfaction and burnout, where a sense of job dissatisfaction led to burnout (Kim, 2012) and burnout itself caused low levels of job satisfaction (Steel et al., 2015). Both situations were reported to result in a high rate of employee turnover (Chang, 2014; Scanlan & Still, 2013; Steel et al., 2015). Among the factors contributing to job dissatisfaction are factors contributing to burnout as a result of the work environment (see above), as well as the lack of job security, lack of professional accomplishment, poor communication between staff members, excessive managerial demands, a lack of flexibility in the schedule and difficulties with clients (Davies et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Scanlan & Still, 2013).

The current study

Art therapists in the education system work within a framework that is not therapeutic in orientation and has highly specific working conditions. We focused here on the suitability of the therapy room, the quality of interprofessional team collaboration and the number of clients to better assess the causes of burnout.

The research hypotheses were as follows:

1. A positive correlation will be found between the therapists' perceptions of the suitability of the therapy room in which they work along with the quality of interprofessional team collaboration in the school they work in; and job satisfaction as well as the positive dimension of burnout professional efficacy.
2. A negative correlation will be found between the number of clients the therapists treat in the school and job satisfaction, as well as the positive dimension of burnout, professional efficacy.
3. A negative correlation will be found between the therapists' perceptions of the suitability of the therapy room in which they work along with the quality of interprofessional team collaboration in their school and the two negative dimensions of burnout, exhaustion and cynicism.
4. A positive correlation will be found between the number of clients the therapists treat within the school and the two negative dimensions of burnout, exhaustion and cynicism.

Method

Participants

This study was based on responses to questionnaires filled out by 49 art therapists employed by the education system in Israel. The therapists, who were recruited by the researchers, agreed to take part in the study in return for a 60-hour graded course on the topic of Research in Art Therapy that earned them professional training credit. The therapists ranged in age from 28 to 62 (M=45, SD=7.5). Forty-four of the therapists were Jewish and five were Muslim. Thirty-eight of the therapists lived in the center of the country and the remainder lived in other areas. In terms of education, 28 had a Master's degree, 13 a Bachelor's degree, five studied psychotherapy after their Master's degree,

and one has a Ph.D. Eight had fewer than five years of post-qualification experience in the field, 20 had worked in the field for 5-10 years, and 21 had worked for more than ten years. These therapists' clients were eligible for special education services within the regular education system or in special education classes in the regular education system. The school system referred the students to therapy for individual or group therapy and they were not treated in any additional form or framework of psychotherapy.

Instruments

Suitability of the Therapy Room Questionnaire. This questionnaire, developed by two of the authors (Danieli, Snir, Regev & Adoni-Kroyanker, 2019), consists of three parts. The first part, "Physical Conditions," examines the therapists' perceptions of the suitability of the working conditions in their respective therapy rooms. The respondents were asked to choose the extent to which each of 11 dimensions of the therapy room were suitable for the needs of therapy (e.g., a place to store the artwork) and then rank each one on a scale ranging from (1) "*very inappropriate*" to (5) "*very appropriate*". The second part, "Qualities," examines the therapists' perceptions of the quality of the therapy room (e.g., "*the room is an inviting place for artistic creativity*") and responded on a scale ranging from (1) "*it is not the case at all*" to (5) "*it is very much the case*". The third part asks therapists to rate their general satisfaction with the therapy room on a scale ranging from (1) "*not satisfied at all*" to (5) "*very satisfied*". All questions on all three parts can also be answered "0" (not applicable). Due to the large number of instruments administered in the study, and after a high correlation was found between the two parts of the questionnaire (r=.80, p<.001), a single overall score was used based on the mean for all items on the questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha internal reliability score for the whole scale was good for this study at α=0.87. Due to the sample size, it was not possible

to assess the validity of the questionnaire and as such, it was used in this study solely in an exploratory manner.

