A scoping review of policies and practices to support young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Young people transitioning from out-of-home care (OOHC), globally known as care leavers, are recognized as a vulnerable group relative to non-care-experienced young people. Previous literature from Indonesia reveals the need for policy and formal support for care leavers. This study is part of a doctoral study focusing on young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Indonesia, in which the first author, an Indonesian researcher, scopes the primary studies and peer-reviewed articles available in jurisdictions that have cultural, social, and geographical proximity with Indonesia.

This study used a scoping review method proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005). The authors searched six known databases. From 2,893 articles screened, 65 articles underwent a full-text review, and a total of 21 studies met the inclusion criteria for this scoping study.

Several themes emerged from the scoping review including: (1) Inadequate formal leaving care and aftercare support for care leavers; (2) Promising practices of leaving care and after care intervention; (3) Residential care settings (RCS) as major care arrangements and their impact on young people leaving out-of-home care in Asia; (4) Poor preparation and insufficient support within out-of-home care (OOHC) settings; (5) Stigma and cultural barriers after leaving care, especially for girls and young women; (6) The importance of informal support from others while transitioning into adulthood; (7) The significance of independent living skills for care leavers; and (8) Care leavers' resilience, and coping mechanisms. Discussions and policy implications are further discussed.

1. Introduction

Young people transitioning from out-of-home care (OOHC), widely known as care leavers or care experienced young people, experience vulnerabilities and difficult circumstances across different jurisdictions and countries relative to their non-care leaver peers (Courtney et al., 2001; Courtney & Dworsky, 2006; Courtney et al., 2007; Mendes et al., 2011; Mendes & Snow, 2016; OECD, 2022; Stein & Munro, 2008; Stein, 2012; Strahl et al., 2021; Van Breda et al., 2020; Van Breda & Pinkerton, 2020). Many studies have been conducted in the Western and global North contexts, while fewer studies have come from the global South, including from Asia. (Van Breda et al., 2020). Although the global South term has a diversity of meanings and limitations, it is commonly used to refer to countries that have historically experienced colonialism and are also economically disadvantaged compared to global North nation states (usually located in Asia, Africa, South America, and Ocenia) (UNDP, 2024; Van Breda & Pinkerton 2020).

Studies from more economically affluent countries have pointed out

difficult circumstances and vulnerabilities experienced by young people leaving out-of-home care (OECD, 2022). Several poor outcomes such as homelessness or housing insecurity, limited access to education or training or employment, financial instability, and psychosocial adversity are among the less favorable outcomes for care leavers identified by studies in the global North (OECD, 2022; Strahl et al., 2021; Van Breda et al., 2020).

This scoping review is part of a doctoral study titled "Young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Indonesia." Due to the dearth of studies and literature from Indonesia, the first author, who is an Indonesian researcher, sought to explore what is known from leaving care studies exploring policies, practices, and support for young people leaving care in the Asian continent, which might have social, cultural, and geographical relevance to Indonesia.

Furthermore, Asian countries, many consisting of global South countries, might have different child protection contexts from the typical Global North and Western context, which prefers more 'professionalized' foster care in family-based settings rather than the

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institutionalized and residential care settings that are more common in the global South and Asian context (Roche, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021). This phenomenon also parallels the Indonesian context which is still mainly dependent on residential care settings to deliver alternative child care provision, and much of the de-institutionalization efforts are relatively slow (Agastya, et al., 2024; Irwanto & Kusumaningrum, 2014; Martin & Sudrajat, 2007; O'Kane & Lubis, 2016; Radityaputra et al., 2024).

Residential care settings (RCS) constitute significant child protection institutions in the global South, including Asia (Roche, 2019; Rogers et al., 2021). RCS can be defined as alternative care for children who have lost parental care in non-family-based group settings (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). Because efforts to de-institutionalize within these regions face difficulties, institutional care remains the primary provider for alternative child care. Transitioning to 'family-like' care (kinship care, foster care, or small group homes) from large institutions is difficult (Agastya et al., 2024; Goldman et al., 2020; Van IJzendoorn et al., 2020). On the other hand, initiatives to support the resilience of young people transitioning from OOHC in the global South context, primarily from residential care, are less studied and researched (Radityaputra et al., 2024; Van Breda & Pinkerton, 2020).

This alternate 'child protection' context in Asia compared to Western jurisdictions might have a particular impact on the pathways of care leavers, who presumably mostly transition to adulthood from residential care settings (RCS). Recent studies and research have revealed that RCS that do not provide a family environment have less favourable outcomes for children and young people living in that environment (i.e., developmental delays, substantial impairment, physical and brain growth) (Goldman et al., 2020; Van IJzendoorn et al., 2020). This condition might pose the possibility of poor outcomes for young people transitioning to adulthood and living their adult lives in the Asian context. Thus, it is worthwhile to pursue this scoping study to explore the existing studies available across the Asian region, which consists of global South countries, adding to the body of knowledge on Leaving Care and Alternative Care.

Furthermore, different leaving care and aftercare contexts might exist in Asia. Cultural contexts such as the importance of family unit and family reliance, duty and obligation towards community and family, communal responsibility, and religious influence might also interplay in how out-of-home care services are delivered (Mendes, 2017; Radityaputra et al., 2024; Sundberg, 2024). For instance, Confucian values may significantly affect how social services and welfare are delivered in East Asia, including child welfare services (Shang & Fisher, 2017; Sundberg, 2024). The role of the family as the primary care provider is heavily stressed by how social policy in these countries is delivered, which puts more responsibility on the family rather than the State, or alternatively enables third-party entities to be involved (Mendes, 2017; Sundberg, 2024).

The authors also used a social ecology of care-leaving proposed by Pinkerton (2011) as a theoretical tool and guidance to search and analyze the literature. Pinkerton's framework examines the availability of wider social support networks in the lives of care leavers, including their neighborhood, school/work, social services and the general political, economic and cultural context at both national and international levels, what some authors refer to as the concept of 'social capital' (Boardieu as cited in Siisiainen, 2003; Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019; Putnam, 2001; Waugh et al., 2023). By utilizing this framework, this review provides a prompt description of the mechanisms of the care-leaving process for young people who went through the child welfare system in their respective countries. Some themes were examined to sharpen our search using the proposed framework, such as leaving and aftercare interventions, local (national or international) social ecology of support, care leaver's social capital, care leavers' resilience, and coping capacity for youth transitioning to adulthood.

This scoping review seeks to strengthen the body of knowledge in the care leaving space in Asia and provide insights, particularly for the Indonesian context. Fig. 1. provides a summary of Pinkerton's (2011) social ecology of care leaving.

This study aims to identify and synthesize evidence from primary studies and peer-reviewed articles reporting policies and practices supporting young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia. The research question is, "*What is known from the existing studies and peer-reviewed articles about policies and practices to support young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia?*".

2. Methods

The authors conducted a scoping review to gather evidence from the literature on the policies, practices, and support programs for young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia. The authors used the PRISMA framework (Liberati et al., 2009) to align the study selection with the research question. The guidelines from Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and Joanna Briggs Institute (Tricco et al., 2018) were used for this scoping review. This study also used the PRISMA- ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews) extensions to ensure good reporting and mapping of the body of the literature (Tricco et al., 2018). The five key steps of the scoping review are the following (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005): (1) identify the research question, (2) identify relevant studies, (3) select eligible studies, (4) chart the data, and (5) collating and summarising results. The authors did not conduct quality appraisals for the studies due to the nature of this review, which intends to explore the scope of studies conducted in this area. However, we sought to maintain the quality of the studies and articles by selecting only peer-reviewed studies and articles at the full-text review stage.

Mays, Roberts, and Popay (cited in Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) define scoping studies as aiming to map quickly the key concepts supporting a research area, the primary sources and types of proof available, and as a stand-alone project in their own right, especially if the area is complex and has not been comprehensively reviewed. Arksey and O'Malley (2005) also identify at least four common rationales for why a scoping study might be conducted:

> To assess the scope, variety, and characteristics of research initiatives;
> To find out the merit of conducting a full systematic review;
> To sum up and disperse knowledge of research findings,
> To determine study gaps in the existing literature.

Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brien (2010) also proposed several recommendations to enhance the 5-stage framework proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005):

- Clarify and connect the purpose and research question (stage one).
- Balance practicability with the width and thoroughness of the scoping process (stage two).
- Utilise an iterative team approach to choosing studies (stage three).
- Extract data (stage four).
- Incorporate a numerical summary and qualitative thematic analysis, report results, and consider the implications of study findings to policy, practice, or research (stage five), and incorporate consultation with stakeholders as a required knowledge translation component (stage six).

Due to the limits of this study, we did not use stage six. The sixth stage requires us to perform an optional consultation with stakeholders, which is beyond the scope of the study.

Furthermore, Tricco et al. (2018) explained that a scoping review is a type of knowledge synthesis that follows a systematic approach. This approach ensures the rigour and reliability of the review, as it maps available evidence on a topic, main concepts, theories, sources, and knowledge gaps. They further stress the need for quality improvement in
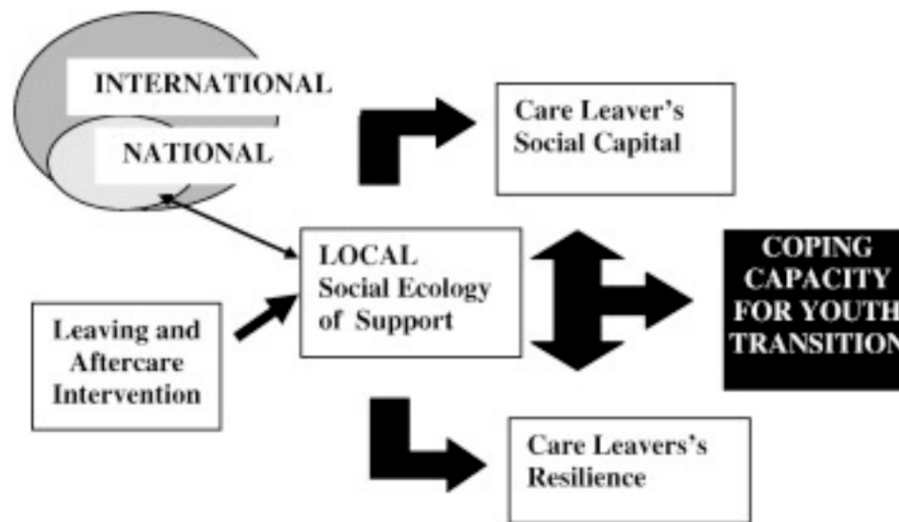
Fig. 1. A globalized social ecology of care leaving. Reprinted with permission from Pinkerton (2011), Children and Youth Services Review, Vol 33, Issue 12, p. 2414. Copyright © 2011 Elsevier Publisher.

the reporting process, proposing the PRISMA-ScR checklist and explanation to provide good scoping review reporting.

