

STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE LEADERSHIP

Master thesis

Perceptions of organizational support and psychological well-being:
experiences of Ukrainian refugees in Dutch organizations



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Preface

The writing of my thesis is one of my proudest achievements. It was written between February 2024 and June 2024 as part of the master's program in Strategic Human Resources Leadership at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. Selecting the topic of refugees was a natural choice for me, as I have always been interested in investing my time in socially relevant issues. This thesis circle offered the freedom to focus on an area of personal interest within this broad topic. This enabled me to focus on mental well-being, a subject I have always been passionate about due to my interest in psychology.

I got to know so much more about Ukrainian refugees, their experiences and their current challenges. I heard stories that were heartbreaking, as well as very meaningful and inspiring ones. The literature and journals I read were all so interesting to me, and I value the personal connections I made deeply. This thesis trajectory pushed me to step out of my comfort zone, leading me to go to shelters, Ukrainian cultural events, unfamiliar places, and talk to people I would not normally encounter. I learned a lot.

I am very grateful for my supervisor, Mrs. Sofija Pajic who guided and supported me throughout this process of writing my thesis. She provided me with well-written feedback, which gave me new insights regarding the development of this work. I am also really thankful to my second examiner Mrs. Marloes van Engen for providing me with valuable feedback on my research proposal. Furthermore, I thank Mr. Lars Streppel for helping me find Ukrainian refugees to participate in my research.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my family and friends for supporting and motivating me during this process.

Thank you for taking the time, and I hope you enjoy reading my thesis.

Robin van Raak

Abstract

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, approximately 89,000 Ukrainians sought refuge in the Netherlands by November 2022. The European Union activated the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) which provided immediate asylum and labor market access for Ukrainian refugees. This unique situation offers a valuable opportunity to study the integration of Ukrainian refugees into the Dutch labor market, free from the typical complexities of prolonged asylum processes. This qualitative thesis investigates the integration experiences of Ukrainian refugees, focusing on how organizational support influences their psychological well-being and workplace integration. Refugees often face mental health challenges due to pre- and post-migration stressors, which affects their workplace integration. Organizations who employ refugees can be crucial in supporting their psychological well-being and workplace integration. This study addresses the knowledge gap regarding the perceptions of current workplace support on refugees' mental health, emphasizing the importance of creating supportive work environments.

This thesis used qualitative research methods, including twelve in-depth interviews with Ukrainian refugees who work or have worked in Dutch organizations. The sampling techniques of convenience and snowball sampling were used to invite interviewees, ensuring a diverse range of backgrounds and professions. A thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns in the interviews, to provide an understanding of the complex interplay between perceived organizational support and psychological well-being. The findings of this study highlight positive and negative perceptions about central themes such as uncertainty about the future, development opportunities, and transparent communication. The research emphasizes the critical role of fair treatment, supportive HR practices, and leadership in enhancing refugees' mental health. It finds that organizational support, such as stable employment, transparent communication, and opportunities for social integration, significantly mitigates psychological distress and fosters a supportive work environment. The study contributes to the understanding of refugee integration by highlighting the need for tailored support systems within organizations to address refugees' unique challenges, ultimately promoting their well-being and workplace integration.

Keywords: Ukrainian refugees, perceived organizational support, psychological well-being, workplace integration

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1. Introduction

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, 89.000 Ukrainians sought refuge in the Netherlands by November 2022 (Dijkstra et al., 2022; Vetten-Mc Mahon et al., 2023). For the first time in history, the European Union (EU) activated its Temporary Protection Directive (TPD), a policy established over two decades ago to provide immediate protection and rights to those fleeing conflict. It granted Ukrainians automatic asylum in EU countries and the ability to move freely in the EU where they had connections, job prospects, or felt welcome and cared for (Bosse, 2022; Carrera & Ineli-Ciger, 2023). This granted them immediate access to the Dutch labor market (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken., 2022). The existence of TPD offers a unique opportunity to study the integration experiences and processes of Ukrainian refugees without the added complexities of prolonged asylum procedures and uncertain legal status, which often affect other refugee populations (Deimantas & Şanlıtürk, 2023). In this thesis, the experiences of Ukrainian refugees integrating into the Dutch labor market have been studied, as their recent arrivals, uncertain future, and immediate labor market access present a distinct case for understanding integration's impact on the long-term well-being of our societies and economic stability (European Commission, 2020).

Refugee integration is a complex challenge since refugees are the most vulnerable population among migrants, forced to leave their country and usually exposed to multiple pre- and post-migratory stressors (Mann & Fazil, 2006). The stressors might include traumatic events such as violent conflict, political events, persecution, natural disasters, and environmental degradation (Reed, 2018). All of which cause mental health challenges and psychosocial problems (WHO, 2018). Compared to other migrant groups, the prevalence of psychological problems is exceptionally high among refugees, and recent studies show that this also applies to Ukrainian refugees (Fóti, 2024). These issues further hinder their ability to integrate (Li et al., 2016), obstructing their engagement in career and work-related activities, which are crucial for achieving their full potential in the professional realm (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017; Coursol et al., 2001; 2005; Strang & Ager, 2010).

Hence, the appropriate and accessible mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is essential for conflict survivors to address trauma and distress during and after their escape while trying to adjust to an unfamiliar place (Weissbecker et al., 2019). The unfortunate reality is that the majority of refugees struggling with mental health challenges will never access the necessary support and services they require. Either because of the limited and uneven distribution of services or due to other factors, such as challenges in coordinating efforts at both national and international levels, barriers hindering access to care even in regions where services exist, and the enduring stigma of being both a refugee and mentally ill (Silove et al., 2017). The Netherlands is no exception and fails to honor this commitment with fragmented services that do not meet the support needs (Vetten-Mc Mahon et al., 2023).

Currently, the mental health challenges of refugees are interfering with their labor market integration, which causes challenges in integrating them into the Dutch workforce (World Health Organization, 2018). Thus, the role of organizations as key stakeholders in labor market integration and the potential source of supportive interventions and practices is increasingly drawing attention from researchers and policymakers. Research on refugees provides empirical evidence that organizations need to not only be aware of the psychological well-being of refugees but also to proactively engage in creating a supportive work environment, as external support is known to influence psychological well-being (Daniels & Guppy, 1994; Gallagher & Vella-Brodrick, 2008; Siedlecki et al., 2014). Organizational measures supporting the psychological well-being of employees (especially those with vulnerable backgrounds) are associated with increased job satisfaction, positive mood, and improved performance, which not only foster a healthier work environment but also benefit achieving organizationally relevant outcomes (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In addition, there is a rising call for management scholars and practitioners to pay attention to refugee workplace integration to increase socially responsible businesses and inclusive workplaces (Lee et al., 2020).

The key to successfully integrating refugees into host nations lies in a two-step approach. The first step involves assisting refugees in finding reliable and stable employment, and second, providing social and workplace support to help refugees settle into and thrive in their new roles (OECD, 2016). While the literature has extensively explored the first step, both are crucial for comprehensive integration. This thesis will therefore focus on the second step, to gain knowledge on workplace support. Despite insights on the importance of workplace support (Newman et al., 2018), a recent study by Pesch and Ipek (2023) points out a knowledge gap on how organizations can support the psychological well-being of refugees more effectively. Moreover, while research on the overall psychological well-being of refugees has expanded, the factors that influence their psychological well-being, specifically at work, still remain unexplored (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008; Jasinskaja-Lahti et al., 2006). Finally, Pesch and Ipek (2023) advocate for ongoing research in workplace integration strategies to empower refugees, and ensure that they receive adequate support to thrive and contribute maximally to their work environments. Hence, Pesch and Ipek (2023) emphasize the importance of recognizing distress signs and providing the specific support refugees need in their employment. Evidently, this can strengthen their resilience and agency in the labor market and help organizations assist in their integration process (Urbanaviciute et al., 2019).

Because Ukrainian refugees are the most recent group of refugees in the Netherlands, with their own particular needs and challenges, there is a pressing need to better understand their integration into the workforce, mainly through the lens of their mental health and well-being. This thesis focuses on the perception of Ukrainian refugees and how they perceive the support their employing organizations provide. To address this knowledge gap, the following research question is both timely and necessary:

“How do Ukrainian refugees perceive the organizational support in relation to their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?”

To answer the above-mentioned research question and provide a contribution to the aforementioned research gap and recent calls for understanding the role of organizational support on the well-being of refugees Pesch and Ipek (2023), this thesis applies a qualitative research methodology centered around in-depth interviews with refugees who work or have worked in various Dutch organizations. This approach is chosen for its strength in uncovering refugees' nuanced perspectives and experiences, providing rich and detailed data. The theoretical framework for perceived organizational support (POS) from Eisenberger et al. (1997) is the foundation for this research. While this framework is typically applied to investigate perceptions of general employees, this thesis extends its scope to the unique context of Ukrainian refugees, a recent and distinct refugee group in the Netherlands. Through these interviews, the study delves into the personal stories of Ukrainian refugees, focusing on their perceptions of issues such as fair treatment, leadership, and HR practices in relation to their psychological well-being. A thematic analysis is conducted, and from this, results and conclusions were drawn. This thesis provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of the unique wants and needs of Ukrainian refugees to effectively integrate them into the workplace. It offers empirical evidence that informs both theoretical discourse and practical applications, providing a foundation for future research to foster successful integration and well-being of refugee employees.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter outlines and analyzes the primary theoretical concepts addressed in this thesis. It begins by explaining the context of refugee labor market integration with a focus on a detailed description of the circumstances faced by Ukrainian refugees as the target group of this study. Next, it connects the experiences of workplace integration to psychological well-being. The following chapter presents the theoretical framework for perceived organizational support (POS) from Eisenberger et al. (1997) to provide the backbone for analyzing the potential role of organizational support in the psychological well-being of refugees. Finally, the thesis presents the conceptual model to gain a complete understanding of the key concepts, theories, and relationships that are involved and to be investigated.

2.1. Refugee workplace integration

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines refugees as individuals who leave their country because of fear of being harmed for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion (UNHCR, 2023). Upon fleeing their country, refugees arrive in a new country where they need to adapt and integrate. Refugees' integration must be distinguished from voluntary immigrants (Becker & Ferrara, 2019) because they are not forced to leave their home countries due to factors they cannot control (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010). Moreover, the refugee experience differs and adds complexity to the integration, as they have often experienced traumatic episodes in their country of origin or extended periods of traveling or in temporary living situations, which affects their psychological well-being (Brell et al., 2020; Fazel et al., 2005; Murray et al., 2010).