Inter-professional team collaboration Questionnaire. This questionnaire is based on the Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (Bronstein, 2002). Thirty of the original 49 questions were translated into Hebrew by Liat Cohen-Yatziv and adapted to art therapists working in the school system, and 15 additional questions were added by the researchers in the same context as the original questionnaire related to art therapy. The authors discussed and agreed upon the phrasing of the items and their adaptation to the context of art therapy in the school system. The questionnaire was designed to measure the therapists' perceptions of multidisciplinary collaboration and includes five sub-scales: interdependence (e.g., *new projects emerged from collaborative work between staff members from different disciplines*), professional activities (e.g., *I dedicate time to introducing and explaining the field of art therapy to the educational staff*), flexibility (e.g., *my colleagues and I work together in a variety of different ways*), shared goals (e.g., *I usually take an active role in writing my clients' individualized learning programs*) and finally, thinking about the process (e.g*., the educational staff consults with me about my clients*). The therapists rate each question on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "very unsuitable" to "very suitable" or could mark 0 for "not applicable". In the current study only one score was calculated from all the items, and the Cronbach's alpha score for the scale was good at α=0.91.

Job Satisfaction Questionnaire – for the therapist (Judge, Locke, Durham & Kluger, 1998). This is a self-report questionnaire that examines the respondent's level of current job satisfaction. The questionnaire includes five items which are rated on a scale

ranging from (1) "*highly disagree*" to (5) "*agree very much*" (e.g*., I feel a fair amount of job satisfaction*) where a high score indicates a high level of job satisfaction (items 3 and 5 are reversed). The questionnaire authors report a Cronbach's alpha of α=0.85 and a high correlation with similar instruments. In this study, the questionnaire was filled out three times: at the beginning, middle and end of the academic year. The Cronbach's alpha for the beginning of the year was α=0.80, α=0.77 in the middle and α=0.812 at the end of the school year.

Burnout Questionnaire – for the therapist (Maslach & Jackson, 1986), translated into Hebrew by Etzion (1988) and validated using the previous index that was created by Maslach & Jackson (1986) and Pines & Aronson (1988), in Bachner's study (1998). This self-report questionnaire examines the extent of job burnout. It consists of 16 items which are divided into three different dimensions of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism and professional efficacy) measured on a scale ranging from (1) "*never*" to (7) "*every day*". Exhaustion is the dimension that includes feelings of fatigue, stress, and being worn out due to work (e.g., *I feel emotionally drained because of my work*). Cynicism is the dimension in which a worker develops negative feelings, cynicism, and a sense of detachment from work (e.g., *I become more and more cynical about the possibility that my work makes any real contribution*). Professional efficacy is the dimension in which a worker feels secure in his/her contribution to the organization and the ability to fulfill his/her expectations and professional objectives in work (e.g., *I did many valuable things in this job*). The authors reported an overall Cronbach's alpha of α=0.87, α=0.89 for the exhaustion dimension, α=0.69 for the cynicism dimension and α=0.72 for the professional efficacy dimension. Respondents filled out this questionnaire

three times during the academic year. The reliability scores ranged from α=0.82 to α=0.90 for the three time periods.

Procedure

The therapists were recruited by contacting representatives of the Ministry of Education and by calls for participation through the Israeli Association for Creative Arts Therapies (YAHAT). The data were collected using Qualtrics software. The therapists were sent an online link from the researchers to complete the questionnaires at a time suitable for them.

Professional ethics and confidentiality

The study was approved by the Office of the Chief Scientist at the Ministry of Education and by the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Social Welfare & Health Sciences at the University of Haifa. The data were collected anonymously and were then cross-referenced by using an identifying code for each therapist that was assigned by a researcher who was blind to the information. In addition, in the consent letter that the therapists signed, it was clearly stated that they were not obligated to participate in the study and could terminate their participation at any stage without consequences.

Findings

Descriptive statistics

As shown in Table 1, the therapists, on average, reported that their working conditions were fairly suitable in the schools where they worked both in terms of the therapy room (*M*=3.64) and inter-professional team collaboration (*M*=3.86). The average number of clients per therapist was 36, but with a high degree of variability as indicated by the high SD.

Insert Table 1 about here

Preliminary analyses

A preliminary examination revealed that most of the scales were not normally distributed; therefore non-parametric tests were performed. A Friedman test was conducted to examine whether there was a difference between the three measurement times during the academic year in relation to burnout and job satisfaction. Table 2 presents the means, the standard deviations and the minimum and maximum scores for each of the scales, as well as the chi-square ($\chi 2$) values. As shown in the table, the only difference between time periods (T1-T2-T3) was for the burnout - professional efficacy variable ($\chi 2$=8.938, *M*=5.58-5.67, *p*=0.011). To examine the source of this difference, a Wilcoxon post-hoc test was performed, and showed that the mean for the second measurement in the middle of the year (*M*=5.88) was significantly higher than for the beginning of the year (*M*=5.58) and the end of the year (*M*=5.67). Table 2 also shows that generally, the level of job satisfaction was good, and the level of burnout was moderate.