2.1. Protocol and Registration

A scoping review protocol was developed before the start of the literature search, but was not pre-registered for scoping reviews due to time limitations, as the study is part of a doctoral study that has restrictive limitations on time. The protocol is available on request from the corresponding author.

2.2. Eligibility criteria

The authors developed the inclusion and exclusion criteria before the literature search, and further iteratively developed during the search and selection process as the first author is familiar with the literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

2.2.1. Types of evidence

The authors only selected peer-reviewed studies and articles to ensure good quality, sound methodology, and academic rigour (Pascoe et al., 2021), although no quality review was conducted. Studies or articles searched were not time-limited until the literature search date (29 August 2024) due to the limited literature available.

In terms of determining countries that potentially have social, cultural, and geographical 'proximity' with Indonesia, the authors used a pragmatic approach that other countries in Asia, where Indonesia reside, have more social, cultural, and geographical relevance (i.e., culture, country economic status, geographical location), compared to African, Western, or South American countries. Although arguably imprecise or irrelevant, the authors used recognized Asian countries derived from the UN Member States lists (United Nations. n.d.), including West Asia or the Middle East, due to the potential similarities of Islamic religious influences in the Middle East and Indonesia. This definition was defined a priori. On the other hand, we excluded studies from countries arguably residing in the Asian region that are not Asian UN Member States (i.e., Israel, West European member states & the State of Palestine: Non-member states) as of 29 August 2024.

The review is open to studies and articles reported in any language if they meet the other inclusion criteria. This approach is taken to ensure a comprehensive review of the available evidence. However, the authors excluded studies where the full text is unavailable.

2.2.2. Out-of-home care arrangements

The inclusion criteria covers publications reporting on various out-of-home or alternative care forms, including kinship care, foster care, and long-term residential care settings defined by the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children (United Nations General Assembly, 2010).

The authors excluded young people from unrecognized or temporary forms of care (i.e., faith-based boarding schools or institutions, community shelters or temporary shelters, halfway houses, short-term residential care (under 6 months), hospital care, substance use residential centres, healthcare residential facilities, or any forms of temporary healthcare for young people) and also excluded permanent family-like care such as adoption and international adoption. This study also excluded unaccompanied humanitarian refugee minors (UHRMs) who receive out-of-home care services not in their original home country (Grage-Moore & Mendes, 2023).

2.2.3. Participants

This study included publications reporting on young people aged 16 to 25 years (inclusive) preparing to leave or already leaving out-of-home care. The authors identified this age range to include those young people preparing to leave care before 18 (the age at which young people typically leave out-of-home care). Furthermore, the upper age of 25 can be used to mark the end of transitioning to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Arnett, 2007). Usually, those reaching this age might already have full roles and responsibilities as an adult (work, parenting, and having a domestic partner). Nonetheless, the authors excluded studies of young people who did not include those aged 16 to 25 years.

2.2.4. Study design and methods

Included publications must report on either primary qualitative or quantitative studies of policies and practices to support young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia. The authors included also any form of 'systematic' literature reviews (i.e., scoping studies), as long as they have a clear methodology section within the reviews and was focusing on the countries of interest. The authors excluded commentary articles on policies and practices of young people transitioning from out-of-home care that did not include a 'methodology' section in the article at the full-text review stage.

2.2.5. The focus of the article

The authors included studies with findings relevant to care leavers' policies, practices, and supports within the Asian region. The authors excluded studies or articles that entirely focus on care leavers'

descriptions, conditions, and situations without any information about their support. Pinkerton's (2011) conceptual framework was applied to guide the literature search, review, and analysis.

2.3. Literature search and sources

All literature searches were conducted on 29 August 2024. A librarian was consulted for one session to advise on how to build a search strategy. The first author provided a search strategy document in

a separate file. The search strategy (Pascoe et al., 2021) was designed using several key concepts: (1) [Population] Young People, (2) [Concept] Leaving Care, (3) [Context] Asia. The first author also identified five 'gold set' articles as a strategy to explore the precision of the database searches. The search strategy was then developed in PsycINFO (OVID) using the three concepts above, and later, other databases were used. This study used six electronic databases to search for relevant literature: PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL Complete, Social Science Premium Collection, and Social Services Abstracts. The search
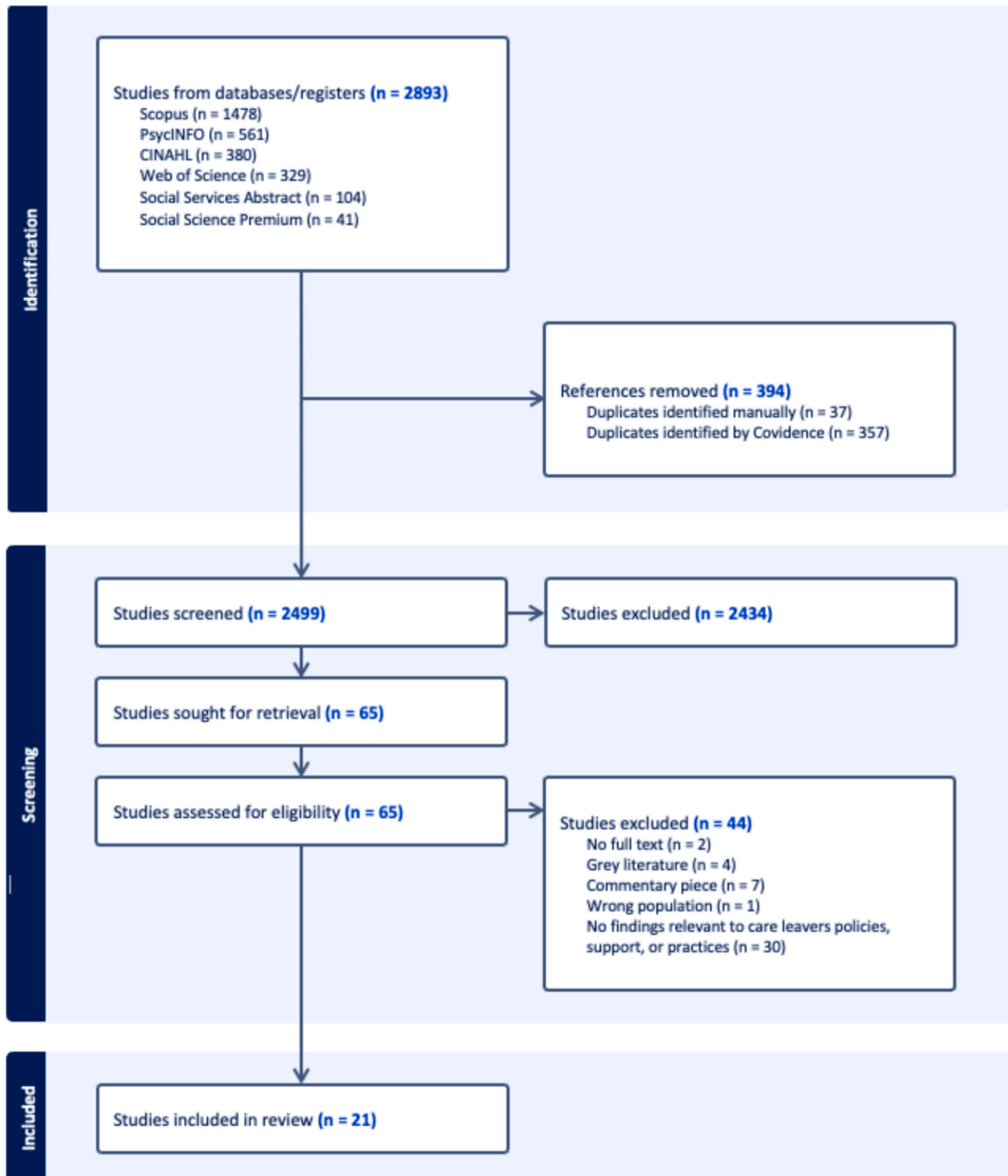

Fig. 2. PRISMA Flow Diagram.

included non-English language publications, and was not limited to English language. Due to the nature of the research question, which delves into the Asian region, widening the research effort into non-English published papers is deemed relevant to the study exploration. The selection process was meticulously documented using the PRISMA flow diagram (Liberati et al., 2009). Google Scholar was also specifically utilized when the first author could not locate full-text articles from the databases.

2.4. Data management and software

Results from each database search were exported into a single library in the EndNote X9 to remove the duplicates. The result was then exported into Covidence for a second attempt to remove the duplicates and conduct title and abstract, and full-text screening.

2.5. Study selection

The first author screened all 2,893 articles and removed 394 duplicates. This stage of the screening process was highly inclusive (empirical studies, review articles, commentary articles, policy documents), and a full-text review was implemented when the information in the title or abstracts is insufficient or unclear (first and second author). The reviewer (first author) ensured that during the full-text review process, the content of the included studies was relevant to the aim of the study, the research question, and primary studies.

The first and second authors then duplicate screened 13 per cent of the published papers to enhance the reliability of the review. The first and second author had 329 articles screened, with 41 articles in disagreement (12.5%). The disagreements were later discussed between the first and second authors until a consensus was reached. The first author conducted all of the remaining title and abstract screenings, a full-text review, and data extraction purposes using data exported into Covidence. The first author also used an Excel spreadsheet to chart the data. The extracted data was analyzed and reported as a narrative review. A summary using the PRISMA flowchart is detailed in Fig. 2.

2.6. Data charting process and items

Data were extracted from 21 studies selected for inclusion: study characteristics (authors, year of publication), location of the study conducted, study aim, study design and methods, participants (young people in care and care leavers), sources relevant to care leavers studies of policies and practices to support them.

2.7. Synthesis of results

Extracted data were transferred into Microsoft Excel to synthesize the data (i.e., sample characteristics, findings, et cetera). The key results and relevant findings from the scoping review were then narratively synthesized. Using the social ecology of care-leaving framework from Pinkerton (2011), the first author pre-determined three distinct social ecology spheres such as the 'macro' dimension (i.e., policies, social & cultural context, etc.), the 'mezzo' dimension (OOHC settings, leaving & aftercare intervention), and 'micro' dimension (i.e., personal resilience, coping, social capital). The first author then categorically grouped the relevant findings drawn from the previous data extraction process, emerged them into the eight themes, and narratively synthesized them.

3. Results

The results are divided into two distinct outcomes: sample characteristics and several main themes. The data chart findings are detailed in Appendix 1.