Hence, there is no single generally accepted definition, theory, or model of refugee integration (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016). Bakker et al. (2013) described integration as an essentially contested concept characterized as a multidimensional two-way process starting with the arrival in the host country. This process is characterized as multidimensional because it requires refugees' willingness and ability to adapt to the host community's way of life in many private and work domains (Bakker et al., 2013). Moreover, the process is characterized as two-way because it requires effort from the side of the refugee, as well as an openness from the host country to welcome and support this integration (Bakker et al., 2013). Thus, a lack of support can prevent refugees' full integration into societal entities in the workplace (Li & Kung, 2023). In other words, both refugee and the context where employment is secured are essential to create initial employment, as well as continuous comparable opportunities for career progression and similar workplace outcomes as other workers (Hirst et al., 2021, p. 3). Thus, true workplace integration involves gaining employment, and receiving the support needed in the workplace to sustain performance and well-being (Lee et al., 2020). However, in practice, this process is not linear and refugees face many complex challenges while integrating into workplaces in host countries (Muller-Dugic et al., 2023).

Empirical evidence identifies several key obstacles that hinder workplace integration and generate lower employment rates of refugees compared to other immigrants and natives, with these obstacles being consistent across host countries and across refugee groups (Muller-Dugic et al., 2023). First, there is the issue that refugees' qualifications and previous work experience are not being recognized in their host country, making it harder to find jobs that match their skills and background (Ager & Strang, 2008). Second, they have had limited time to prepare for their migration and integration, making it harder to align their skills with the needs of the labor market (Fasani et al., 2021; Muller-Dugic et al., 2023). Not being able to speak the language and the lack of time to learn a new language creates the third barrier to gaining and integrating into employment (Ager & Strang, 2008). Lastly, they are often still processing the traumas they have suffered and struggle with mental health problems, which can create a slower integration (Fasani et al., 2021; Hunkler & Khourshed, 2020).

Because country-level policy measures had limited success, employers have been called to address these challenges and engage themselves in efforts to support workplace integration and share the responsibilities with other stakeholders (Knappert et al., 2020). For example, HRM practices can impact refugees during their processes of recruitment, onboarding, and socialization, and have been argued to be particularly relevant (Alfes et al., 2013; Hirst et al., 2021; Loon & Vitale, 2021). Additionally, employers can support refugees by creating policies and programs that address cultural, structural, and experiential barriers to seeking psychological help (Byrow et al., 2020). Therefore, this study attempts to move from identifying barriers to workplace integration to outlining support mechanisms that organizations can employ to facilitate Ukrainian refugees at different stages of workplace integration.

2.2. Context of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands

Ukrainian refugees fled their country after the Russian Federation started a full-scale war in February 2022. The existing reports show that due to the Ukrainian general mobilization, most males are prevented from leaving the country. Consequently, 70 percent of the adult refugees are female, and over one-third are children in all host countries (Kosyakova & Brücker, 2024). In terms of education level, current data shows that a significant proportion of Ukrainian refugees are highly educated compared to other refugee groups and the general Ukrainian population. Two-thirds of Ukrainian refugees have a college or university education, with many holding a master's degree or higher (OECD., 2023). Therefore, the general demographic picture of Ukrainian refugees integrating in the Netherlands is mainly highly educated, working-age women (Kosyakova & Brücker, 2024). Understanding their demographic profile is crucial for analyzing their workplace integration and psychological well-being within Dutch organizations.

Ukrainian refugees are granted a temporary protection status, meaning they get more rights and immediate access to the Dutch labor market (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken., 2022). However the application of this directive ends in the Netherlands in March 2025 (Fóti, 2024), leaving the future of this refugee population uncertain. It is unknown when the war will end and if they are able to return to Ukraine. When looking at the workplace integration of Ukrainian refugees, it is striking to see that 45 percent of working-age Ukrainian refugees found employment within half a year after their arrival (Doomernik & van Heelsum, 2024). Hence, for this group of refugees, it is more relevant to move from the investigation of the initial stages of orientation in the Dutch labor market and job search and to investigate factors that might affect durable and sustainable workplace integration. Mainly, the current research focuses on unveiling the complex interplay between refugees' psychological well-being, its impact on job performance and workplace integration, and the role of organizational support in facilitating lasting workplace integration.

2.3. Psychological well-being of refugees

As stated by Papadopoulos (2007), "*... it is important to remember the obvious fact that becoming a refugee is not a psychological phenomenon per se; rather, it is exclusively a sociopolitical one, with psychological implications*" (p. 301)."

This distinction is crucial for understanding the unique psychological well-being of refugees, as their mental health is deeply influenced by the sociopolitical challenges they face. The current research defines psychological well-being as an individual's cognitive assessment of satisfaction with his/her life circumstances (Diener et al., 1985). Such assessment is characterized by three features. First, it is phenomenological, meaning that people are happy when they believe themselves to be happy (Diener, 1994). Second, it involves emotions; individuals with better psychological well-being are typically more likely to experience positive emotions and less likely to experience negative emotions (Diener & Larsen, 1993). Third, the concept of psychological well-being refers to one's life as a whole (Diener, 1994).

Refugees are often confronted with many past, present and future issues that significantly impact their psychological well-being. The environments they live in and their experiences could cause higher levels of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kleijn et al., 2001). Research indicates that individuals affected by war and severe human rights violations undergo numerous traumatic events, averaging between seven to fifteen traumatic events per person (Marshall et al., 2005; Mollica et al., 1999; Mollica, 2004). Ukrainian refugees are not different in this regard. Studies indicate that there is a significant number of Ukrainian refugees suffering from psychological problems often stemming from traumatic experiences (Fóti, 2024). They feel culturally deprived and experience trauma from the past while also dealing with current challenges, such as nostalgia and uncertainty about their future (Li et al., 2016). In addition, there is the extended and uncertain duration

in detention centers, coupled with the lack of access to legal services, separation from friends and family and the lack of control on processing time, that badly affect their mental health (Li et al., 2016). The longer they remain in detention centers, the more psychological distress they experience (Robjant et al., 2009), underscoring the need for comprehensive support systems.

Supporting psychological well-being affects not only the refugees but also the organizations that employ them. At the individual level, enhancing psychological well-being can improve employee attention, thought processes and action, problem-solving abilities and reduce the likelihood of perceiving information as threatening (Cartwright & Cooper, 2009; Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002; Seidlitz & Diener, 1993). At the organizational level, research showed that psychological well-being in the workplace is a predictor of employee retention, organizational profits, customer loyalty, fewer workplace accidents, and decreased sick leave (Darr & Johns, 2008; Harter et al., 2010; Harter et al., 2002). Therefore, to optimize the support, it is beneficial for both the refugees and the organizations involved to understand how the support provided is currently perceived.

2.4. Perceived organizational support (POS)

Although past research offered evidence on the positive role of organizational support on employee outcomes in general working population, we have limited understanding on if, and how this holds for Ukrainian refugees. In order to approach and analyze the role of organizational support among this group and identify potential specifics, the current study builds on the more general conceptualization of POS stemming from the organizational support theory (OST) by Eisenberger et al. (1997).

Within OST, POS refers to perceived organizational support as employees' perceptions that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being, and it considers the organization's commitment to the employees. Eisenberger et al. (2020) explain it as a way of looking at how employees see their workplace as a supportive or unsupportive entity. It suggests that people have a certain perception of an organization, as if it is a living thing with its own intentions and purposes, even though it is known that organizations are only structures made up of rules, norms, and people. According to this theory, employees develop a sense of POS based on how they feel the organization treats them.

The OST identifies a number of major antecedents that play a crucial role in shaping how employees perceive the support they receive from organizations (Figure 1). These are: fairness, leadership support, and HR practices and work conditions (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Namely, fairness encompasses the distribution of resources such as promotions or rewards, the fairness of the decision-making processes, and the choices on access to information about the organization (Colquitt, 2001). Leadership support such as leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived supervisor support, and transformational leadership, fosters POS by enhancing employees' perception of organizational care and concern, thus contributing to a supportive work environment (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Lastly, HR practices and work conditions refers to opportunities for development, autonomy, and supportive policies (Shore & Shore, 1995). These antecedents promote POS by providing trust, enhancing employee engagement, and giving a sense of value within the organization (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Research on POS has been widespread because of its clear antecedents and significant influences, including favorable employee attitudes, performance and well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

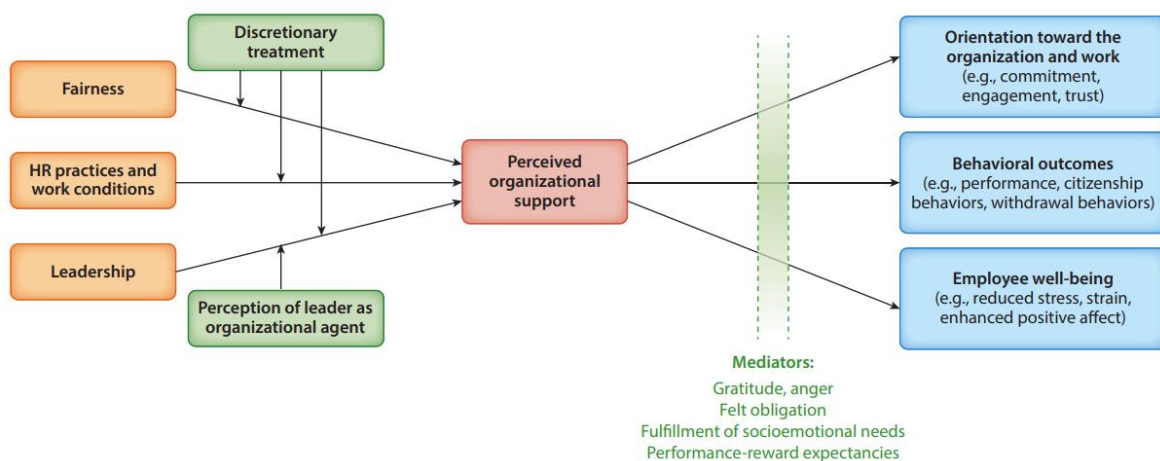


Figure 1: The theoretical model of the organizational support theory. Antecedents are colored in orange, outcomes in blue, and mechanisms in green. The figure is adapted from Baran et al. (2012).

As noted in 2.3., refugees face significant mental health challenges during their workplace integration. Therefore, the feeling of organizational support is crucial because it can increase employee well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1997). This thesis will specifically investigate the role of fairness, HR practices, and leadership as factors that might drive POS and, consequently, the psychological well-being outcome of POS among Ukrainian refugees.