Insert Table 2 about here

Correlations between working condition variables. To examine the degree of internal consistency across the scales measuring working conditions, a two-tailed Spearman correlation test was performed (Table 3). The data show that there were no significant correlations between the inter-professional team collaboration variable and the other variables. However, there was a significant negative correlation between the number of clients in therapy and the perceived conditions of the therapy room (*r*=-.394, $p<0.01$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Correlations between job satisfaction and burnout. The correlations between job satisfaction and burnout were significant in the expected direction, in that job satisfaction was positively correlated with the positive dimension of burnout - professional efficacy, and negatively with the two negative dimensions of burnout - cynicism and exhaustion for all measurements.

Correlations between work conditions and job satisfaction and burnout. Spearman correlation tests with a Bonferroni correction for multiple correlations in each hypothesis were calculated. As shown in Table 4, for the first hypothesis, there was a significant positive correlation between job satisfaction at Time 2 and inter-professional team collaboration (r=.448, p=.003), a significant positive correlation between burnout - professional efficacy at Time 1and inter-professional team collaboration (r=.404, p=.008) and for burnout – self-efficacy at Time 2 and inter-professional team collaboration (r=.397, p=.008). The second hypothesis was not confirmed, since no negative correlation was found between the number of clients treated, job satisfaction and professional efficacy. In line with the third hypothesis, there was a negative correlation between burnout - exhaustion at Time 1 and the perception of the therapy room (r=- 489, p=.001), between burnout - exhaustion at Time 2 and the perception of the therapy room (r=- 540, p=.000), and burnout - exhaustion at Time 2 and inter-professional team collaboration (r=- 442, p=.003). Hypothesis 4, which predicted a positive correlation between the number of clients treated and exhaustion and cynicism, was not confirmed.

Insert Table 4 about here

Additional analyses

A stepwise regression was performed to test the predictability of the level of exhaustion as a dimension of burnout measured in the middle of the year, by examining the therapists' perceptions of the therapy room and the quality of inter-professional team collaboration. In the first step of the regression model (Table 5), perception of the room accounted for 29% of the variance in exhaustion ($F(1,32)=12.87$, $p\leq.001$). The predictor variable indicated a significant negative correlation between the therapy room and exhaustion (β=- 536, $p\leq.001$). In the second step, incorporating inter-professional team collaboration to the regression added 10% to the variance accounting for exhaustion ($F(1.31)=4.95$, $p<.05$) and the regression predictor variable showed a significant negative correlation between inter-professional team collaboration with the therapy room and the dimension of exhaustion in burnout (β=- 334, $p<.05$).

Insert Table 5 about here

The moderating effect of inter-professional team collaboration on the relationship between the number of clients and the exhaustion dimension of burnout as measured in the middle of the year (Time 2) was calculated, after this measurement was found to be more significant in the previous analyses. The moderating model was significant [$F(3,30)= 5.61$, $p<.003$, $R^2=.36$]. Specifically, at a low level of quality of inter-professional team collaboration, the effect of the number of clients was $b=.059$, $t(30)= 2.3$, $p=.02$, indicating that when the quality of inter-professional team collaboration was not good, each additional client raised the level of exhaustion by .059. At an average level of inter-professional team collaboration, the effect of the number of clients was $b=.027$, $t(30)=1.74$, $p=.09$, a marginal effect suggesting that when there was an average

level of inter-professional team collaboration, each additional client raises the level of exhaustion by .027. At high levels of inter-professional team collaboration, the effect of the number of clients was b=-.004, t(30)=-.33, p=.74, which indicates that when the level of inter-professional team collaboration was good, there was no association between the number of clients and the therapists' level of exhaustion.

Discussion

The aim of the study was to examine the associations between working conditions and job satisfaction and burnout in art therapists who work in the school system under the auspices of the Israeli Ministry of Education. The hypotheses were partially confirmed.