3.1. Sample characteristics

The authors reviewed and analysed 21 articles. Although the authors did not limit the search year of publication, most studies were published between 2010 and 2019 (42.8%) and 2020 to 2024 (57.1%). This indicates that research examining support for care-experienced young people, especially within Asia, is relatively new, with few studies having been published.

Findings also revealed that most of the primary studies in care leaver support conducted are within India (57.1%) and followed by China (19.0%). Furthermore, the scoping review found a few other countries that have studies in this area, such as South Korea (9.5%), Kazakhstan (4.7%), the Philippines (4.7%), and Jordan (4.7%).

Congruent with previous studies (Roche, 2019), the Asian region is dominated by residential care settings, with all studies discussing young people leaving residential care settings (100%). However across these studies, a few mentioned foster care (23.8%) and kinship care (14.3%).

Regarding the nature of the studies and methods used, most of the primary studies are qualitative (71.4%) with 19.0 per cent utilising quantitative methods, and 9.5 per cent adopting mixed methods. Most articles use semi-structured interviews (66.7%) (Dutta, 2016; Dutta, 2017; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Keshri, 2021; Keshri, 2023; Madhavan et al., 2022; Meshelova et al., 2024; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022; Modi et al., 2020; Nho et al., 2017; Shang & Fisher, 2019; Yin, 2024b) and focus groups (18%) (Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022; Modi et al., 2020; Shang & Fisher, 2019). There are two studies utilising some form of "systematic" literature review included in this study due to the nature of their studies reviewing specifically for their respective countries. Table 1 further explains the study's sample characteristics.

3.2. Main themes

Several themes were identified by the authors after reviewing and analyzing the articles. Table 2 provides a summary of themes from the literature reviewed, which are then expanded in further detail below.

Table 1
Study sample characteristics (n = 21).

Variable	N (%)
Year of publication	
2020 – 2024	12 (57.1)
2010 – 2019	9 (42.8)
Country location of studies	
India	12 (57.1)
China	4 (19.0)
South Korea	2 (9.5)
Kazakhstan	1 (4.7)
Philippines	1 (4.7)
Jordan	1 (4.7)
Out-of-home care arrangement*	
Residential care	21 (100)
Foster care	5 (23.8)
Kinship care	3 (14.3)
Study design	
Qualitative	15 (71.4)
Quantitative	4 (19.0)
Mix-method	2 (9.5)
Research method*	
Semi-structured interviews	14 (66.7)
Unstructured interviews	1 (4.8)
Focus groups	4 (18)
Observations	2 (9)
"Systematic" literature reviews**	2 (9)
Survey	6 (27)

*not mutually exclusive to one type of care arrangements or research method.

** Included because mention a clear methodology and specifically exploring their countries of interest.

Table 2
Summary table of key findings.

Lack of or inadequate formal leaving care and aftercare intervention for care leavers

- No measure or insufficient national and sub-national Leaving Care policies and practices, while care leavers only receiving basic life skills education and less support for basic needs (i.e., housing & financial support, employment).
- Disproportionately low aftercare facilities and support with a significant number of care leavers not receiving any type of support.
- A significant number of RCS are unregistered, leaving care leavers without known aftercare support.
- No guidance or pathways for future life opportunities after leaving care.
- Less understanding of 'holistic' aftercare needs for care leavers from OOHC institutions compared to Global North countries (OECD, 2022).
- Other inadequacies such as unclear roles of stakeholders, poor data management that leads to inadequate budget planning, and low monitoring mechanisms.
- Lack of integrated system.
- Institutional care inadequacy to provide genuine care.
- Missed opportunity to utilize other potential alternative care settings (i.e., foster care, kinship care) to promote better outcomes for care leavers.
- Most organizations have unclear policies mechanisms to support young people's transition and aftercare.
- Limited entitlement from the State for young people after leaving care (i.e., excluding young people who still have families).

Promising practices of formal leaving care and aftercare support for care leavers

- A promising practice of 'Mentorship' had potentially positive influence for care-experienced young people.
- Institutional care or Social Welfare Institutions helped to promote young people's resilience through providing adequate resources and social support such as stable and permanent living arrangements, the role of 'good' staff, trained peers, and school teachers to develop their positive life purposes, educational support to complete higher education.
- Using positive role models in learning positive behavioral attributes.
- The establishment of national and provincial regulations to support care leavers.
- Promoting healthy relationships between young people and staff helped for smooth transitions.
- Opportunity utilizing families (i.e., grandparents) to provide formal kinship care, supported by the government.
- Adding cultural aspects to better prepare young people's transition from care might be a potential good practice.

Residential care settings as a major out-of-home care setting in Asia

- Residential care settings as the dominant child welfare services
- State residential care dominant in China
- Difficulties for the child welfare system to pivot to 'family-like' alternative care
- Family-like environment during transition from care is more conducive to favorable outcomes for care-experienced young people during their transition into adulthood compared to institutional environment.

Poor preparation and insufficient support within out-of-home care entities to support care leavers future transition

- Recommendations around building a more robust Mentorship Curriculum to better prepare young people transitioning from their care.
- Preparational or transitional programs were available in a few residential care settings.
- Young people (girls in particular) felt "unprepared" with their emotional wellbeing, post-secondary education opportunity, work, social support, and economic security.
- The need to consider micro, mezzo, and macro factors that potentially led to better outcomes to successfully transition such as leaving care age, educational attainment, and young people's self-esteem condition, support system availability after leaving care, characteristics of the out-home-care settings and its services, and also the level of involvement and support of State for care leavers.
- Young people mostly are prepared to leave care, but have no knowledge about care leaving process and no access to transitional planning.
- Potentially harmful practices such as arranged marriages by care homes.
- The State is involved to a certain degree in providing some independent living support for young people living in OOHC institutions. However, there is unclear information on other care settings and how far the State supports these young people (i.e., kinship care, foster care).

Stigma and cultural barriers after young people leave care, especially for girls and young women

- Lack of specialized support for young girls leaving care in relation to the different challenges they experience from their communities.
- Care leavers 'failed' to reintegrate to their community and experienced social exclusion due to stigma coming from institutions, care and personal care backgrounds.
- Strong cultural barriers potentially hamper care leavers positive post-care experience transitioning into adulthood.

The importance of informal support from others

- Long-term positive informal relationships with formal mentors or staff within care can assist with honing care leavers' independent living skills, providing academic help, economic assistance, feelings of insecurity, and securing employment.
- Social welfare institutions and friends provide potential informal support for care leavers.
- Informal support can enhance care leavers resilience in the transition to adult life.
- Potentially provide a good role model from older peers, teachers, volunteers, etc.
- Despite exceptional informal support received by care leavers, care leavers experience challenges aggravated by cultural standards.
- Informal support also works as a stepping stone for care leavers. It is crucial for care leavers in the form of 'bonding', 'bridging', and 'linking' (Authors, 2023, p.228).

The significance of independent living skills to survive and thrive in their community

- Independent living skills adaptable for Asian social norms (i.e., basic mannerisms, perceived risky behaviors, et cetera)
- The need for basic life skills for care-experienced young people.
- Shortcomings in the 'independent living' educational approach to better prepare care leavers for transition.
- Other skill sets needed to survive adulthood (i.e., motivation to study, resilience, self-regulation, skills to 'move forward').

Care leavers resilience and coping mechanisms

- The importance of building young people's resilience that integrates with specific religious and cultural contexts, and expected social norms..
- The dire needs of voices of care-experienced young people in studies, and detailed description of their resilience.
- The need to enhance young people's resilience and social capital due their difficult experience in finance, career, and work.
- The need to enhance their psychosocial capacity and build healthy coping mechanisms.
- Experience of problematic behaviors.
- Increase their resilience by enhancing their social capital such the ability to pursue higher education, skills to manage personal finance, etc.
- Predictors of care leavers resilience
- Diversity of outcomes and several poor outcomes from studies conducted in Asia.
- Positive aspirations of care leavers and their good hopes about the future.

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(1) Lack of or inadequate formal leaving care and aftercare intervention

All studies reported a lack of, or some form of inadequacy, in formal leaving care and aftercare intervention (100%). Studies from India, China, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Jordan, and the Philippines presented the challenges of supporting young people leaving care. In contrast, at least four jurisdictions had some form of support for young people beyond the age of 18 (India, China, South Korea and the Philippines).

Although insufficient, among those providing formal leaving care and aftercare interventions, there are at least two countries (India and the Philippines) that have national legislation that clearly states support for young people leaving care or youth beyond 18 years (Blanco & Panao, 2019; Dutta, 2018; Keshri, 2021; Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Modi et al., 2020). A study from Udayan Care also found that India has started its leaving and aftercare support through regulations that required the

central and state governments to ensure the social reintegration of care leavers and set a specific budget allocation designated for them (Juvenile Justice Act 2015, as cited in Mishra & Dutta, 2024). One country (China) has state/ local policies and program initiatives to support youth from care beyond 18 years (Liu et al., 2022; Yin, 2024a, 2024b).

Those jurisdictions that stated some form of formal support for care leavers provided a range of assistance including financial support (Lee & Lee, 2024; Liu et al., 2022; Modi et al., 2020), housing support (Modi et al., 2020; Yin, 2024), psychosocial support (Lee & Lee, 2024; Modi et al., 2020), compulsory education program or skills development (Lee & Lee, 2024; Modi et al., 2020;), continuing higher education and vocational training support (Modi et al., 2020), entrepreneurial capital support (Modi et al., 2020), employment opportunities (Yin, 2024a), legal aid (Meshelova et al., 2024), and incentives to kin and foster carers (Blanco & Panao, 2019).

While others did not have any formal leaving care and aftercare intervention available, jeopardising their capacity for social capital, resilience, and coping mechanisms (Pinkerton, 2011). These inadequacies are described below.

Inadequacies in formal leaving care intervention were identified in studies from India (n = 12) (Dutta, 2016; Dutta, 2017; Dutta, 2018; Keshri, 2021; Keshri, 2023; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Mishra & Sondhi, 2021; Mishra and Sondhi, 2022; Modi et al., 2014; Modi et al., 2020). Research conducted by Udayan Care in India in five states revealed that the number of aftercare homes in India are disproportionately low. At the same time, a quarter of care leavers did not receive any formal aftercare support (Mishra & Dutta, 2024). Furthermore, Udayan Care found that most care leavers are unaware of aftercare services, despite the existence of the aftercare national regulation for children in alternative care. A lack of consistency in implementation and unclear roles of the state (provinces) were identified, meaning that no bodies take responsibility for supporting care leavers (Mishra & Dutta, 2024). On the other hand, many out-of-home care institutions are unregistered, thus leaving young people transitioning from out-of-home care without any available services (Mishra & Dutta, 2024). Young people also did not have any clear guidance or pathways for future direction after they leave care, leaving them with no clue on how to access employment, acquire residential assistance, access financial means, or have back-up plans to transition from care, alongside other extended and practical problem solving skills to navigate their future life (Mishra & Dutta, 2024).