Previous studies show that these factors positively impact employee well-being in general. Perceived fairness can contribute to employee well-being and job satisfaction (Lawson et al., 2009), HR Practices and working conditions can enhance employees' mental well-being through, for example, enhancing communication and encouraging participation, but it can also negatively affect mental well-being through decreased social interaction or physical health issues (Cañibano, 2013). Different leadership styles have various impacts on mental well-being, with transformational leadership style improving employees' mental well-being by fostering meaning, confidence, motivation, and trust (Arnold et al., 2007). These findings make it reasonable to explore their effects on refugees' integration and well-being as well, as refugees often face unfair treatment, poor work conditions, and low self-esteem (Viazminsky et al., 2022; Willott & Stevenson, 2013; Yanar et al., 2018).

2.5. Conceptual model

The conceptual model illustrated in figure 2 outlines the key theory and concepts related to the workplace integration of refugees. It visualizes refugee workplace integration as an overarching theme, highlighting the critical role of POS in enhancing their psychological well-being. It starts with the contextual factors Ukrainians are dealing with, such as the war and migration stressors and the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD). The demographic considerations include high education levels and the majority of Ukrainian refugees being women. It identifies key workplace integration challenges such as language barriers, unrecognized qualifications, limited preparation time, and mental health issues. POS, which includes fairness, leadership support, and HR practices, interconnects these elements. And lastly, the influence on psychological well-being. It emphasizes the need for a supportive organization to mitigate the obstacles regarding the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees for successful workplace integration.

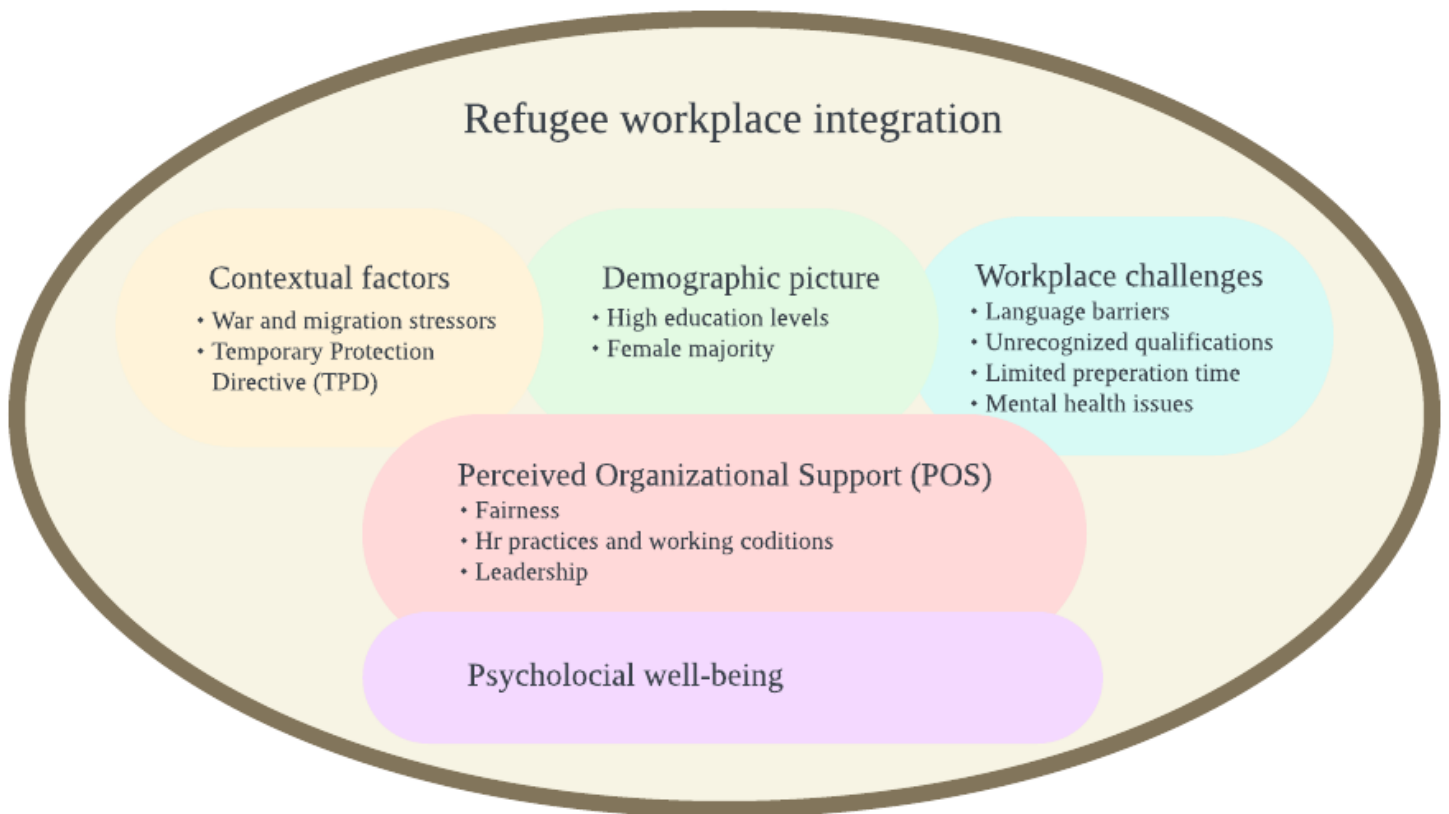


Figure 2: Conceptual model of the interrelations between POS and Psychological well-being with contextual factors, demographic picture, and workplace challenges.

Sub-questions have been developed to support answering the main research question of this thesis; *"How do Ukrainian refugees perceive organizational support in relation to their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?"*. The first sub-question focuses on the psychological impacts and stressors experienced by Ukrainian refugees. The following three sub-questions are devoted to gaining knowledge on the three aspects of the POS model: HR practices and work conditions, fairness, and leadership. These sub-questions are listed below:

- *What are the psychological well-being impacts and stressors experienced by Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands?*
- *How do Ukrainian refugees perceive the impact of fairness, as described in the POS model, on their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?*
- *How do Ukrainian refugees perceive the impact of HR practices and work conditions, as described in the POS model, on their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?*
- *How do Ukrainian refugees perceive the impact of leadership, as described in the POS model, on their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?*

3. Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed description of the research approach, interviewees, data collection, data analysis, and finally, the research ethics of this thesis. It not only describes the tactics used, but also the reason for choosing these methods.

3.1. Research approach

This thesis provides insights into how Ukrainian refugees interpret and experience organizational support in relation with their psychological well-being. A qualitative research method is chosen to answer the research question: “*How do Ukrainian refugees perceive organizational support in relation to their psychological well-being within Dutch organizations?*”. Employing a qualitative research design is contrary to quantitative methodologies, which prioritize generalizability and objectivity (Lund, 2012). Instead, it delves deeply into the refugees' lived experiences, avoiding a quantitative approach that emphasizes causal relationships and hypothesis testing (Lund, 2012). Qualitative research affords the opportunity for complex conversations that involve a deep exploration of the subject matter (Doorewaard et al., 2015). This can enrich the data and provide more meaningful insights into complex scenarios.

This thesis is grounded in subjectivist and relativistic ontologies. This approach recognizes the constructed nature of reality, emphasizing that individual perceptions and experiences shape our understanding of the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The subjectivist stance acknowledges the influence of personal biases and backgrounds on our perceptions, making it particularly suitable for exploring the perspectives of Ukrainian refugees regarding organizational support and its influence on mental well-being (Symon & Cassell, 2012).

Relativism further supports this approach by claiming that multiple, equally valid realities exist, reflecting the diverse ways individuals experience and describe their lives (Levers, 2013). This ontological perspective allows the study to capture the complexity of psychological well-being and POS, challenging the objective observation advocated by positivism (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Through this methodological approach, the study aims to gather nuanced insights into the lived experiences of Ukrainian refugees, contributing to a more informed and empathetic understanding of this intersection.

3.2. Interviewees

To gather the data, fifteen interviews were conducted with Ukrainian refugees who are or have been employed in various professions within different Dutch organizations. Unfortunately, two recordings failed, and one interviewee held a volunteer position rather than paid employment, resulting in twelve usable interviews. The interviewees come from diverse professional backgrounds and have transitioned into various roles in the Netherlands, often different from their original careers. The duration of their employment in the Netherlands varies significantly, with some interviewees having worked for three months while others have been employed for over two years. The interviewees in this study were selected based on their age, ranging from 18 to 67 years, due to the focus of this thesis on working adults. A detailed overview of the interviewees with a summary of the demographics and current employment of the interviewees is included in the appendix, located in Appendix 8.4.

A large part of the interviewees were sourced from a personal network, specifically through a contact who is a location manager for multiple Ukrainian refugee centers in the Netherlands. A convenience sampling strategy was used to gather data. Where the contact invited multiple available refugees regarding access, location, time, and willingness (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). Additionally, interviewees were recruited during an event to support Ukrainians, where potential candidates were approached and asked if they would be willing to collaborate in the study. Finally, snowball sampling was used due to its networking characteristics and to foster trust among interviewees (Parker et al., 2019). These different sampling strategies resulted in a diverse group of interviewees with various backgrounds, professions and educational levels. The interviewees worked in different sectors such as logistics, agriculture, catering industry, or finance. All individuals were able to speak English. None of the interviewees had a permanent contract; every interviewee had or has a temporary contract, likely due to their temporary status in the Netherlands. Most interviewees were actively employed, but four had either lost their job or resigned.

3.3. Data collection

The data is collected from the sample population by conducting in-depth interviews. Interviews are favored for their ability to provide rich, detailed stories, allowing interviewees to articulate their thoughts and experiences in their own words and at their own pace (Demuth & Mey, 2015). The advantage of using interviews lies in the flexibility they offer, enabling interviewees to discuss complex details of their lives and perceptions that might not be as easily captured through more structured methods such as surveys (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). Moreover, the interview process is beneficial to building a connection and trust between the researcher and interviewees, which is crucial when dealing with sensitive topics. A trust-based relationship enhances the reliability of the data collected, as interviewees are more likely to share genuine and detailed descriptions of their experiences (Bleijenbergh, 2013).

The research method employed is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to include key questions related to the topic while exploring an issue or response in depth (Evans & Lewis, 2018). Semi-structured interviews create a two-way communication between the researcher and the interviewee, which means that open-ended responses can be taken and more in-depth information relating to the research topic can be gathered (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). Islam and Aldaihani (2022) recommend it as the most useful interview method for rich data exploration.

The location was chosen after the interviewees were found and had agreed to participate. It was preferred that the interviews take place in person in a setting most appropriate for asking personal questions. This was successful, with the exception of three interviews. Due to travel time and associated costs, meeting these interviewees in person was not feasible, so we conducted our meetings online. However, this approach may result in the loss of some social signals during online interviews (James & Busher, 2006).