There were several significant correlations between the therapists' perceptions of their working conditions with burnout and job satisfaction. Specifically, the better the perception of inter-professional team collaboration, the more job satisfaction was reported at Time 2. It might be that good inter-professional team collaboration emerged as important for art therapists who work in schools because in most educational settings, only one therapist is assigned to a given school (Snir et al., 2018). The therapist may feel isolated professionally because of differences between the goals of the therapeutic approach and those of the school (Moriya, 2006). Similar findings were found in a study that examined the relationship between teamwork and job satisfaction in 77 senior psychologists working in community mental health service institutes in Ireland. Findings from that study indicated that involvement in important decision-making processes and professional recognition were significant factors influencing job satisfaction (Roncalli & Byrne, 2016). Hence, inter-professional team collaboration may play an important and noteworthy role in creating a sense of belonging and improving a sense of job satisfaction for art therapists working in the education system.

The findings also showed that the better the therapists' perception of inter-professional team collaboration, the greater their sense of professional efficacy at Times 1 and 2 and the less their sense of exhaustion at Time 2. Hence a good level of inter-professional team collaboration may promote a sense of professional efficacy at work, reduce the sense of emotional burden that accompanies the therapeutic work and contribute to reducing the level of exhaustion among therapists. Support for the claim that good inter-professional team collaboration has a beneficial effect on reducing levels of burnout can be found in several studies (e.g., Charoensukmongkol, Moqbel & Gutierrez-Wirsching, 2016; Kim, 2016). For example, a study examining art therapists' outlook on their integration within the school system found that therapists who shared the workload with other staff members perceived collaborative teamwork as a factor that led them toward achieving a common therapeutic goal (Regev et al., 2015).

Finally, more satisfactory perceptions of the working conditions in the therapy room were associated with a lesser sense of exhaustion at Times 1 and 2. This finding is consistent with the claim in clinical and theoretical art therapy literature that the conditions of the therapy room constitute a significant factor in therapy. As a physical location, it serves as the container for clients (Danieli et al., 2019). Thus, good conditions in the therapy room may contribute to an appropriate and continuous work process which eases the therapeutic process in the school setting. Further support for this claim can also be found in studies that have examined the relationship between the work environment and the exhaustion dimension of burnout in 374 individuals in the human resources, industrial and transportation sectors (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). That study reported that poor physical work conditions were associated with high levels

of exhaustion. The crucial role of the perceived quality of the therapy room and the importance of inter-professional team collaboration were strengthened in the current study when a regression test that examined the ability to predict the degree of exhaustion, as measured in the middle of the year, showed that therapy room conditions and inter-professional team collaboration accounted for 39% of the total variability for exhaustion.

Most of the correlations between the variables emerged at Time 2. This period of the academic year is characterized by more consecutive work days, which allows for more staff meetings than in the first and last trimesters of the school year, during which there are more school holidays and special events in schools (Ministry of Education, 2018). In addition, midyear is considered the main period for therapeutic work to take place (Adoni-Kroyanker et al., 2018). When examining the differences in burnout variables and the levels of the job satisfaction at Times 1,2, and 3, in the middle of the school year, therapists noted a higher level of professional efficacy than at the beginning or the end of the year. Hence during a period when there is more intensive therapeutic work, therapists may feel a higher level of professional efficacy, but their level of job satisfaction appears to be more closely related to teamwork, which in turn affects the level of burnout in terms of higher levels of professional efficacy and lower levels of exhaustion.

The moderating role of inter-professional team collaboration on the relationship between the number of clients and the exhaustion dimension of burnout as measured at Time 2 showed that when the quality of inter-professional team collaboration is perceived as low, each additional client raises the level of therapist exhaustion. When the quality of inter-professional team collaboration is high, there was no association between the

number of clients and the level of burnout in the exhaustion dimension among therapists. This may hint that high-quality inter-professional team collaboration may help prevent exhaustion burnout in art therapists working in schools, in terms of the number of clients they treat. Inter-professional team collaboration was found to be a moderating factor in several studies (Mutkins, Brown, & Thorsteinsson, 2011). This finding has strong implications for therapeutic professions which involve a high level of emotional and mental investment in work.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

The Suitability of the Therapy Room Questionnaire used in the study is in its initial stages of validation and did not undergo validation here due to the small sample size. Another limitation is related to the notion that job satisfaction is multidimensional (Zemach, 2012). Therefore, a general assessment of job satisfaction as reflected in this questionnaire may examine some aspects but overlook others that could capture the type of job satisfaction that therapists experience. As such, a more detailed questionnaire might have been more appropriate. Since this was a correlational study, it is impossible to draw causal inferences and additional causes could have affected the type or directionality of the findings. Further research should implement other research tools such as observation and interviews to examine the factors affecting burnout and job satisfaction in therapists, and in particular the role of teamwork on these variables.