Among the identified registered institutional care facilities, there was no aftercare facility or support for girls 18 to 21 years old in India (Dutta, 2018). Care leavers receive minimal and unregulated follow-up support after release from institutions or aftercare homes (Dutta, 2016). Insufficient aftercare support in India during young people's transition failed to address their potential vulnerabilities, such as homelessness, unemployment, substance misuse, and social exclusion (Modi et al., 2020). Other problematic conditions are also experienced by care organisations and their workforce, such as a lack of transitional planning for care leavers and a lack of understanding of young people's 'holistic' needs after they leave care (Modi et al., 2020). Other adverse findings include the unclear roles of stakeholders, lack of data management that led to poor budget planning, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms to assess care leavers' outcomes during and after the transition into adult life in India (Modi et al., 2020). Studies also highlight the need for policy reforms in India to develop more robust aftercare policies, given the abundance of studies and evaluations available (Modi et al., 2020).

Other jurisdictions, such as Kazakhstan, revealed that most 'orphanage graduates' lack advice and legally entitled aid to obtain government housing support, while a third did not receive any social assistance in their country (Meshelova et al., 2024). There was also a need to provide legal assistance to care leavers about inheritance issues (Meshelova et al., 2024). With regard to their social service workforce, there is a need in Kazakhstan to enhance social workers' roles to enable better support for 'orphanage graduates' to acquire their legal rights (Meshelova et al., 2024).

China portrayed another different situation. While no national Leaving Care regulations exist, local governments have policies to support care leavers (Yin, 2024a). However, the current responses were deemed insufficient, and access to specified support (i.e., housing and employment) needed to be improved (Yin, 2024a). Local policies were said to be unclear, lacking detail, and incomprehensive in providing maximum benefits for care-experienced young people (Yin, 2024a). The lack of a national Leaving Care policy also seemingly adds to the inconsistencies and need for clarity across China's jurisdictions (Yin, 2024a). Institutional care in China is considered "sub-optimal" for children and young people needing genuine care (Yin, 2024b). Some recommendations suggested for policymakers and practitioners in China to improve their Leaving Care intervention include creating family-like practices within residential care settings, providing extended care until 21 years, enhancing social service and caregivers qualifications, improving caregiver-to-children ratios, and ensuring financial revenue to care organisations to support young people after leaving care (Yin, 2024b).

In other East Asian jurisdictions, such as South Korea, there was mention of the need for integrated Leaving Care intervention to support care leavers, and initiatives focusing on building their confidence were deemed essential (Lee & Lee, 2024). Findings from South Korea also showed the government's variety of support plans and programs for care leavers, highlighting a few principal services: (1) requirements to attend mandatory education to receive a one-time transition allowance by establishing a Child Development Account (CDA); (2) a description of the compulsory program consisting of economic and financial education, consultation, maintaining contacts/social network, and independent living counselling and information; (3) Housing support; and (4) College scholarships; (5) the establishment of independent living centers; and (6) Independent Living Programs specialists (Lee & Lee, 2024; Nho et al., 2017).

One jurisdiction from South East Asia, the Philippines, revealed that they have legislation and specific rights for young people in care until 21 years old; this jurisdiction has a considerably flexible definition of what constitutes a 'child', which is a person under 18 or above 18 that cannot care or protect oneself (Blanco & Panao, 2019). The rights of these young people in foster care were enhanced by a monthly subsidy from the Philippines Social Affairs Department. At the same time, their foster parents were also entitled to health services schemes and other support services (Blanco & Panao, 2019). Given the considerable need for supporting young people who lost parental care, Blanco and Panao (2019) suggested utilizing grandparents as caregivers through formal kinship care arrangements.

Another study from the Middle East (West Asia), Jordan indicated no formal leaving care support available (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011).

(2) Promising practices for formal leaving care and aftercare support for care leavers.

On the other hand, promising findings in leaving care and aftercare interventions are also found in the studies. These forms of formal support are identified as 'helpful' for care leavers. They include practices such as enhancing basic life skills (Dutta, 2016), mentorship programs (Madhavan et al., 2022; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Modi et al., 2014), using positive role models to learn positive behaviors (Mishra & Sondhi, 2022), extended or continuous support for young persons leaving care (Keshri, 2021; Modi et al., 2020), a flexible or upper leaving care age (Dutta, 2016; Lee & Lee, 2024), formal social support (Nho et al., 2017), support for care leavers' education (Dutta, 2017), and preparation for leaving care (Dutta, 2017).

Studies from India highlighted good practices from a few organisations committed to supporting care leavers from 19 to 23 years old (Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022). The study by Mishra and Sondhi (2022) reveals that the resources from institutional care helped promote young people's resilience in and leaving care. They mentioned that institutional care offers permanent living arrangements,

and staff, trained peers, and school teachers are essential in growing positive life purposes. Using positive role models is also valuable for learning similar behavioral attributes among young people in care.

Other promising practices from India were also documented. Some forms of transitional support from institutional care organisations are available as basic independent living skills education (i.e., cooking, cleaning) (Mishra & Dutta, 2024). One care organisation, such as Udayan Care, also owns aftercare facilities that provide a formal mentorship program related to leaving care and aftercare support (Modi et al., 2014). This mentorship program with "mentor parents" can potentially influence care leavers, especially young women and girls, resulting in positive outcomes such as healthy and secure attachments, adaptive self-regulation skills, and resilience to have positive future expectations (Modi et al., 2014). Other positive benefits of child (alternative) care homes are young people's access to formal and non-formal education and basic life-skill education (Dutta, 2016). At least two studies provided a potential ideal framework for Leaving Care and Aftercare support (Dutta, 2016; Modi et al., 2020). Furthermore, findings revealed that continuous aftercare support is necessary to foster independent living skills and enable care leavers to reintegrate into society (Modi et al., 2020).

Promising findings from East Asian jurisdictions such as China also occurred. Care leavers perceived social welfare institutions and their friends as their main sources of social support, strengthening their social capital (Liu et al., 2022). China's local policies also have a variety of services and measures to support care-experienced young people, with housing and employment at the top of the list (Yin, 2024a). There was also a suggestion to formalize state support or state guardianship responsibilities for families, supporting and promoting the "family" system in China (Shang & Fisher, 2019). Other alternative care arrangements, such as foster care practices in China, also potentially have positive outcomes for youth transitioning to adulthood, enhancing their social inclusion, promoting better living conditions and identity, better education, more stable employment, economic security, good social relations, and marriage (Shang & Fisher, 2019).

A study from South Korea stated that the country's leaving care age is 18 years. However, it could be extended until 24 years with the requirements to enroll in college or a job training program (Nho et al., 2017). Formal social support from significant others is a "stepping stone" for Korean care leavers to have more successful outcomes (Nho et al., 2017). The study conducted by Nho et al. (2017) also indicated that smooth transitions in Korea are facilitated by promoting healthy relationships between young people in care and staff, and also by educational support to help care leavers complete higher education that will lead to more stable employment (Nho et al., 2017).

(3) Residential care settings (RCS) as major care arrangements and their impact on young people leaving out-of-home care in Asia.

All reviewed studies in Asia demonstrated the hegemony of residential care settings (100%), with all of the care arrangements involving some form of residential or institutional care, which appears to set the Asian context apart from the Global North care systems (e.g. North America, Europe, Australia). This framework might have different outcomes and contexts for care leavers in Asia. Studies revealed the major child welfare services were residential care in India and China (Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Modi et al, 2020; Yin, 2024a). However, one study identified the potentially more positive outcomes for young people transitioning from foster care in China, in which family environments are more conducive for care leavers wellbeing as they enter adulthood (Shang & Fisher, 2019).

A few studies from India (Dutta, 2016; Dutta, 2017; Dutta, 2018; Keshri, 2021; Keshri, 2023; Madhavan et al., 2022; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Mishra & Sondhi, 2021; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022; Modi et al., 2014; Modi et al., 2020) suggested the need for particular attention to enhancing the resilience of young people leaving residential care. The regional focus on de-institutionalization and a massive effort to form a "family-like" alternative care is somewhat

neglecting the need to prepare young people for leaving residential care that may reinforce their poor outcomes in transitioning and adulthood (Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Mishra & Sondhi, 2021; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022).

(4) Poor preparation and inadequate support within OOHC entities.

Most articles (81%) also directly and indirectly mentioned how poorly prepared young people are to leave care and transition into adulthood. Most of these studies collected data from interviews and focus groups with care leavers and care providers. One study employed a self-administered survey of care leavers to indirectly assess their preparedness (i.e., career identity) (Lee & Lee, 2024). Two studies used face-to-face interviews with care-experienced young people (Dutta, 2018; Liu et al., 2022). Two studies utilized some form of 'mixed-method' by conducting face-to-face surveys, qualitative interviews, and focus groups with care leavers and care providers (Meshelova et al., 2024; Modi et al., 2020). Nonetheless, one study explored the successful transition from care leavers who successfully 'moved on' using qualitative interviews (Nho et al., 2017).

Most OOHC organisations reveal a lack of, or no preparation, to leave care (Dutta, 2016; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Keshri, 2023; Modi et al., 2020), while other studies indicated insufficient preparation planning to leave care (Nho et al., 2017). Studies also revealed that some young people left care without any work/ educational qualification (Dutta, 2018; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Modi et al., 2020), and lack health coverage (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Modi et al., 2020). Care leavers also subjectively felt that they did not have adequate support to prepare them to leave care (Dutta, 2018; Modi et al., 2020). These conditions indicate that young people might receive inadequate support before discharge and are less prepared to transition from care.

A study by Dutta (2017) from India mentioned that planning for social support after they leave care was only available to one-third of study participants, leaving two-thirds of them without any social support. Another study by Dutta (2016) pointed out that most of the care organisations in the study (78%) had unclear policies for preparing young people to guide their transition journey and access their aftercare support. This study was conducted by using in-depth qualitative interviews with at least two members of each organization. The study collected data from twenty OOHC institutions from two urban cities in Mumbai and Kolkata.

Dutta (2016) also mentioned the consistent efforts from child (alternative) care organisations in India to implement family reunification because most young people in care have at least one biological parent or guardian. Moreover, this is probably related to transitional extended support only being provided by aftercare homes to orphans, neglected youth, and youth with insecure family environments (Dutta, 2016).