It was important to establish and maintain a warm and non-judgmental manner towards the interviewees and ask questions in a balanced, unbiased, non-threatening, sensitive and clear way so that the interviewees feel they can speak freely (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). Moreover, it was necessary to ensure privacy and comfort and avoid interruptions. The interviews were not hurried or stopped before they were naturally completed. However, interviewees were free to stop or pause the interview at any time. Lopez and Whitehead (2013) recommended that no single interview last more than 60 to 120 minutes. The time of the interviews in this study ranged between 60 minutes and 155 minutes, with most of them being around 90 minutes. It was notable that the interviews tended to take longer when the interviewees had a better proficiency in the English language.

The interview script used (viewable in Appendix 8.2) is based on the theoretical framework, focused on exploring the intersection of POS with psychological well-being within the context of refugee workplace integration. It contains an appropriate range of open questions to provide clarity on the topics. Interview techniques such as funneling, probing and paraphrasing were used to gather in-depth and lengthy responses (Lopez & Whitehead, 2013). All of the interviews were conducted in English.

3.4. Data analysis

The data in this thesis is analyzed abductively. The literature and theories offered a lens through which to interpret the experiences of Ukrainian refugees. However it did not capture all the nuances of their experiences. Abductive analysis does not follow a strictly hypothesis-driven or data-driven approach. Instead, it integrates both theory and data to formulate codes in response to astonishment, mystery, and breakdowns in one's understanding (Brinkmann, 2014, p. 722).

To interpret, identify and examine patterns and themes within the data, a thematic analysis was conducted. This method helped in understanding the perceptions of refugees in a deeper way to eventually answer the research question (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). It emphasized on sense-making and understanding instead of predicting or explaining a phenomenon (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). Braun & Clarke's work outlines thematic analysis as highly flexible and adaptable to suit the requirements of many studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method identifies, analyzes, organizes, describes, and reports themes found within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They provide a step-by-step guide of six phases to facilitate the interpretation process. Following this guide can improve the study's trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017). These steps are summarized in *Table 1* in Appendix 8.1. It is important to note that although the model appears linear, the process is still iterative and reflective, and there is a constant movement between stages (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

It is crucial to note that researchers build detailed descriptions, apply codes, develop themes or dimensions, and provide an interpretation in light of their own views or perspectives on the literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the results may differ when other researchers conduct the analysis. This variability highlights the richness and complexity of human experience and understanding, which fits this thesis's the relativistic and subjectivistic approach. It is not seeking a single "objective" truth, but it is open for multiple interpretations and understandings, each contributing to a more nuanced and comprehensive exploration of the experiences of Ukrainian refugees. To support this qualitative data analysis, a widely used software program: ATLAS.ti was used. Lewis (2004) argues that ATLAS.ti is one of the best available and possibly most practical QDA tools.

3.5. *Research ethics*

Research involving refugees deepens our understanding of their experiences and has the potential to inform evidence based decision-making, but also poses significant ethical considerations. Clark-Kazak (2017) highlight some ethical dilemmas to consider when researching people in situation of forced migration. Legal status and power imbalances can affect refugee individuals, as they often depend on sponsors or governments for survival. This dependence raises questions about the voluntary nature of their consent to participate in research conducted by or in partnership with these party. Additionally, an interview may add to the psychological burden of displaced individuals by requiring them to recall traumatic experiences. This research focuses on mental well-being which might bring up negative thoughts or experiences for individuals involved. This shows the importance of ethical research practices and the responsible sharing of the findings.

To strengthen the responsibility in maintaining integrity in science and scholarship the Dutch Code of Conduct on Scientific practice was followed. The principles of this code are supported by the Radboud University (Nijmegen School of Management, 2023) and are the following: honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence and responsibility (NWO, 2018). These principles are the basis of integrity in research and guide individual researchers and other parties involved. NWO (2018) describes honesty as being honest and accurate within all parts of the research. Scrupulousness means that the methods used are scientific or scholarly, and exercise the best possible care in designing, undertaking, and reporting research (NWO, 2018). Transparency involves ensuring that it is clear to others what data the research was based on, how it was obtained, what and how results were achieved, and what role was played by external stakeholders (NWO, 2018). The line of reasoning must be clear. The fourth principal is independence, this refers to making decisions based solely on scientific or scholarly considerations, without being influenced by commercial or political factors (NWO, 2018). Lastly responsibility means that the researcher takes the legitimate concerns of all interviewees into account (NWO, 2018).

Prior to the research, the goal was explained clearly to the interviewees, who were informed on how the findings will be applied in this thesis. The interviews were anonymous and consent was asked for participation and recording of the interviews (consent form is included in Appendix 8.3). It was clarified that the interviews were voluntary and that they had the freedom to withdraw at any time. Furthermore, to protect research-related documents that contain personal data, strict measures were taken, such as password protection and sustaining accessibility. The privacy of the interviewees are taken very seriously, and the findings are treated confidentially.

4. Results

This chapter presents the research findings. These are presented first with an overview of the interviewees, followed by sections corresponding to each sub-question outlined in chapter 2.5. Here, subsections are created based on the most prominent codes from the thematic analysis (see also Appendix 8.5). The findings of this study offer insights into the psychological well-being impacts and stressors of Ukrainian refugees and the three key aspects of the POS model: HR practices and work conditions, fairness, and leadership. For each section, positive perceptions and negative perceptions are presented. A table that summarizes the key results from each interview is presented in Appendix 8.6, which provides a clear overview of these findings for quick reference. This approach ensures a balanced view of Ukrainian refugees' experiences, reflecting their complex and various experiences.

4.1. *Psychological well-being impacts and stressors*

This thesis uncovers specific psychological impacts and stressors faced by Ukrainian refugees and the role of support systems in these experiences. Key themes that emerged were the impact of war, uncertainty about the future, language barriers, and the need for professional psychological help in shaping their well-being.

4.1.1. *The impact of war*

Ukrainian refugees in this study experience significant emotional and psychological challenges due to the impact of the war, their migration, and adjusting to a new environment. One interviewee illustrates it as:

“I compare it with a plant ..., you're like living in your own environment, everything is good and then someone just took it. Took it and put it in the sand and you need like time to adapt also because there is like other rules other culture other lifestyle. Everything is different.” (interview 2).

Others described a feeling of living in two ‘parallel realities’ (interview 12): one in Ukraine, constantly checking the news, witnessing horrors, deeply concerned about the safety and well-being of their loved ones, and one in the Netherlands, where people are friendly, happy and living their ordinary lives. This dual existence and impact of war severely impact their mental health, causing sleep problems, anxiety, an increase in alcohol use, identity crises, depression, and higher stress levels. Some addresses that this also impacts them at work and express their need for some sort of psychological assistance.

4.1.2. *Uncertainty about the future*

An important topic affecting their mental well-being was the uncertainty about the future. The majority of interviewees struggled with mental health issues due to unknown thoughts: will they be able to stay in the Netherlands, when will the war end, and how will their career and life unfold? They feel that their temporary status played a significant role in this. Several interviewees feel that the current institutional and organizational support is lacking in providing their need for stability and help with their integration. Employees express that organizations are lacking in offering permanent contracts, explanations of (contractual) information, language courses, psychological support, social events (with Dutch employees), having someone to talk to in a safe environment and help with their integration with for example Dutch culture workshops.

4.1.3. *Language barriers*

A significant challenge Ukrainian refugees faced during their integration is the inability to speak Dutch. This language barrier hinders them in career opportunities within organizations and in the broader labor market. Moreover, they encounter difficulties following instructions but also social issues such as understanding jokes. An interviewee describes what it would mean for her to speak Dutch:

“So I think it's really freedom for me, freedom is this language.” (interview 4).

Dutch lessons are not provided by the government. Some pay for lessons themselves but the majority of interviewees do not have access to Dutch lessons. The majority of interviewees do mention that they feel supported by their co-workers who engage in conversations with them, speak English, and teach them Dutch words.

4.1.4. *Professional psychological help*

They express feelings of being misunderstood or in need of psychological support. Most are unaware of their access to professional psychological help. They miss this kind of support from organizations or experience a lack of information about it. Ideally, they would prefer to talk to Ukrainian psychologists because they feel that Dutch people do not understand the specific trauma they have endured. One interviewee did feel supported and expressed deep appreciation, as the organization provided a platform for sessions with a Ukrainian psychologist or other options such as mindfulness lessons.

4.2. *Perceptions of organizational support (POS)*

This section presents the results of the perceptions of organizational support regarding fairness, HR and working conditions, and leadership.

4.2.1. *Fairness*

Fairness includes the distribution of resources such as promotions or rewards, fairness in decision-making processes, and how information about the organization is shared (Colquitt, 2001). A variety of perspectives are expressed with equal and fair treatment, but also negative experiences with unequal or unfair treatment that severely impacted their psychological well-being. This study reveals that fairness encompasses more than just equitable treatment. It extends to fostering a sense of respect, recognition, and inclusion, all of which are found to enhance their psychological well-being significantly. Key themes that emerged were: the distribution of promotion and rewards, treatment and workplace bullying, diversity in the workforce, employment contracts, and information sharing.

4.2.1.1. Distribution of promotion and rewards

Half of the interviewees highlight that promotions and salary increases are based on fair evaluations, including feedback sessions and assessments of hard work. They believe this positively impacts their psychological well-being, as it seems to increase their self-esteem, drive for self-development and it motivates them to excel in their work.

However, there are concerns about unequal treatment regarding the distribution of promotions and rewards. Several interviewees mention that they experience discrimination and unfair treatment. They see Dutch colleagues getting better promotions and higher salaries, where an interviewee states:

"I only really did not see international people getting promoted even when they really deserved. And so maybe that just felt a little bit frustrating that.. they say there is room for growth, but when they promote people, they promote unfortunately, locals and no internationals." (interview 3).

Such perceived inequality in career advancement led to feelings of frustration, demotivation, and a sense of unfairness among the interviewee. Another interviewee said:

"So if they have a choice between Dutch people and not Dutch people, they will conservatively choose Dutch people. Because who knows which culture, what's in your head, maybe Ukrainian will decide to leave to Ukraine" (interview 12).

Here it is also seen that there is a bias in favor of Dutch employees over refugee employees. This interviewee explains that this caused frustration and feelings of injustice. These findings highlight that when organizations have biases in favor of Dutch employees over refugee employees in their distributions of promotion and rewards, that it harms their mental well-being.