Summary and Conclusions

These results underscore the associations between the conditions in which art therapists work in schools, and how they feel as workers. As shown, more satisfactory perceptions of inter-professional team collaboration and working conditions in the art therapy room were associated with a lesser sense of exhaustion and burnout and with

higher job satisfaction. This association emerged mainly at midyear, which is characterized by more consecutive workdays. It is considered the main period for therapeutic work to take place and incorporates more staff meetings than the first and last trimesters of the school year. The findings also show that inter-professional team collaboration affects the relationship between the number of clients and burnout from exhaustion. Overall, they highlight the importance that should be ascribed to the conditions in which art therapists work in the education system.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics of working conditions

	Min.	*Max.*	*M*	*SD*
Work room conditions	2.45	4.80	3.64	.562
Inter-professional team collaboration	2.91	4.71	3.86	.447
Total number of clients	12.00	105.00	36.26	16.792
Number of clients outside the study framework	0	80	17.78	15.271
Number of clients within the study framework	2	43	18.20	8.595

Table 2

Friedman-type comparison table showing the differences between Times 1,2, and 3 for job satisfaction and burnout

	Measurement	*Min.*	*Max.*	*M*	*SD*	χ^2	*p*
Job satisfaction	1	2.20	5.00	4.15	.65		
	2	2.40	5.00	4.03	.63	4.405	.111
	3	2.40	5.00	4.04	.71		
Burnout – Professional efficacy	1	2.67	7.00	5.58	.97		
	2	3.00	7.00	5.88	.89	8.983	.011
	3	2.83	7.00	5.67	.96		
Burnout - Cynicism	1	1.00	6.20	2.10	1.05		
	2	1.00	4.80	1.89	.89	5.560	.062
	3	1.00	4.60	1.84	.89		
Burnout - Exhaustion	1	1.00	6.20	2.98	1.28		
	2	1.00	6.60	3.03	1.29	.243	.886
	3	1.20	6.40	2.82	1.21		

Table 3

Spearman correlations for working condition variables

	Number of clients	Work room conditions	Inter-professional team collaboration
Number of clients			
Work room conditions	-.394* (n=37)		
Inter-professional team collaboration	-.069 (n=34)	.295 (n=34)	

*$p<0.01$

Table 4

Correlations between working conditions, job satisfaction and burnout

	Measurement	Work room conditions	Inter-professional team collaboration	Number of clients
Job satisfaction	1	.137 (n=38)	.268 (n=35)	-.011 (n=45)
	2	.246 (n=39)	.448** (n=36)	.054 (n=46)
	3	.138 (n=39)	.085 (n=34)	.076 (n=45)
Burnout – Professional efficacy	1	.014 (n=38)	.404** (n=35)	.270 (n=45)
	2	.185 (n=39)	.397** (n=36)	.032 (n=46)
	3	-.51 (n=37)	.299 (n=34)	.146 (n=45)
Burnout - Cynicism	1	-.070 (n=38)	-.166 (n=35)	-.062 (n=45)
	2	-.257 (n=39)	-.301 (n=36)	.029 (n=46)
	3	-.066 (n=37)	.403 (n=34)	.023 (n=45)
	1	-.489** (n=38)	-.289 (n=35)	-.165 (n=45)

Burnout -	2	-.540**	-.442**	-.044
Exhaustion		(n=39)	(n=36)	(n=46)
	3	-.389	-.304	-.196
		(n=37)	(n=34)	(n=45)

**p<.001

Table 5

Linear regression

	Unstandardized beta (B) regression	Standard error for beta (SE.B)	Standardized regression - BETA	T
Step I				
Room	-1.271	.354	-.536***	-3.588
Summary Step I		F(1,32)=12.87, R^2=.29, $p\leq$.001		
Step II				
Room	-.993	.357	-.419**	-2.787
Inter-professional team collabo-ration	-.997	.448	-.334*	-2.226
Summary Step II		F(2,31)=9.71, R^2=.39, $p\leq$.001		

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***$p\leq$.001