A recent study from India (Keshri, 2023) described the poor preparation planning for young people in care. This study from Keshri (2023) highlighted that care organisations most likely did not communicate their care leaving process to young people, and there was no preparation and transitional program in place, while most of these young people did not participate in any transition planning. Other findings from this study also identified that care leaving is still seen by organisations as an event and not an extended process, and the young people in the study have minimal knowledge about their future life outside their institutions. Keshri (2023) also suggested that key factors to young people's better transition and outcomes are extended support with a comprehensive and compulsory aftercare service.

Another study from Jordan also portrayed different and potentially harmful practices, such as arranged marriages conducted by care homes as part of the discharge plan for female youth (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011).

However, at least five articles (Dutta, 2017; Dutta, 2018; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2018; Nho et al., 2017) identified good practices to improve transitional planning and support within OOHC entities. These studies identified potential practices using in-depth interviews and focus groups with young people preparing to leave care,

care leavers, and staff institutions.

Promising findings from Mishra and Dutta (2024) discussed enhancing a Mentorship Curriculum plan in India around education and career-related guidance. Dutta (2024) also mentioned improving guidance and preparation for care leavers, such as support for finding accommodation, familiarizing oneself with the outside world, communicating concerns, and preventing solitariness. Several articles also mentioned the potential practice to prepare for mentorship in India (Modi et al., 2014; Modi et al., 2020). Another study from Dutta (2018) also mentioned that young girls leaving care received better preparation in life skills and access than in other areas. Key factors such as leaving care age, education, self-esteem, support system availability, out-of-home care characteristics, and the state's involvement might influence their preparation to leave care (Dutta, 2018).

Another potentially good practice from India was mentioned in a study by Mishra and Sondhi (2018). Their youth participants were 'groomed for the future' to prepare them for life and handle challenges in their community (i.e., via training in basic mannerisms, following structured activities, and avoiding risky behaviors). There was 'active career guidance' from the child (alternative) care organisations in India about care leavers' possibility of career pathways in the future, while in parallel, young people were prepared with relevant vocational training and a suitable workplace (Mishra & Sondhi, 2018). The study from South Korea also mentioned the availability of transitional and independent living programs for young people in OOHC institutions, although not commenting as to how well they were delivered (Nho et al., 2017).

(5) Stigma and cultural barriers after leaving care, especially for young women and girls.

Seven articles (33.3%) from India, Jordan, and Kazakhstan describe how stigma and cultural barriers might hamper successful outcomes for young people transitioning into their adult life (Dutta, 2017; Dutta, 2018; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Meshelova et al., 2024; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2021; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022).

A study from Jordan conducted by Ibrahim and Howe (2011) reported that cultural influences, patriarchy, family life, and collectivism have a particular impact on care leavers' post-care experiences, especially for young women. The reason for entering care and the family's non-existence increased the risk of being stigmatised (i.e., young girls living alone) (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011). Care leavers also experience difficulties managing their post-care identity challenges and handling stressful situations (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011). Sometimes, they must 'lie' about their care identity status to get accommodation. Culture also interplays with how care organisations view care leavers, in which there are potentially harmful practices conducted within care homes (for example, arranged marriages) as part of the female youth discharge plan. Ibrahim and Howe (2011) also suggested that adding a cultural dimension into the care-leaving experience might help to improve support for youth leaving care. Jordanian care leavers' active efforts to conceal their care identity from others might have an adverse 'psychological' impact (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011).

A study in India conducted by Keshri (2021) also mentioned the social exclusion experienced by young people after they leave care due to their personal and care background. There is an effort from young people to 'hide' their care identity. Dutta (2018) also mentioned the lack of specialised support for young girls leaving care, especially their different needs in the community relative to their male counterparts. Findings also showed that failure to reintegrate into the community in India was due to young people's institutional care identity (Dutta, 2016; Dutta, 2017; Dutta, 2018; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Mishra & Sondhi, 2021; Mishra & Sondhi, 2022).

However, cultural aspects may also be helpful for young people' outcomes. A study by Shang and Fisher (2019) mentioned using grandparents as caregivers, thus promoting formalised kinship care in China. The utilization of grandparents as caregivers for alternative care is also recommended by Blanco and Panao (2019) for the Philippines.

(6) The importance of informal support from others for young people transitioning from care into adulthood.

Almost all articles (95%) mentioned the importance of informal support from others to care leavers. Three studies from India highlighted the importance of long-term mentoring relationships and their essential role in care leavers' successful transition into adulthood and honing their independent living skills (Madhavan et al., 2022; Modi et al., 2014; Modi et al., 2020). Positive and strong attachment between mentors and young people in care creates a long-term informal relationship long after youth leave their care (Madhavan et al., 2022). Another study by Mishra and Sondhi (2022) in India highlighted the roles of caretakers or caregivers in shaping young people's future by providing them with academic help, tutoring, and assisting young people to acquire adequate independent living skills.

Mishra and Sondhi (2018) collected data by utilizing focus groups with twenty young people living in residential care and interviews with their staff members. They mentioned how young people preparing to leave care talk about building resilience to have a better life in the future, and the importance of informal support from others to transition into adult life. Young people receiving informal support in the form of institutions' commitment to support their higher education greatly reduces their insecurity after turning 18. This instrumental support from institutions included economic assistance for young people to complete higher education and provide networks to secure jobs.

Other informal support also comes from factors that promote personal growth, such as good role models from positive behaviors acted by older peers, wardens, volunteers, and school teachers, and good exposure within institutions to educational books and films (Mishra & Sondhi, 2018).

A study by Liu et al. (2022) also revealed that social welfare institutions and friends are the main sources of formal and informal social support for care leavers in China. Furthermore, a study by Nho et al. (2017, p. 315) in South Korea also revealed that informal social support from care leaver's significant others works as a 'stepping stone' for future successful outcomes for Korean care leavers.

The study from Ibrahim and Howe (2011) in Jordan also described that despite exceptional informal support received by care leavers such as financial assistance from landlords who knew their care status, they experience challenges that are aggravated by cultural standards. In this situation, care leaver peers offer a potential system of supportive relationships (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011).

(7) The significance of independent living skills for care leavers.

All articles (100%) mentioned "independent living skills" and their importance to young people's successful outcomes. Care leavers need to have skills to undertake independent living, such as knowing how to get nutrition and take care of personal health (Dutta, 2018; Modi et al., 2020), how to perform first aid and crisis management (Dutta, 2018; Modi et al., 2020), household management such as cooking and cleaning (Dutta, 2018; Modi et al., 2020), financial management (Dutta, 2018; Liu et al., 2022; Modi et al., 2020), personal hygiene and care of belongings (Dutta, 2018; Liu et al., 2022; Modi et al., 2020), how to avoid risky behaviors such as substance use and unsafe sexual relationships (Dutta, 2018; Liu et al., 2022; Modi et al., 2020), social skills (Liu et al., 2022), job-seeking skills (Liu et al., 2022), career planning (Liu et al., 2022), positive future expectations (Liu et al., 2022), and positive personal values (Liu et al., 2022; Nho et al., 2017).

Care-experienced young girls in India reported better preparation in basic life skills than their perception of their psychological well-being and other abilities such as accessing higher education, social support, and so forth (Dutta, 2018). Another study from India highlighted the need to change the educational approach to promote better independent living skills (Keshri, 2021). On the other hand, residential-based care in India can potentially prepare young people who leave care with resources that will help them develop and create more positive future changes (Mishra & Sondhi, 2018).

A study from Korea was conducted through in-depth interviews with

five young adults, aged 25 to 31, who previously lived in out-of-home placements (Nho et al., 2017). It mentioned several skill sets needed to survive as care leavers in Korea, such as studying, resilience in a tough world, having self-control or regulation, and "moving forward" skills.

(8) Care leavers resilience and their coping capacity.

All articles mentioned the theme of care leavers' resilience, reflecting their capacity to cope with challenges. They also described potentially poor outcomes for these young people in their respective jurisdictions while having limited capacity to cope with life challenges during the transition into adulthood. These studies identified difficulties for care leavers across jurisdictions in continuing education (Dutta, 2018; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Modi et al., 2020; Yin, 2024b), securing accommodation or homelessness (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Keshri, 2021; Meshelova et al., 2024; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Modi et al., 2020; Yin, 2024a), finding employment (Dutta, 2018; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Liu et al., 2022; Mishra & Dutta, 2024; Modi et al., 2020; Yin, 2024a), emotional and social support (Dutta, 2018; Modi et al., 2020), managing finances (Dutta, 2018; Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Liu et al., 2022; Meshelova et al., 2024; Mishra & Dutta, 2024), establishing identity (Keshri, 2021; Modi et al., 2020), skill development (Modi et al., 2020), substance use (Modi et al., 2020;), psychological stress (Liu et al., 2022) and social exclusion (Modi et al., 2020; Yin, 2024a).

A study by Mishra and Sondhi (2021) collected data with unstructured interviews from 28 young people aged 14 to 23. This study suggested building resilience among orphaned adolescents in care and those who previously lived in institutional care, particularly in India. They proposed that these young people have the desire to break through their adverse conditions. Their desire can be nurtured by enhancing their protective value through initial maintenance of the children within institutions and easing their long-term adjustment (i.e., guiding them, having the presence of significant adults, modelling strengths from others, helping them adjust to the institutional environment, enhance their self-management, and re-evaluate institutional entry in a more positive light). A study by Keshri (2021) also indicated similar nuances to the need to build young people's resilience, that Indian care leavers perceive that leaving care is both an opportunity and a challenge.

One study from India, as reported in a previous theme, (Dutta, 2018) reported that care-experienced young girls in India were not confident about their psychological wellbeing and their ability to access higher education, social support, employment, and financial independence. Another study by Dutta (2017) found that half of care leaver participants could not pursue higher education or have personal savings. Other predictors in India that could enhance care leavers' resilience and 'social capital' are higher educational qualifications, older leaving care age, well-planned preparation for social reintegration, social support network availability, and higher self-esteem (Dutta, 2017). Dutta (2016) also described the individual challenges in transitioning into adult life in India: failure to reintegrate due to stigma coming from institutions, leaving care while also having a disability, and inadequate social support from institutions to prevent relapse (i.e., young people being sent back to another institution).

Another study by Modi et al. (2020) documented several challenges experienced by care leavers in India, such as housing insecurity, identity documentation, education, building skills, job opportunities, and emotional support. Other studies also documented the challenges experienced by Indian care leavers, including difficulties at the workplace while parallel finding lodging, performing household duties, and establishing formal identification (Keshri, 2021). Perceived difficulties and uncertainties for future life are also experienced by young people preparing to leave care (Mishra & Dutta, 2024). Conversely, personal aspirations to have a better life and existence of a strong care leavers informal network were also mentioned by Mishra and Sondhi (2018) and Keshri (2021).