4.2.1.2. Treatment and workplace bullying

Furthermore, it is often mentioned that local employees are getting better treatment and are handed the 'better' tasks compared to refugees. One interviewee, a young woman, shared her distressing experience of being bullied at work. She talks about how her colleagues treated her poorly, consistently assigned her the worst tasks, and frequently criticized her performance. This relentless mistreatment led to significant emotional distress. As she described it:

"I can't explain how it was, but I had a really mental breakdown. Because of so many unfair situations that were happening just in a row, really." (interview 5).

This quote illustrates the significant impact of workplace bullying on her mental health, highlighting the severe emotional toll caused by persistent and unfair treatment.

Additionally, some Ukrainian refugees highlight negative experiences with co-workers who frequently spoke in Dutch despite being able to speak English. This behavior made them feel excluded and not accepted by the group. However, most interviewees emphasized the importance of their co-workers, describing that they felt supported, treated fairly, and were able to make friendships.

4.2.1.3. *Employment contracts*

A number of issues related to the employment contracts were identified. While most have no problems with their contracts or find them fair, some experience significant feelings of unfairness. Interviewees working forty or even more hours every week, under zero-hour contracts, or employees receiving less pay than expected or, in one case, no pay at all. One interviewee expresses her frustration, reporting:

“They say oh I will pay you, or okay I will do that but they do not do it. After that you feel ashamed to ask again.” (interview 4).

Some explained that because they are refugees, they have a hard time making requests in their employment contracts because they feel that they need to grasp every chance they get. A interviewee describes it as:

“And they were also excited because some of us we are coming from a rough background. So when we get a chance we really maximize the opportunity. You know we take the chance.” (interview 3).

Overall, these findings suggest a pattern of unethical and potentially illegal practices within some organizations and the vulnerable position refugee workers are in.

4.2.1.4. *Sharing of information*

Another recurring theme was the confusion surrounding contracts and the lack of transparency, which led to frustration among interviewees. Again they describe the vulnerable position they are in and the difficulties they experience in understanding the information. One interviewee described a conflict with her manager, where she did not receive a contract and was not informed about her rights or the details of their arrangements. She explains:

“The work I like because this work that I usually work. So like, it's giving me energy. But the organization, this unclearness, this unfairness, it's frustrating.” (interview 12).

This persistent issue led her to resign, and she experienced depression afterward. This underscores the negative effect that unfair treatment with unclear communication and lack of transparency has on the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees.

4.2.2. HR practices and working conditions

HR practices and working conditions refers to opportunities for development, autonomy, and supportive policies (Shore & Shore, 1995). Again there are various perceptions. Themes that emerged were: work environment, work/life balance, contract and salary, development opportunities and social integration.

4.2.2.1. Work environment

Someone describes the workplace as:

“it was this vibe of this office because they're allowed to take their dogs to the office and they have all the fun events like ugly sweater day and national food day and people are so relaxed and so friendly and so easy going (...) Because I feel like I'm in a place where my ambitions and my knowledge and my skills are appreciated. And where I can develop myself.” (interview 7).

These quotes shows that elements such as allowing pets in the office, organizing fun events, and fostering a relaxed and friendly atmosphere contribute to a positive workplace culture, which has a beneficial effect on the mental well-being of refugees. Interviewees mention it can boost their self-esteem and social skills.

Countering this perspective is that some experience a work culture with high pressure and workload, causing physical and mental strain where one states:

“Sometimes it is a lot of mental pressure and physical pressure as well, because sometimes the work is physically demanding and it feels like, honestly, it feels like it is not worth the amount of pressure that is on you.” (interview 1).

A recurrent theme in the interviews is the importance of a safe environment, where the existence of the war in Ukraine is acknowledged, and there is caution in placing Russian and Ukrainian employees together to prevent potential conflicts. Recognizing and being mindful of the impact of external conflicts like the war in Ukraine is perceived as crucial for Ukrainian employees.

4.2.2.2. Diverse workforce

Two interviewees mention the presence of many employees from different nationalities in their workplace. One interviewee expressed her feeling of not being alone in having a multicultural background:

“I'm not the only one, you know. I am not unique there. So this is.. 'It's normal that people are from different countries.” (interview 7).

This diversity at the workplace helped her and other interviewees feel more accepted and less isolated. They reported that this sense of acceptance and inclusion enhanced their overall mental health and job satisfaction. This result highlights the positive impact of a diverse workplace on refugees' mental well-being.

4.2.2.3. *Work/life balance*

Some interviewees explain that they experience difficulties in balancing their work/life. For example, women clarify that due to the Ukrainian general mobilization, most males are prevented from leaving the country. Consequently, women must raise children on their own while also working to earn a salary to support them. One woman describes that she does not have enough time for her daughter:

“I go from home at seven and came back at eight, at seven and she already, her life is already, the whole day she spent without me. And she's growing up and I don't see this.”(interview 12).

Additionally, younger interviewees explain that following (online) studies can be challenging due to long hours and high pressures. These imbalances affect their psychological well-being, causing frustration and exhaustion. Perceived organizational practices that ease these imbalances are flexible arrangements. Flexibilities in work location, hours, or extra vacation days helped some employees by allowing them to manage their work and personal responsibilities better. They express that this helped them to reduce stress and improve their psychological well-being.

4.2.2.4. *Contract and salary*

All interviewees reported that their salaries meet their basic needs. Some expressed a deep appreciation towards the Netherlands for providing resources such as housing and financial support. They felt fortunate, recognizing that it can be challenging finding a job as a Ukrainian refugee. Others felt underpaid given their education or work experience, which caused frustration and feelings of injustice.

Furthermore, organizations offered solely temporary contracts to the interviewees and most had limited discussions about future prospects regarding their contracts and future at the company. The interviewees understand that it is difficult for an organization to meet their needs because of their temporary status in the Netherlands. However, this does increase their feelings of instability and frustration. Many explain that these limited prospects make it harder to integrate and thrive in this new environment despite a strong desire to build a life in the Netherlands. They express the need for organizational practices that offers them more stability.

4.2.2.5. *Development opportunities*

It was striking that almost all interviewees showed little interest to develop or pursue opportunities within the organization, like following trainings, or contemplate their future careers. These findings illustrate that this issue stems from a combination of internal and external factors.

Internally, interviewees often express that they do not think about their future because they face too many uncertainties and feel there is no point in planning ahead. They sometimes lack the confidence to pursue professional growth due to low self-esteem, language barriers, and a perception that their refugee status limits their potential for advancement.

Externally, they experience a lack of guidance and practices from organizations to encourage or facilitate such aspirations or to mitigate these internal barriers. Employees mention that organizations do not provide clear career paths and engage in conversations about their future or other forms of career guidance. Only one interviewee (interview 7) who reported that there are many development opportunities in their organization and that she feels encouraged by the organization to grow and think about her next steps. She felt excited about this, and it reduced anxiety about her future.

4.2.2.6. *Social integration*

Many interviewees expressed a need for more social events and team-building activities. Some Ukrainian refugees mention that they not only suffer from losing their former social group but also experience difficulties in forming new social ties. Some express feelings of loneliness and isolation. They are feeling a lack of acceptance and connection to locals.

The majority of the interviewees mention they either greatly value the social events a lot, or wish that the organization would organize them. They seek greater social connection with Dutch employees, believing this would foster a more positive environment and improve their language skills. One woman describes how the social activities helped her integration and transformation as:

“I am feeling a lot more lively right now. I feel more secure and a lot more social.” (interview 1).

This quote underlines the critical role this organization played in supporting her mental health by actively organizing social events and promoting interaction between employees.

4.2.3. *Leadership*

Eisenberger et al. (2020) describe that supportive leadership can foster POS when it includes a good relationship between the leader and follower, perceived supervisor support, and a transformational leadership style. It creates a positive and supportive work environment by enhancing employees' sense that the organization cares about their well-being. This study revealed that most interviewees in this study feel some sort of support by their leaders. Many of these interviewees did identify specific

characteristics or actions they would like to see improved. Three interviewees reported that their leaders lacked sufficient support and expressed criticism about their leadership. Essential themes that emerged from the analysis are: fostering a supportive atmosphere, value recognition and professional acknowledgement, offering praise and expressing gratitude and communication and information sharing.

4.2.3.1. Fostering a supportive atmosphere

They expressed strong appreciation for leaders who showed genuine interest and created a safe space for open communication. For many interviewees conversations about the war and their families is challenging. They do value a leader who is approachable and asks about their mental well-being, though some emphasize they do not want to be pitied.

A woman who deals with a significant amount of stress due to the ongoing war, displacement, and loss described her experience of two contrasting leadership styles in the Netherlands. One manager was unsupportive, unappreciative, never complimented her and withheld crucial information. The other was supportive, communicative, and genuinely helpful. She described her supportive manager very emotionally, highlighting deep appreciation after enduring the prior unsupportive atmosphere. She described this leadership's profound emotional impact on her, particularly given her vulnerable position and circumstances.

4.2.3.2. Value recognition and professional acknowledgment

The findings of this study reveal that the feeling of being valued is a crucial aspect of the organizational practice, especially for refugee employees. Interviewees describe the importance of the feeling that they are contributing to something and using their skills, building social connections and develop professionally. This not only provides them with a sense of purpose but also helps them, as they describe it, 'feeling normal' after experiencing displacement and disruption. Additionally, interviewees highlight that it is essential to be acknowledged as a professional because it helps them build their confidence and reinforces their identity as competent and capable individuals.

4.2.3.3. Offering praise and expressing gratitude

Some felt really anxious, insecure or inadequate being in a new country and other culture. An interviewee mentioned that she felt the '*imposter syndrome*' (interview 10), meaning that she felt that she was not actually qualified in spite of contrary evidence and had a fear that others would discover that she is an intellectual fraud (Clance & Imes, 1978). Praising and complementing their work was therefore, very important for her. Another stated the following after her supervisor complimented her and showed her work to other colleagues as an example:

So yeah. It gave me more power to, you know, go through difficult moments because you understand that you like it. You are supported.”(interview 7).

This feeling of gratitude, trust and appreciation was missed by some, leaving them unhappy or unsatisfied with their jobs.

4.2.3.4. Transparent communication

Several interviewees emphasized the importance of clear communication and information sharing of managers. This included thorough explanations and translations, as they often felt vulnerable due to information gaps and their position in the labor market. They mentioned that they are unfamiliar with Dutch systems and procedures, which is why they often needed additional information from their managers. A interviewee described a negative experience with the managers attitude:

“Ukrainians like they don't speak Dutch they probably never go to like for any help to municipality or any organization. So I can treat it I can't don't tell them these documentation things.” (interview 5).

This finding reveals that managers can exploit their vulnerability by not sharing or explaining crucial information. She explained that this significantly harmed her mental well-being, causing feelings of injustice.

While some managers supported interviewees in assisting with housing, taxes and even private matters, others preferred maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life and self-reliance. Especially sharing information about their mental well-being was not universally desired. However, some interviewees did appreciate and desired this kind of support from their managers.

5. Discussion

This chapter delves into the key findings of this thesis, the theoretical implications, the practical implications, a critical reflection on the research's limitations, and it proposes directions for future research.

5.1. Key findings on the psychological well-being impacts and stressors

The study's findings reveal that many interviewees are confronted with a number of issues that significantly impact their current psychological well-being. Specifically, their past experience with war, migration, and adjustment to a new environment has led to psychological complaints such as: sleeping problems, anxiety, an increase in alcohol use, identity crises, depressive symptomatology, and higher stress levels. One interviewee described the experience as being uprooted like a plant, needing time to adapt to a completely different environment. Many refugees live in 'parallel realities', constantly worried about their loved ones in Ukraine while trying to adjust to their life in the Netherlands. This dual existence contributes to severe mental health issues, including anxiety and depression.

Integration challenges, particularly language barriers, perpetuate psychological distress and challenged well-being. One interviewee expressed that learning the language would feel like gaining freedom. Without government-provided Dutch lessons, refugees struggle to learn on their own or rely on their colleagues. Uncertainty about their future, amplified by their temporary residential status and concerns about the war's end, cause a significant feeling of instability and emotional distress.

When it comes to perceived support and its role in psychological well-being, the respondents often report that current institutional and organizational support falls short in providing stability and facilitating their integration. They express their need for adequate support in the form of permanent contracts, clear information, language courses, psychological assistance, and cultural/integration workshops. Interviewees expect it to reduce psychological stressors and the symptoms related to poor psychological well-being, such as stress and anxiety associated with integration. Conversely, lacking such support seems to worsen these challenges, leading to negative perceptions of the organization and hindering their psychological well-being.

5.2. Key findings on the perceptions of organizational support (POS)

This section summarizes the key findings of the perceptions of organizational support regarding fairness, HR practices and working conditions and leadership.

5.2.1. Fairness

Fair evaluations and feedback positively impacted self-esteem and motivation. Fair treatment, such as equal pay and opportunities, enhanced their sense of belonging, confidence, and self-worth, thereby improving their mental health. It also goes beyond traditional measures of equity, it extends to a sense of respect, recognition, and inclusion that enhances their mental well-being. However, the study's findings revealed that interviewees faced unfair treatment, such as bullying or discrimination, with Dutch colleagues receiving better promotions, more favorable working conditions, and higher salaries, leading to frustration, a sense of injustice, and sadness, sometimes even resulting in depression. For example, one interviewee noted a lack of promotion opportunities for refugees, and another highlighted bias favoring Dutch employees.

An important theme was contract issues. While some contracts were fair, others faced exploitation, such as long hours under zero-hour contracts or unpaid work. Lack of transparency and contract confusion further frustrated interviewees. One refugee experienced distress from not receiving a contract or information about her rights, leading to resignation and depressive symptomatology.

5.2.2. *HR practices and work conditions*

The study reveals various perceptions of HR practices and working conditions. Most Ukrainian refugees strongly desire to build a life in the Netherlands. However, their temporary status in the Netherlands hinders this aspiration, making it difficult to plan their future and future careers. The lack of permanent contracts and limited discussions about future prospects with their organizations contribute to this unstable feeling. This, coupled with language barriers and a lack of confidence, discourages them from actively considering their professional development or long-term career goals. Most did not perceive adequate organizational support to guide or encourage such aspirations.

Interviewees highlight the importance of a positive work environment with a diverse workforce, supportive colleagues, a manageable workload, and opportunities for social connections to make them feel valued and appreciated, which boosts their mental health. A safe environment is highly recommended, where the war is acknowledged, and there is caution in placing Russian and Ukrainian employees together. Some interviewees experienced a negative work environment with high pressures and a lack of social integration, which negatively affected their psychological well-being.

The Ukrainian refugees highly desire social activities such as workplace celebrations and social get-togethers to combat loneliness, improve their language skills, and social integration. Balancing work and personal life is found challenging, especially for women handling childcare alone. Interviewees suggest and experience that flexible working conditions, such as the ability to work in different places and the ability to schedule their own time, could ease these pressures.

5.2.3. *Leadership*

The results of this study reveal significant insights into how Ukrainian refugees perceive leadership within Dutch organizations and its impact on their psychological well-being. Strong support from leaders emerged as a crucial factor, with the most valued aspects being the feeling of being genuinely valued and recognized, and having a safe space for open communication. Interviewees find that leaders who are empathic, show genuine interest, provide clear communication, guidance and create a safe space and a sense of belonging, positively impact their well-being. Leaders who provide compliments and acknowledge their professional skills are particularly important for Ukrainian refugees who might have feelings of anxiety or insecurity. Supportive leadership could empower them to overcome difficult moments or boost their confidence.

Conversely, unsupportive leaders who discriminate, are unappreciative, increase pressure, or withhold information can increase psychological stressors such as anxiety and feelings of isolation, which ultimately hinders their well-being. Clear communication and information sharing by managers were also emphasized as vital. Refugees often feel vulnerable due to information gaps and their insecure position in the labor market. Effective leadership, therefore, included thorough explanations and translations to help bridge these gaps. While some interviewees appreciated leaders who assisted with personal matters such as housing and taxes, others preferred maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life.

5.3. *Theoretical implications of psychological well-being impacts and stressors*

This section discusses the key findings related to the impacts and stressors on the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees. These findings are connected to the existing literature.

Psychological well-being is earlier defined as an individual's cognitive assessment of satisfaction with his/her life circumstances (Diener et al., 1985). It was characterized by three features. First, that people are happy when they believe themselves to be happy (Diener, 1994). Second, that you are more likely to experience positive emotions and less likely to experience negative emotions (Diener & Larsen, 1993). Third, it refers to one's life as a whole (Diener, 1994). The interviewees from this study faced significant emotional challenges from contextual factors such as uncertainty about the future, including temporary residential status, as well as war and migration stressors, which disrupted their life satisfaction and belief in their own happiness. The dual existence between their past in Ukraine and their present in the Netherlands adds to this distress, impacting their mental health and sense of contentment. Integration challenges, especially language barriers, negatively affect the balance of positive and negative emotions, tipping the emotional balance towards negativity (Diener & Larsen, 1993).

In this study, Ukrainian refugees perceive that adequate organizational support can enhance their positive emotions which improves life satisfaction, and ultimately, their psychological well-being. These findings are consistent with those of Eisenberger et al. (1997) who state that high POS improves employees' well-being. The psychological mechanisms behind these improvements can be understood by literature on the importance of social support (Langford et al., 1997). When refugees receive strong organizational support, they feel valued and cared for, which might alleviate feelings of isolation and uncertainty. Conversely, a lack of support can lead to poor mental health outcomes such as stress (Thoits, 1984). Moreover, as mentioned in the literature review, high POS can reduce stress and job satisfaction, encourage participation, and foster confidence, motivation, and trust (Arnold et al., 2007; Cañibano, 2013; George et al., 1993; Lawson et al., 2009).

Interviewees express their need for adequate support to assist successful integration and to foster a sense of stability. They perceive that support such as language courses, cultural integration workshops, and psychological assistance can reduce symptoms of poor psychological well-being, associated with integration. Conversely, a lack of such support seems to worsen these challenges, leading to negative perceptions of the organization and hindering their psychological well-being. However, this type of support is not included in the model of POS by Eisenberger et al. (1997) because this model is more general and aims to apply to all employees. It does raise a question of who is responsible for providing such support, organizations or governmental institutions?

Wang and Chaudhri (2019) report that currently, business involvement in supporting refugee integration is sporadic and mainly led by large multinational corporations (MNCs). They highlight that business support for refugee (economic) integration can be a manifestation of corporate social responsibility (CSR), enhancing employee-organizational identification. Moreover, research by Müller (2021) reveals that business engagement in refugee integration shapes experiences and perceptions of refugees in a complex but predominately positive way. The interviewees in the study of Müller (2021) greatly valued the support they received beyond normal employment relations. It resulted in feelings of being in a secure space that offered a future and created a positive sense of belonging. This finding indicates that business sector engagement and CSR initiatives regarding refugee integration can have a real potential in addressing refugees' psychological well-being. Therefore, it is crucial to identify how organizations can complement the government's integration support efforts and create long-term solutions where the private sector is considered an "essential partner" (Martinez, 2018). The findings of this thesis suggest that this should not only involve multinational corporations but also ensure tailored support for smaller organizations.

5.4. Theoretical implications of perceptions of organizational support (POS)

In this section, the key findings of the perceptions of organizational support are discussed. These findings are connected to the existing literature.

5.4.1. Fairness

The findings of this study contribute to the literature on fairness and organizational justice by revealing the crucial role it plays regarding the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees. The positive effects of fair treatment that the interviewees experienced, such as an enhancement in their self-esteem and a sense of belonging, may be particularly relevant to refugees. This group faces unique challenges, including difficulties in obtaining employment (Jackson, 2021), lower self-esteem (Yanar et al., 2018), struggle with feeling a sense of belonging in the workplace or facing discrimination and harassment (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Mueller et al., 2001; Young & Chan, 2015). These challenges are also found in this study with Ukrainian refugees. It highlights the current state of unfair treatment in Dutch organizations and the significant impact it has on mental health. It sheds light on both the positive effects of inclusivity and the devastating consequences of unfair practices, worsening their already challenging situations.

Moreover, as stated in the theoretical framework, workplace integration is a two-way process involving the refugee and the context where employment is secured with comparable opportunities for career progression and similar workplace outcomes as other workers (Hirst et al., 2021). However, the current study revealed that Ukrainian refugees did not always get comparable opportunities or equal pay. This highlights that this unfairness hinders their workplace integration.

These findings reveal that some organizations lack support regarding clear and transparent communication. The POS model explains that employees' access to information and clear information sharing foster POS (Colquitt, 2001). This seems especially important for Ukrainian refugees, who already feel vulnerable and have difficulties understanding information from the organization.

5.4.2. *HR practices and work conditions*

The results of this study shed light on the inadequate support from organizations to guide or encourage future career aspirations or professional growth. Prior studies have revealed that refugees struggle to fulfill their career potential in host countries (Wilkinson & Garcea, 2017), highlighting the need for sense-giving practices to manage refugees' expectations of career opportunities while fostering hope for the future. Nardon et al. (2020) found that organizations often focus on securing short-term employment for refugees and provide insufficient long-term support, which results in instability, underemployment, and inadequate social integration. They emphasize the importance of organizations adopting a long-term approach by providing ongoing career development, more permanent contracts and clear discussions about future prospects. This study suggests that this would not only foster their career and professional growth but also their psychological well-being by reducing feelings of instability, frustration, and underappreciation.