Findings from China portrayed diverse outcomes in which care leavers' transition into adulthood from residential care occurred at different rates and sequences of life circumstances. Leaving Care in China is described as an important life event that results in significant changes in young people's accommodation situation, social roles, and level of social support (Yin, 2024b). These youth's diverse outcomes were seen regarding education, work, and family formation as parents.

A study from China (Yin, 2024b) revealed how Chinese care leavers cope with three markers of adulthood (education, employment, family formation) with a great diversity of outcomes. Care leavers transitioning from institutions in China have more risks and challenges than young people leaving a 'family-like' alternative care. Another documented their lack of capacity to cope with life challenges (i.e., financial difficulties, career plan challenges, and employment instability) (Liu et al., 2022). Care leavers experience challenges in their emotional wellbeing, high stressors, prevalent problematic behaviors, and potentially unhealthy coping mechanisms, such as high future self-expectations, which create high stress and potentially lead to unhealthy coping, such as withdrawal from social activities (Liu et al., 2022).

Another study by Yin (2024b) was conducted by interviewing 34 young people with lived experiences in institutional care in China. This study mentioned risk factors for poor outcomes during care leavers' transition to adulthood. They were care identity, absent of parental care, poor living standards, incompetent caregiving, unreasonable domestic duties, neglect of their education, unstable environment, and physical disabilities.

A study from Korea (Lee & Lee, 2024, p.1) described a term of 'career identity' that might be associated with better self-esteem and self-efficacy for Korean care leavers and also with good mental health. This finding highlights the significance of the psychosocial capacity of care leavers in their career exploration and preparation. Similar challenges were also experienced by Jordanian care leavers, as noted by Ibrahim and Howe (2011, p.2471). Care leavers felt that they were 'easy prey' and that other people might take advantage of them due to a lack of family protection and support.

4. Discussion

This study identified and synthesized findings from the primary peer-reviewed studies about policies and practices supporting young people transitioning from out-of-home care in Asia.

A common theme from the findings is the limited formal Leaving Care support within the studies' jurisdictions, either in the form of policies or practices. For example, there is little formal support in housing for care leavers who consequently struggle to find self-supporting accommodation (Dworsky et al., 2013; Mackenzie et al., 2016; OECD, 2022; Van Breda & Dickens, 2016). Regarding promising practices, mentorship programs are mentioned in a few studies reviewed, and it is a 'popular' support mechanism provided in previous established studies (OECD, 2022). It is also noticeable that relatively less attention is given to care leavers' physical health, mental health, and other provisions relative to housing, employment, and education measures (Mendes & Chaffey, 2023; Baidawi, 2024).

Young people transitioning from out-of-home care within the studies' jurisdictions seem to be struggling to access adequate support due to the unavailability of formal assistance programs. That absence of support services contrasts with other mostly Global North countries which offer post-18 support for care leavers through their national legislation via forms of extended care (Courtney, 2019; OECD, 2022; Mendes et al., 2011; Mendes & Rogers, 2020; Peters et al., 2009; Strahl et al., 2021; Van Breda et al., 2020), planning for leaving care (Courtney, 2019; Mendes & Rogers, 2020; Mendes & Purtell, 2020; Stein, 2019), educational and work support (Arnau-Sabatés & Gilligan, 2015; Courtney, 2019; Gilligan, 2019; Baidawi, 2024), the availability of aftercare support in the forms of continued financial assistance (OECD, 2022), housing support (Mendes et al., 2011; Stein, 2012; OECD, 2022; Baidawi, 2024), mentorship and care leavers peer support (OECD, 2022), monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (OECD, 2022), procedures for aftercare support (OECD, 2022), and firm integrated services (OECD,

2022; Baidawi, 2024; Radityaputra et al., 2024). Furthermore, Leaving Care scholars also advocate for more ongoing holistic and good quality aftercare support for care leavers (Courtney, 2019; Mendes, 2009; Mendes & Snow, 2016; Mendes & Rogers, 2020; Stein, 2012; Van Breda et al., 2020).

There are some limited exceptions to this rule. For example, a few jurisdictions such as China and the Philippines mentioned utilizing kinship care to provide accommodation for young people from OOHC during their transition into adulthood. There may also be some financial support offered, albeit care leavers across Asia seem only to have one-time financial assistance entitled to them after they leave care. These jurisdictions might lack wider 'social safety nets' to allocate provisions to care leavers due to limited funding or less integrated health and social care systems within their respective countries compared to those jurisdictions from more economically-developed countries that have universal health and social care systems that are more integrated (Mendes, 2017). Some jurisdictions in the studies also mentioned the legal leaving care age, which is mainly the age of 18, with unclear possibility of remaining in the child welfare system.

All articles identified residential care settings (RCS) as the "dominant" form of child protection or child welfare initiatives in studies across the region. The Asian context is uniquely different from the child welfare system in Western countries, which lean toward "professional" foster care services or "family-like" services compared to residential-type settings (Mendes, 2017; Van Breda & Pinkerton, 2020; Van Breda et al., 2020). In the global South context, NGOs and residential care play a significant role in preparing youth for leaving care, and enabling their transitions into independent living (Frimpong-Manso, 2022).

From the six countries which the studies reviewed, differences occur within the formal national support, with only India mentioning a specific Leaving Care national legislation. Furthermore, studies from China also highlighted unique differences across regions in which the country depended on state residential care to provide support for young people in care and transitioning from care. Yet on the other hand, more than seventy per cent of children and young people live in kinship care in China (not mentioned formal or informal), which seems different from other countries that highlighted their reliance on residential care settings.

Furthermore, there are also unknown areas in which care leavers who are more vulnerable (i.e., cognitive or physical disabilities) dealt with their mental health and other complex needs in the literature within the scope of this study. Previous scholars have mentioned the need for specialist aftercare support for young people with complex needs such as physical or psychosocial disability (Baidawi et al., 2014; Stein, 2008). In addition this needs, others also commented that support with eligibility requirements for young people from care primarily benefitted only young people who fare better (Stein, 2012; Van Breda et al., 2020).

By borrowing Pinkerton's (2011) social ecology care-leaving framework, leaving care and aftercare intervention needs to provide an adequate social ecology of support for care leavers. Furthermore, wider social support networks need to exist to provide better outcomes for care-experienced young people, especially assisting their transition into adulthood (Pinkerton, 2011; Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019; Waugh et al., 2023).

Extending care also has potential educational benefits or outcomes for care leavers (Courtney & Hook, 2017), with the caveat that youth participation in extended care might be influenced by contextual factors (i.e., varied political atmosphere, worker's satisfaction with cross-system collaboration, and placement location) (Park et al., 2022; Park et al., 2023). Furthermore, youth involvement in transitional plan decision-making is also seen as a protective factor during the transition into adulthood. It may be determined by several predictors such as age, personality traits, the helpfulness of their caseworker, and physical disabilities (Park et al., 2020).

Young people in care need to be prepared for their care-leaving process and its transition (OECD, 2022; Baidawi, 2024; United Nations General Assembly, 2010). In the Global South context, like most of these Asian countries, youth are often unprepared for key aspects of independent living (Frimpong-Manso, 2022). A holistic approach to preparing and planning for young people's transition must consider their psychological conditions, social skills, and other practical skills (Modi et al., 2020; Stein, 2008). Furthermore, transitional programs must provide long-term, consistent, and integrated support that is individually tailored to young people after they leave care (Mendes & Rogers, 2020). Several countries require, through their local or national law, OOHC entities to develop a preparation plan for youth in care well before they reach 18 (Mendes & Purtell, 2020; OECD, 2022). A transitional plan also needs to take into account a well-planned and detailed assessment before care leavers reach 18, enhance strong engagement with young people to increase their capacity for self-management after they leave care, and provide continuous support for more disadvantaged care leavers (Mendes & Purtell, 2020). Furthermore, youth involvement in transitional planning is determined by the support from others who helped them (Park et al., 2020). The studies reviewed also have various ways to conceptualize "successful transition", and most of them, due to the usage of qualitative methods, did not provide clear "indicators" of positive outcomes. Only one study from India (Modi et al., 2020) had at least a clear conceptualisation of "successful transition" with eight different dimensions of leaving care.

Previous literature on leaving care, specifically in Asia, has not discussed how social and cultural factors influence certain countries and institutions to support care leavers or how cultural barriers and stigma interplay to prevent positive outcomes for care leavers. Substantial cultural barriers may be a factor that hinders more favourable outcomes for vulnerable youth (Pouw et al., 2017). The role of patriarchy, strict gender roles, and rigid cultural norms in society may undermine the smooth transition of young men and women from care (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011). For example, ethnicities and other individual attributes (i.e., religion, age) might prevent young people from having social mobility in certain countries and enhance social exclusion for vulnerable youth (Pouw et al., 2017). The role of care-experienced young women compared to young men may also differ. A Study from Girls and Boys Town in South Africa pointed to the similarities of resilience processes between male and female care leavers. At the same time, there are distinct resilience processes uniquely addressed to young women, such as motherhood and taking on responsibilities (Hlungwani & Van Breda, 2020). While female residential care leavers from various Global North and Global South jurisdictions experienced gender-specific challenges, such as early parenthood and gender-based violence (Zhao et al., 2025).

The role of a patriarchal society also may provide smoother pathways for young male care leavers relative to their female peers, who may have more limited opportunity to access viable education and employment (Ibrahim & Howe, 2011; Van Breda & Dickens, 2016).

Furthermore, informal social support in "social capital" forms is critical to care leavers transitioning into adulthood (Pinkerton, 2011; Pouw et al., 2017; Pinkerton & Van Breda, 2019; Waugh et al., 2023). Our review found that youth received informal support from other people who supported them, such as staff, mentors, caregivers, wardens, teachers, peers, and even landlords who knew their care identity. Previous studies have pointed out how 'social capital' owned by care leavers plays a significant role in facilitating social support and access to resources care leavers receive (Waugh et al., 2023). Other studies from a more relevant context from a developing country such as South Africa, highlighted the importance of informal social support for care leavers (Hlungwani & Van Breda, 2020). Caregivers play a significant role in helping care leavers in the Global South prepare to look after themselves, find accommodation, and find employment (Pouw et al., 2017).

Furthermore, potential informal social support in the Asian context may also be determined by kinship, extended families, and other informal social networks. The first author would argue that care leavers' social capital functions (Waugh et al., 2023) may work more optimally

in this Asian context. As a more collective society, community members are obligated to help and assist those who need help, especially those who have 'little' protection (Hlungwani & Van Breda, 2020). The lack of a wider universal social safety net in Asian jurisdictions, which mainly consists of less economically-developed countries, may also increase the importance of informal social support in accessing various developmental and environmental resources (Waugh et al., 2023). Furthermore, extended families in global south countries (i.e., Asia) usually care for orphaned and neglected children in informal kinship care arrangements (Martin & Zulaika, 2016; Westerlaken, 2024).