The importance of creating a positive and diverse work climate was highlighted in the findings of this thesis. This confirms existing literature that a high psychosocial safety climate and less harassment in the workplace can improve refugees' mental health and adaptation (Afsharian et al., 2021). The current findings show the benefits of flexible working conditions, particularly for women handling childcare alone. It enabled them to better manage their work-life balance. This can alleviate pressures and improve psychological health (Kröll et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the study found that Ukrainian refugees highly desire social activities such as workplace celebrations and social get-togethers. Research indicates that social participation for refugees enhances resilience, re-establishes social lives, and acts as a protective factor against poor mental health outcomes (Niemi et al., 2019). Addressing the social integration desires of refugees not only benefits them, but also offers significant advantages for organizations. These benefits include increased innovation, the development of social networks, and an improved public image (Niemi et al., 2019).

5.4.3. *Leadership*

The perceptions by Ukrainians on leadership seem to fit the most with a transformational leadership style, which includes conveying caring and concern for employees, over a transactional style, which is more focused on the distributions of rewards in exchange for high performance (Eisenberger et al., 2020). Kurtessis et al. (2017) further support this, stating that a transformational style is more closely related to POS than a transactional style. Ethical leadership might also be fitting since it involves strong moral values and promoting ethical behavior. It builds trust, prevents misconduct, and ensures everyone's well-being (Den Hartog, 2015). Unlike transformational leaders, ethical leaders prioritize the common good and protect all stakeholders rights, reducing unethical practices (Den Hartog, 2015).

The findings of this thesis imply that leadership practices that foster inclusivity and support can transform organizational culture, making it more accommodating for diverse populations and promote belongingness. This connects with theories on inclusive leadership and organizational development, which also show that inclusive leadership has positive behavioral outcomes in diverse work groups (Randel et al., 2018).

5.5. *Practical implications*

This thesis obtained knowledge on refugees' perceptions, offering several practical implications for organizations, governments, and the broader society who seek to understand and support refugees.

The present findings reveal that the majority of interviewees are confronted with some sort of psychological distress because of their experience with war, migration, and adjustment to a new environment. Organizations could develop tailored support programs to help them integrate or enhance their psychological well-being. Officially, they do have access to psychological help from the municipality and can also request it in their own mother tongue. However, they are often not aware of or see barriers to getting help. Organizations could support them by offering available resources such as psychological support or provide information on where to seek psychological help. Additionally, they could work to remove barriers to seeking help.

Within this study it is suggested that organizations should actively engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives focused on refugee integration. This engagement can significantly enhance the psychological well-being of refugees. It is crucial for organizations to identify areas where they can complement government integration efforts and develop long-term solutions. Both multinational corporations and smaller organizations should provide tailored support to effectively address the needs of refugees. Policymakers should recognize the private sector as an essential partner in refugee integration efforts. Both parties should encourage and facilitate collaboration to develop and implement effective support programs.

The current study revealed that not all refugees perceive equal treatment. This underscores the need for organizations to prioritize making their workplaces inclusive. Initiatives could include better equitable treatment with equal pay and opportunities, as well as diversity and inclusion initiatives that promote a sense of belonging and value for all employees. The government could support this by strengthening existing regulations and enforcement mechanisms to prevent discrimination and ensure fair treatment of refugee employees in the workplace. Additionally it is necessary to create awareness among the whole Dutch society about the challenges faced by refugees in the workplace.

Fostering a positive work environment to directly impact the mental well-being of refugees by reducing burnout, depression, and anxiety (Bronkhorst et al., 2015) is found in this study. To specify organizational support for Ukrainian refugees, it is important to create a safe and positive environment that acknowledges the ongoing war in Ukraine. This includes being cautious in placing Russian and Ukrainian employees together to prevent potential conflicts. To accommodate their diverse needs, organizations could offer flexible work arrangements. There is also a need to organize more social activities, such as workplace celebrations and get-togethers to support Ukrainian refugees. Such social participation enhances resilience and mental health while benefiting from increased innovation, stronger social networks, and an improved public image.

The need for stability is evident. Organizations should adopt a long-term approach to support refugees' career development. Providing guidance, resources, and conversations about their career development and future can significantly enhance their sense of security and stability. Such practices will help refugees fulfill their career potential, reducing feelings of instability, frustration, and underappreciation. By focusing beyond short-term employment, organizations can enhance professional growth and psychological well-being of refugees, leading to better social integration and more stable employment outcomes.

Finally, organizations should prioritize cultivating leadership that embodies empathy, genuine concern, and clear communication. This aligns with transformational and ethical leadership styles. They should adopt leadership practices that foster inclusivity and support to transform their culture and promote belonging for diverse populations. Recognizing the vulnerability that refugees often experience due to information gaps and uncertainties, organizations should strive for clear and transparent communication and provide thorough explanations and translations of crucial information.

5.6. Limitations of the study

There are limitations that need to be taken into account. First, as a researcher, my background and lack of personal experience as a refugee or Ukrainian culture could have affected my understanding of the results. The interpretations in this study represent my own understanding and it could differ if another carried out the research. To mitigate this, I conducted intensive literature reviews and consulted with professionals working with Ukrainian refugees.

Second, this research has a modest sample size consisting of twelve interviewees. A reason for having this sample size is due to the time inherent to this study. This limits the generalizability of the thesis findings to the broader population of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. Additionally, the convenience and snowball sampling methods may have introduced biases in the sample selection, potentially limiting the representativeness of the interviewees. However, with the help of a location manager of multiple Ukrainian refugee centers, a diverse group of interviewees were invited to participate with different backgrounds, professions, and educational backgrounds.

Thirdly, it is essential to address the homogeneity of the interviewees. Eight out of twelve interviewees were women and most had a university background. This did represent the general demographic picture of Ukrainian refugees integrating in the Netherlands since they are mainly highly educated, working-age women (Kosyakova & Brücker, 2024). Consequently, this makes the results valuable in practice.

Fourthly, a limitation is that the study solely relies on qualitative data from interviews. Using additional data sources could have strengthened the validity and reliability of the study's findings through triangulation. To mitigate this limitation, I employed several strategies: using a detailed and structured interview guide to ensure consistency across interviews, conducting in-depth interviews lasting 1.5 hours and analyzing thoroughly with multiple coding rounds to identify patterns. These steps helped enhance the rigor and credibility of the current findings despite the reliance on a single data source.

The last limitation was the language barrier that might have affected the depth and richness of the data collected. It was noticeable that interviewees with better English proficiency could articulate their thoughts more clearly, particularly regarding their mental well-being. However, research suggests opening up can be easier with an outsider (Bridges, 2002).

5.7. Directions for future research

This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. First, it is now needed to investigate how different sectors and types of organizations, including multinational corporations and smaller businesses, can complement governmental efforts and create long-term, sustainable ways to support refugee integration. Longitudinal studies would be of great help to provide insights into how continuous support affects refugees' psychological well-being over time. Second, it is strongly recommended to examine the effectiveness of ongoing career development programs and best practices for organizations to foster refugees' professional growth to reduce feelings of instability and enhance psychological well-being among refugees, particularly for refugees with a temporary status. Third, since the perceptions about organizational support differed among the interviewees, it might be interesting to have comparative studies across different industries and professions. Finally, further

research is needed to understand which leadership styles are most effective in supporting the mental well-being of refugee employees, as there is no one-size-fits-all leadership style.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has shown the significant role that organizational support plays in the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees in the Netherlands. The study's findings provide an overview of the specific support most crucial for the mental well-being of Ukrainian refugees in Dutch workplaces. There is no single perception, but this study sheds light on both positive and negative perceptions of organizational support. It uncovers that the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees, as defined by Diener et al. (1985), is severely impacted by war, migration, and integration challenges. The study has confirmed the crucial role of supportive leadership, fair treatment, good work conditions, and HR practices to enhance the well-being. The current findings add to the existing literature by demonstrating the unique wants and needs of Ukrainian refugees. The study's practical implications extend to organizations, policymakers, and society as a whole, offering guidance for creating more inclusive and supportive environments for refugee employees. Furthermore, the study's theoretical contributions, particularly in broadening the POS model and identifying gaps for future research, can contribute to developing new interventions and policies to enhance the well-being of Ukrainian refugees and facilitate their integration into organizations and the Dutch society.

7. References

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8. Appendix

8.1. Steps in the thematic analysis

Step	Description
1.	<i>Data familiarization</i> : Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, get acquainted with the text and noting down initial ideas.
2.	<i>Initial coding generation</i> : Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, combining data relevant to each code, capture a segment of the text's essence.
3.	<i>Searching for themes based on initial coding</i> : Combine codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme, look for patterns.
4.	<i>Reviewing themes</i> : organize data around the themes by checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5.	<i>Theme definition and labeling</i> : Ongoing analysis to review and refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. Thereby obtaining meaningful answers for answering the research question.
6.	<i>Producing the report</i> : The final stage for analysis where the research should polish and modify the analysis according to the problem. Selection of best examples and relating of the analysis to the research question and literature, and producing a report of the analysis.

Table 1, based on Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

8.2. The interview script

Introduction

My name is Robin van Raak and I am a student at the Radboud University. I am doing research on how people, who have fled Ukraine, perceive the support of the organization they work at, in relation to their psychological well-being. Today I am really curious to hear your story and your views on this subject. Please remember that there are no wrong or right answers, I am only interested in your thoughts and feelings about your experiences. Of course, if there is a question you prefer not to answer, just let me know and we can move on to the next one.

Before we begin, I would like to ask for your permission to record this interview. This recording will only be used for my research and it will only be accessed by myself and my supervisors from the university. If at any point you feel uncomfortable with the recording, please feel free to tell me, and I can turn it off immediately. After the interview, it will be transcribed, and you will be given an anonymous name to ensure that you are completely anonymous.

If you are ready, can we start the interview and the recording now?

1. To start, I would like to ask you to tell me something about yourself, your age, education level, and how long you have been in the Netherlands?
2. Could you share a bit about your life in Ukraine before coming to the Netherlands?
 - How did your education look like in Ukraine?
 - Can you describe your career in Ukraine?

Let's now move to your experience in the Netherlands...