Independent living skills are critical for young people's outcomes during transition into adulthood. These skills are relevant for care leavers in order for them to survive and thrive within their respective communities. From the studies, several basic life skills, vocational or educational knowledge, and social skills are needed for young people to become more 'independent' during their transition. Moreover, aligning with the previous discussion, the 'cultural dimension' needs to be considered while discussing skills needed for care leavers to transition within their local communities and the larger society. Studies from South Africa reveal the need for local context to develop the skills needed for young people to achieve more positive outcomes (Van Breda & Dickens, 2016). Learned culturally-acceptable behaviors are needed within these jurisdictions (i.e., respect for elders, gratitude and gratefulness towards the people who provide support, and so forth).

Furthermore, some of the articles in the study mentioned that young people learn skills to be culturally adapted to expected social norms and skills that may differ from the Western context. Previous studies from South Africa mentioned the notion of an 'interdependent' living, *Ubuntu* (Moodley et al., 2018; Van Breda & Dickens, 2016), in which people become adult human beings through advancing supportive social relationships with others. Thus, reconsidering the cultural dimension of "independent living" in Asia might differ from the Western or Global North counterparts.

Although no socio-economic analysis exists in the studies reviewed, mentioning previous literature of the "economic" benefits in allocating provision into the care-leaving system is worthwhile. For example, a cost and benefit analysis from Australia calculated that the savings over forty years for a cohort of care-experienced young people amount to $66.9 million by extending care nationally until 21 years, through achieving gains in education, homelessness, hospitalization rates, involvement in the criminal justice system, rates of mental illness, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancies (Home Stretch, 2018; Mendes, 2022).

Implications for future research, policies, and practices in Leaving Care and Aftercare Support in Indonesia.

By taking Pinkerton's (2011) social-ecological support of care-leaving lens, a more comprehensive support system is needed to advance positive outcomes for care leavers in Indonesia. From studies reviewed, throughout the Asian jurisdiction, care leavers received varied and often inadequate levels of support due to various limitations of these jurisdictions (i.e. human resources limitation, funding, no legislation), while there is also a dire need to enhance holistic support for care leavers in Asia (Modi et al., 2020; Radityaputra et al., 2024).

This evidence of limited support and unmet needs from care leavers across the Asian continent may serve as a strong argument for the introduction of formal aftercare support by Indonesian government stakeholders, which is also mandated by the UN Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children (United Nations General Assembly, 2010). Adding cultural dimensions may also be a potential idea for arranging a "good" preparation and transition plan after leaving care.

Innovative practices, such as Mentorship programs in India, may be transferable to a limited social welfare setting like Indonesia. Long-term volunteers, known as mentor parents, play a crucial role in developing young people's sense of trust, belonging, and connection to the community, ultimately empowering them and fostering satisfaction through the mentor–mentee relationship.

Future exploratory research from the lived experience of care leavers

in Indonesia and those who support them will provide substantial lived expertise to build the argument for formal leaving care and aftercare support in Indonesia. Ensuring that there is a policy adoption plan from the government will further strengthen support for care leavers (Mendes, 2017). Noticeably, most studies in the scoping study are qualitative research with small sample sizes or cross-sectional quantitative studies. There is a need for future research, especially in the Global South context, encompassing longitudinal studies such as that conducted in South Africa, that rigorously measured the outcomes of young people transitioning from OOHC within the Girls and Boys Town South Africa project (Van Breda & Dickens, 2016).

Addressing the challenges from the global South and Asian context may also provide valuable social and cultural dimensions in building the social-ecological support of care-leaving in Indonesia. Challenges from under-resourced countries may also help address Indonesia's potential service gap. At the same time, "evidence-based" practices from established studies might also be helpful for Indonesian policies and practices to provide better outcomes for care leavers in the future.

A recent policy review on Indonesian leaving care policies has clearly stated that these young people may have a strong argument for formal care-leaving provisions such as negative pre-care and in-care circumstances to address their potentially traumatic experiences and further challenges in transitioning to adulthood. It may enhance Indonesia's social welfare and child protection system to fill this vast significant gap and provide formal support for care leavers who are currently unidentified formally in the policy-making in Indonesia (Radityaputra et al., 2024). A policy translation will be transformed into reforms of the Child Protection Law, National Standards of Care for Child Welfare Institutions, and other related alternative care laws and regulations. This scoping study aimed to influence government bodies and lead sectors in child protection and alternative care in Indonesia, including the Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection and the Ministry of Social Affairs. There are also leading NGOs, such as SOS Children's Villages Indonesia, Save the Children Indonesia, and UNICEF Indonesia, as well as national forums and alternative care alliances, that can serve as strategic partners for these reforms.

It is also interesting to find out in the future how the distinction between OOHC settings in the Asian context relative to the Western context and how social and cultural factors might be advantageous or disadvantageous to care leavers between different OOHC settings. Several Asian countries might rely heavily on informal (or formal) kinship care (Agastya et al., 2024; Blanco & Panao, 2019; Shang & Fisher, 2019; Westerlaken, 2024).

5. Limitations

The authors have excluded grey literature from this study to get more 'quality' in capturing the literature in the Asian care-leaving context. However, the authors recognize that an abundance of non-peer-reviewed literature on the internet may discuss young people leaving OOHC in the Asian context. Child protection and OOHC support in the global South and Asian context may be primarily implemented by international NGOs with valuable evaluation and study reports about care leavers. This literature gap may be addressed in the future by systematic searches of care-leaving grey literature on the internet to achieve more "breadth" of the literature to help the first author "dive in" within the Indonesian context. For example, there is an abundance of grey literature from global alternative care networks (Better Care Network, 2025). A follow-up review will examine the policies and practices of leaving care support for young people leaving OOHC in Asia, based on grey literature.

Due to time limitations, the authors used only five electronic databases and did not perform a hand search of key peer-reviewed articles or other relevant sources. The authors may have missed some key articles in the literature search that may influence the review results (i.e., from Google Search). The literature search also may have missed significant

articles from non-English literature. However, this gap may be filled by the future establishment of a Community of Practice across the Asian region to exchange valuable knowledge and insights to enhance the outcomes of care leavers.

Another limitation of this study is that only one author (the first author) drafted the abstract and completed the title screening and full-text review, although the second author assisted in the duplicate screening process to provide more rigor. Previous Leaving Care scholars have also highlighted the dearth of literature on care leavers from the global South (Asia, Africa, South America, and Oceania) (Van Breda et al., 2020).

6. Conclusion

Literature and studies about support for young people transitioning from OOHC are relatively new and scarce in Asia. However, emerging studies in Asia have risen to provide insights into care leavers' experiences, and the varied levels of support for them. As an Indonesian researcher, the first author has identified useful insights to fill the knowledge gap and support practices for more "evidence-based" information by looking at countries that potentially have similar social, cultural, and geographical closeness with Indonesia. Peer-reviewed studies and literature from Asian countries presented challenges reflecting the unique policy and practice context, but also potential best practices that might help care leavers and advance positive outcomes.

However, the scarcity of peer-reviewed studies in this geographical region suggests the need for additional examination of grey literature that might provide other further insights from countries not included in this scoping study. The abundance of alternative care literature within the leaving care space might assist the first author in reviewing potential grey literature on Leaving Care and Aftercare Support issues in Asia, adding more insights into establishing policies and practices to support young people leaving care in Indonesia.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix

Table A1
Primary studies and peer-reviewed articles of characteristics and findings on leaving care policies, practices, and support.

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
Mishra & Sondhi	2021	To examine pathways orphaned adolescents within residential care to positively adapt.	India	Institutional or residential care	orphaned young people, 14 to 23 years	Qualitative study; key informant interview; life story interview format	(1) Flourishing positive outcomes; (2) Develop resilience aftercare (3) alumni being supported by their institutions until higher education for young people age 19 to 23 (five males)
Madhavan et al	2022	(1) To capture Udayan Care's mentorship framework; (2) to examine its scope, impact, outcomes, and the challenges faces, and makes further suggestions.	India	Residential care	21 mentor parents, 40 to 75 years	Qualitative study, semi-structured interview	(1) Promising positive outcomes of long term mentoring relationship, including aftercare role as mentor for care leavers independent living; (2) Strong attachment between mentor and mentee forms a long-term relationship after they leave care;
Mishra & Dutta	2024	To explain the post-care curriculum for enhancing social reintegration youth in care.	City of Pune, India	Institutional or residential care	17 CCIs (youth leaving care (n = 31); Care Leavers (n = 11); caregivers (n = 12)); no age range	Qualitative exploratory study, in-depth interviews	Related care leaving support in the background section: (1) Central and State government are required, by the law, to make sure the effective reintegration of care leavers and set budget allocation; (2) From the Udayan Care study, (a) numbers of aftercare homes are disproportionately low, a quarter of care leavers did not receive any post-care

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							support, (b) majority of care leavers are unaware of such services, a lack of consistent implementation and ambiguity roles of the state no one take any clear accountability (c) Many child care institutions (CCI) are unregistered, thus making care leavers not entitled for aftercare services; FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY: (1) availability of transitional support from OOHC (2) Identified areas for improvement; (3) perceived challenges future life in relation to leaving care; (4) curriculum for mentorship related to education and career guidance
Modi et al	2014	To explore the Udayan Ghars (a residential care model delivered by the Udayan Care)	India	Residential care	2 young people (age 21 female and age 16 male)	Qualitative case study. Observations	(1) 3 Aftercare facilities owned by the Udayan Care with 'holistic group care model'; (2) Mentorship related to aftercare support; (3) Case of of two young people, one of them is care leaver; (4) the positive influence of Mentor Parents and constant support to female care leaver potentially resulting in positive outcomes for her
Liu et al	2022	To initially describe youth leaving institutional care in China.	China	Residential or institutional care	65 youth in one state residential state care (age 18 to 26 years, 49 female and 16 male, 4.7% have visual disability, 1.6% have physical disability)	Quantitative, survey	(1) independent living skills of youth transitioning from state residential care. (2) emotional wellbeing, stressors, and coping mechanisms of care leavers. (3) Risky behaviors (4) social welfare institutions and friends as main social support
Dutta	2018	(a) To measure the level of preparation for social reintegration among the girls in care by capturing their perceptions about their own abilities; (b) To identify the different factors associated with their level of preparation for social reintegration	India	Residential or institutional care	100 female young people in 8 residential care homes and will leave within two years;	Quantitative, survey interview using measurement scales	(1) among 8 institutions, four of them have an aftercare facility and support girls until 21 years; (2) the girls were perceived better preparation in life skills and access to housing than in other areas; (3) Low self-confidence; (4) several potential factors to determine the preparation for social reintegration such as (age, education, and self esteem (micro level)),(support system availability and characteristics of residential care home and its available services (mezzo level)), (support

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							and involvement of the State (macro level)); (1) 50 percent of care leaver girls able to pursue higher education;
Dutta	2017	To describe the experiences of care leavers after leaving residential care home	Mumbai & Kolkata, India	Residential or institutional care	100 female care leavers; 10 different residential homes; 2 government-owned & 8 NGOs; average age 22.16 years; average in residential care 7.42 years	Quantitative, survey (structured interview)	(2) Only one-third of the participants receive social support from organizations; (3) Determinants of care leaver's after leaving care such as educational qualification, leaving care age, preparation to leave care, availability of social support and self-esteem
Dutta	2016	To unpack leaving care policies and legislations of distinct organizations in India	Mumbai & Kolkata, India	Residential or insitutional care	Unclear sociodemographic of participants. Participants taken from 20 organisations (Child Care Home (60%), Aftercare Home (10%), and organisations which had both childcare home and aftercare home (30%).	Indepth qualitative interviews; secondary data	(1) Young people had access to basic services in OOHC homes (i.e., formal & non-formal education, basic life skill education. (2) 78 percent of organisations had unclear policies for transition and after-care support. (3) There is an effort of family reunification due to most young people in care still have at least one parent or guardian. (4) Transitional support occurred only in aftercare homes to orphans, neglected youth, and those with insecure family environment. (5) Follow up support after release was minimal and unregulated in most of institutions and aftercare homes. (6) Failure to reintegration due to stigma as youth coming from institutions, care leavers with disabilities have more challenges, inadequate social support. (7) The author developed a social reintegration framework for intervention to enhance the leaving care process in institutional care.
Meshelova et al	2024	To analyze the current model of social preparedness of young people who lost parental care and brought up in orphanages in Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan	Residential care (orphanages)	255 participants from orphanages for the quantitative study; 15 to above 48 years. Mean 21.9 years. 10 participants for the qualitative study.	Quantitative surveys and qualitative semi-structured interviews (mix)	Care leavers need: (1) Majority of orphanage graduates needs advices, legally entitled aid in obtaining housing (69%) (2) Significant part needs clarification and legally entitled aid on the problem of receiving social assistance (32%) (3) Almost every fifth orphanage graduate needs clarification and legal assistance on the issue of inheritance (19%). (4) The role of social work to enhance accessibility for orphanage graduates to their legal rights (i.e.,

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							housing, social assistance, and inheritance).
Mishra & Sondhi	2023	To describe adolescents resilience in and from care in India	India	Residential care	14 to 19 years (young people in resi care) and service providers age 28 to 50 years	Qualitative focus groups and key informant interviews (semi-structured)	(1) Caretakers helped shape adolescent's future by providing academic support and mentorship;
Yin	2024	To explore subnational authorities in China in supporting care leavers through mapping and examining their published policies	China	Residential care, kinship care, foster care, adoption	2896 records reviewed, and 22 policies fit inclusion criteria and analyze	Scoping review (arksey & Omalley, 2005)	(1) China subnational policies including support for housing and employment are at the top of the list (2) Policy responses and access are limited (3) Policymakers in China need to enhance policies to have more comprehensive and integrated support. (4) The need for national care-leaving policy
Modi et al	2020	To capture the situation of care leavers and aftercare approaches in India; To highlight leaving care policy gaps; and to suggest a workable pathway forward for care experienced young people	Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, & Rajasthan (India)	Residential care	435 care leavers (above 18 years)	Mix method (structured interviews, indepth interviews, semi-structured interviews, open-ended interviews, focus groups)	(1) challenges such as housing, identity documents, education, work & life skill, work opportunities, and emotional support: (2) Inadequate aftercare support during transition to adulthood leads to vulnerabilities. (3) Continuous aftercare support is required to develop independent living skills and enable care leavers reintegration into mainstream society (4) The researchers developed 8 domains of support deemed essential for successful transition called 'sphere of aftercare' (5) there is a lack of transitional planning in OOHC and understanding of holistic leaving care needs. (6) lack of stakeholder's roles, data management, and monitoring mechanisms. (7) Researchers suggesting policy reforms, detailed aftercare support practices.
Mishra & Sondhi	2018	The role of residential care in promoting resilience among orphaned adolescents	India	Residential or institutional care	20 participants (12 to 19 years; 12 females & 8 males; 5 orphanages)	Qualitative. Focus groups. Life story narratives	(1) Talks about resilience and expectations for better life, indirect support or some form of preparation for adult life (2) Participants were prepared for future life (i.e, basic mannerisms, follow a structured time and daily activities, avoiding risky behaviors) (3) 'Active career guidance' from the institutions about possibility of career pathways in the future, while simultaneously assist these young people to get access to relevant vocational training and a suitable place to work. (4) Support for higher education, although

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							informal, plays a major role to reduce their feelings of insecurity and sheltered after turning 18, economically assisting these young people to complete post-secondary education, and securing a job. (5) 'Other growth fostering factors such as the opportunity to have good model of positive behaviors from older peers and warden, motivational enhancing agents such as volunteers, school teachers, older peers instilling positive self-beliefs; 'enhanced exposures' in institutions from the availability of books and films
Lee & Lee	2024	To explore career identity and self-concept of young people leaving care.	South Korea	Residential care	220 young people above 18 years	Quantitative. Survey. Using a dataset from 2021 Independent Living Settlement Compulsory Education for Adolescents Leaving Residential OOHC Survey conducted in Gyeonggi Province, Korea.	(1) Young people with higher career identity are more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy. (2) Groups of young people who are categorized Self-Doubt, still have interest in exploring and preparing their career. (3) Youth higher levels of mental have associated with higher self-esteem and self-efficacy. (4) Integrated intervention approach is essential for care leavers building confidence while have a clear career path. (5) The Korean Government have provided a few support plans for care leavers (e.g., compulsory education, financial support for education, consultation, improving network, information materials and counselling about independent living).
Yin	2024	To explore risk determinants living in institutional care and perspectives of care leavers in China	China	Residential care, kinship care, foster care.	34 young people	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews	(1) Risks factors range: care identity, absent of parents, poor living situation, poor caregiving, unreasonable household duties, no support for eudcation, unstable environment, and physical disabilities; (2) These risk factors contributes to poor outcomes during transition; (3) Institutional care is sub-optimal youth in need of care. (4) Practical implications for policymakers and practitioners for improvement (i.e., family-like practices

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							within residential care, extended care until 21, adjusting caregiver competencies, caregiver-to-children ratios)
Keshri	2023	To explore orphaned care leavers' experience about leaving care in India.	India	Residential or institutional care	13 care leavers	Qualitative. In depth interviews	Suggestions from findings: (1) Extending care (2) A speacialize program for leaving care (3) youth involvement in transitional planning. (4) Access to available aftercare services.
Blanco & Panao	2019	To explore the impacts of socio-historical-economical situation on children and youth wellbeing.	Philippines	Residential care, kinship care, foster care.	N/A	Literature review (the author called integrative review) compiled from EBSCO and Taylor & Francis from Jan 1973 to Jan 2017	(1) The authors document Philippines' Presidential Decree No 603, the Child and Youth Welfare Code, applies to person under 21. It documents the specific rights (under 21) are entitled to. (2) Monthly subsidy for foster care children (under 18 and possibility to 21 years(assuming received by person under 21) and a health support for the foster parents. (3) Foster parents entitled to support care services. (4) Philippines' 2012 Foster Care Act adding that a child refers to 18 and over 18 to unable fully take care or protect oneself. (5) Narratives about grandparents providing kinship care or as caregivers.
Ibrahim & Howe	2011	To explore aftercare experiences of care leavers in Jordan.	Jordan	Residential care	42 care leavers (21 female & 21 male)	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups	(1) care leavers outcomes: struggle to continue education, get housing or periodically homeless, low employment opportunities, and struggling financially. (2) Cultural influences of has certain impact to many care leavers. (3) Reason for entering care and lack of family leads to stigma. (4) Efforts to hide post-care identity, proved to be difficult and stressful. (5) the challenges they faced are worsened due to local culture, although they often received exceptional informal support during their transition to adulthood. (6) Suggest policy and practise change based on inclusive aspects of the cultural values, and family life (i.e. kindness to strangers). (7) Marriage arranged by their care home as part of discharge plan, for female youth, a common practice in conventional Arabic communities

Table A1 (*continued*)

Authors	Year of Publication	Study aim	Location of the Study	OOHC Settings	Participants	Methods used	Relevant findings to care leaver's policies, practices, and support
							(8) Care leavers felt they are an 'easy prey', people might take advantage of them due to lack of family protection and support. (9) Effort to hide their identity as care leavers to prevent stigma from others (i.e., getting single accommodation). (9) Potential psychological impact of 'lying" to others their identity. (10) Potential support system to relate and relax are other care leavers. (11) Adding a cultural dimension to understand post-care experience.
Nho, et al.	2017	to examine the positive transition experiences of young people from OOHC in South Kore	South Korea	Residential care	5 care leavers range 20 to 30 years old, complete post-secondary education, work in stable employment for three years	Qualitative case study. Semi-structured interviews.	(a) Young people in Korea leaving child welfare system at 18 years but can be extended to age 24 if enrolled in higher education or work training. (b) Korea has a independent living support program for OOHC children in institutions. (c) Two main themes identified: Social support and individual factors.
Shang & Fisher	2019	To examine the outcomes for children living with informal adoptive families (mix with institutional care) by comparing these children with those lived in institutional care	China	Residential care & formal non kinship foster care	12 young people from Taiyuan Child Welfare Insitution who some had informal care during childhood (4 with mixed informal non kinship families & institutions) (16 to 40 years)	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, & observation	(1) Family-like environment good for youth's wellbeing during transition to adulthood. (2) Formalized state support or state guardianship responsibility for families (3) Potential implications to consider this options to promote the family system (4) There is an impact of this practice to transition to adulthood: social inclusion, living conditions and identity, education, employment, economic security, social relations, marriage. There are also challenges with this population.
Keshri	2021	To describe care leavers challenges in their adaptation for independent living in India after leaving OOHC institutions.	Mumbai, India	Residential or institutional care	13 orphan care leavers	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews	(1) Perception that independent living are both opportunity and challenge (2) Challenges include navigate work while finding accommodation, managing household, and getting official identity. (3) care leavers have positive aspirations and have hopes for the future and strong care leavers informal network. (4) Care background leads to social exclusion (5) the author recommends change to the independent living approach to promote better independent living experience.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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