3. Can you tell me about your life in the Netherlands outside of work?
 - What are your hobbies for example?
4. If you would give your life a grade on a scale of 1 to 10, what would it be
 - and why?
5. Can you share something about the work-related events and experiences you have had from the moment you arrived in the Netherlands?
 - Have you worked multiple jobs, or is this your first job since you arrived here?
 - *Can you mention things or people that have helped you getting work or better work, or people who have made it harder for you?*
 - How do you feel when you think about these experiences?
6. Can you tell me more about your current job?
 - *what are you responsible for?*
 - How many hours do you typically work per week?
 - Does this job correspond well to your education and previous work experience?
 - Do you see yourself as doing this job for a longer period of time ?
7. If you would give your job a grade on a scale of 1 to 10, what would it be
 - and why?
 - Would you say that you are satisfied with your job?
 - Does it give you energy or is it tiring?
 - Are there things or people you are struggling with? How does the organization help you with this?
 - Do you feel like you can find a balance between the demands of your work and personal/family life? (Do you have (enough) free time aside from work?) Does the organization help you with this?
8. Do you have some negative emotions when you think about your work?
 - for example that you feel down, hopeless or anxious?
 - Do you ever feel stressed about or during your work?
 - How does the organization act on this? Do they know about this, do you talk about it?
9. And how do you feel about the organization itself?

- Have you noticed any differences in how you feel about yourself since you started working here?
 - Have you received any support from the organization you now work for or the organizations you have worked for in the Netherlands (for example housing, counseling, job coach)?
 - Do you have an example about working at this organization that has made an impact on you emotionally? Good or bad?
10. Do you feel there is a difference in how you are treated at work compared to your Dutch colleagues?
- Can you give examples of what makes you feel that way?
11. Do you have a direct supervisor/manager? Can you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
- How do you feel about working with this supervisor?
 - How does your contact with them look like?
 - In what ways has your supervisor demonstrated support for you?
 - Do you think they could somehow support you better?
12. How would you describe the effort of this organization to manage the people who work for it, like you do?
- What do you think of the working hours, are there flexible work schedules?
 - Do you feel secure about your job? What kind of employment contract do you have?
 - Do you think the salary they offer is enough to your fulfill living expenses?
 - Do they offer you any other benefits (for example insurance etc.)?
 - Do they have any additional benefits, for example policies and practices that are oriented to family support?
 - Has the organization offered any help to support (mental) health? How accessible and helpful have you found these resources?"
 - Do they any formal policies to take care of complaints/involve you more in the decision that are made? Is the communication easy?
13. How do you think the company is doing in making sure everyone gets a fair share of things like rewards, promotions, and other benefits?
- Do you experience that every employee is given equal opportunities and treated equally in this organization?
 - How does this make you feel?
 - How is your performance evaluated? Do you think your evaluations are fair (representative of your actual performance)?
14. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to Dutch organizations to better support the mental well-being of Ukrainian refugees?
15. And finally, is there anything else that you would like to add that I haven't asked you ?

8.3. Consent form

CONSENT FORM

For participation in the scientific research study “*The perception of organizational support in relation with the psychological well-being of Ukrainian refugees in Dutch organizations*”

Statement of interviewee

The aim of the research study has been outlined to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research study. I participate voluntarily in the research study. I understand that I can stop at any point during the research study, should I wish to do so. I understand how the data of the research study will be stored and how they will be used. I consent to participating in the research study.

In addition, I give permission to (please check all that apply):

Yes / No

- / process the following personal data: *gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, education, age, income*
- / have *audio* recordings made of me
- / use these *anonymous* recordings for scientific purposes (for example in a conference)
- / use these *anonymous* recordings for educational purposes (for example in a lecture)
- / have the audio recordings transcribed
- / use the anonymized transcripts for scientific research

Name:

.....

Signature: Date:

.....

Statement of executive researcher

I declare that I have informed the above-mentioned person correctly about the research study and that I abide by the guidelines for research as stated in the handbook.

8.4. Overview interviewees

The following table presents an overview of information about the interviewees, including gender, age, (previous) education, job in Ukraine and their current job in the Netherlands. One women chose not to share her age and some fields for ‘job in Ukraine’ are blank, meaning this interviewee did not have a job in Ukraine. This is common in Ukraine for individuals under 18.

Interviewee	Gender	Age	education	Job in Ukraine	Job in the Netherlands
Interview 1	Men	19	Mathematics	-	Kitchen chef
Interview 2	Women	30	Pedagogy	Human Resources	Interpreter

Interview 3	Men	30	Chemical engineering	Call center	Transport support manager
Interview 4	Women	39	Economics and management	Owner of a flower shop and beauty and hair salon	Cosmetologist/hair and makeup artist
Interview 5	Women	22	Graphic design	Graphic designer	Hotel caterer
Interview 6	Women	-	Finance	Accounting manager	Financial controller
Interview 7	Women	28	Veterinary Medicine	Veterinarian	Congress project coordinator
Interview 8	Men	19	Professional Cookery	-	Dishwasher/kitchen chef
Interview 9	Men	18	Sport management	-	Agricultural Cleaner
Interview 10	Women	25	Chemistry	Forensic expert	Scientist/research assistant
Interview 11	Women	20	Professional engineer architecture	-	Line Worker in factory
Interview 12	Women	43	Digital accounting	Accountant	Financial Analyst

8.5. Thematic map

Themes	Codes
Psychological well-being/stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural differences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of war
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language barriers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Living conditions in the Netherlands
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uncertainty about future
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worries about family and friends
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impact of the Dutch government
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Integration efforts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support from colleagues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional mental health support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Independence in problem solving
Perception of Fairness (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discrimination

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equal/Fair treatment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unequal/unfair treatment
Perception of HR Practices (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● advice for organizations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Career paths/promotions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contract/salary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work aligning with education and experience
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workload and compensation
Perceptions of Work Conditions (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conflicts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback and communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● work conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work/life balance
Perception of Leadership (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information sharing
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Praising and compliments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Professional acknowledgement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Value recognition/gratitude

8.6. Summary of interview results

	Psychological well-being/stressors	Fairness	HR practices and WC	Leadership
Interview 1	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future, emotional distress, psychological problems because of war, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues.	Fair evaluation and distribution of rewards, but often instructions in Dutch.	Would like more social events, no option to be promoted, low salary, temporary contract, high pressures, work does not align with experience/education, flexible hours, positive work environment, difficulties work/life balance, high pressures, long hours.	Feels supported by leader, also outside of work, they are open to talk, support him with studies and housing, but does not get enough gratitude.

<p>Interview 2</p>	<p>emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future, mentioned language barrier, difficulty adapting to the culture, loneliness, feels supported by the Netherlands, language barrier, wants psychological assistance.</p>	<p>Equal treatment, fair evaluation.</p>	<p>no option to be promoted, thinks about future elsewhere, temporary contract, work does not align with experience/education, flexible hours.</p>	<p>Feels supported by leader, offers gratitude, open to talk.</p>
<p>Interview 3</p>	<p>worries about loved ones and uncertainty, feels mistreated by the government, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues.</p>	<p>Equal treatment, but unfair distribution of promotions and rewards.</p>	<p>does not get gratitude, they do have social events, no security, temporary contract, enough salary, work does not align with experience/education, positive work environment, high pressures, would like more social events.</p>	<p>Feels supported by leader, ability to make mistakes, no equal treatment, no mental help or conversations about it.</p>
<p>Interview 4</p>	<p>worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, needs more help and information about integrating, language</p>	<p>Discrimination, unequal treatment, unfair evaluations, unfair promotions, depression, no payment, withholding</p>	<p>no option to be promoted, thinks about future elsewhere, no security or salary, work does not align with experience/education, negative work environment.</p>	<p>Does not feel supported by leader, gets into conflict, feels discriminated, put pressure on her.</p>

	barrier, wants psychological support.	crucial information, angry.		
Interview 5	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress, psychological problems because of war, wants help integrating, feels isolated, language barrier.	Discrimination, bullying, unfair treatment, unequal treatment, mental breakdown, loneliness.	Missed social events, no option to be promoted, thinks about future elsewhere, temporary contract, low wages, work does not align with experience/education, negative and positive work environment.	Does not feel supported by first leader, did not help her, unequal treatment, bullying, critical with the second she does, he translated information.
Interview 6	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future, emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, supported by local authorities with finding a job, feels she is integrating and learning the language, would like more social events, language barrier.	Fair promotions, unequal distribution of rewards.	difficulties work/life balance, future career is not discussed, earns enough now but sees problems in the future, temporary contract, work aligns with experience/education, positive work environment, high workload, would like more social events.	Feels supported by leader, but only in work related issues, he puts pressure on her, does not get compliments and misses gratitude.
Interview 7	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress/psychological problems because of	Diverse workforce, equal treatment fair evaluation and distribution.	safe environment, enjoys social events at the company, good salary, sees a future career, temporary contract, work does	Feels supported by leader, ability to grow, open to talk, gets compliments and gratitude,

	war, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues, has many social events.		not align with experience/education, positive work environment, flexible arrangements.	sometimes not enough time for questions.
Interview 8	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues.	Unequal treatment, some people were favored, feels unheard.	Does not think about the future and it is not discussed, temporary contract, low wages, work does not align with experience/education, negative work environment, high workload.	Feels supported by leader, helped with housing and private stuff as well.
Interview 9	emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, difficulty integrating, language barrier.	equal treatment.	No flexibility, does not get to choose hours. Can not get promoted, temporary contract, enough salary, work does not align with experience/education, negative work environment, challenge with work/life balance.	Feels supported by leader, but sometimes misses information or explanation. Does not discuss private life or mental well-being.
Interview 10	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, loneliness, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues.	Fair evaluation and distribution of rewards, equal treatment.	enjoyed benefits, such as gym membership, missed social events, promotions are offered, temporary contract, enough salary, work aligns with experience/education, flexible hours, positive	Feels supported by leader, open to talk, genuine, kind.

			work environment, would like more social activities.	
Interview 11	worries about loved ones and uncertainty about the future emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues.	Diverse workforce, equal treatment.	enjoys social events, language barrier for promotion, temporary contract, good salary, work does not align with experience/education, physically heavy, long travel hours, positive work environment, challenge with work/life balance.	Feels supported by leader, good communication.
Interview 12	Feels that the government could help her integration more, emotional distress/psychological problems because of war, language barrier, feels supported by colleagues, wants psychological support in Ukraine language.	Unequal treatment, unfair distribution of rewards and promotions, does not get paid for overtime.	Misses social events, future career is not discussed, conflict with Russian manager, temporary contract, enough salary, work aligns with experience/education, high work pressures, negative work environment, challenge with work/life balance.	Does not feel supported by leader, complaints are ignored, put pressure and no help, but she is acknowledged as professional and her leader is optimistic.