Variations in Objective and Perceived Financial Wellbeing among Family Daycare Providers

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Introduction

Background

- At a given point in time 6 to 16% children are in family childcare (Porter et al., 2010), and one-quarter of children at some point during their first five years (Morrissey, 2007).
- Challenges faced by providers in family childcare
  - long hours
  - isolation
  - difficult relationships with children’s families
  - difficulty of running a licensed business in one’s home

Research Questions

- Is the Family Resource Management Model (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988; Goldsmith, 2010) useful to assess financial wellbeing among family daycare provider?
- Who are family childcare providers?
- What differentiates family childcare providers who perceive their situation positively despite lower objective financial wellbeing?

Methods

Procedures: Initial Interviews

- The eco-cultural family interview (The Ecocultural Scale Project, 1997)
- Adopts an ethnographic style that is semi-structured and comparable to a conversation.
- Daily routines are a topic that people can easily talk about, and describing what, how, and why daily activities are structured as they are provides a window into individuals’ values, beliefs, resources, and constraints.

Examples of Prompts

- Tell me about a typical day from the moment that you wake up to the moment that you go to bed at night.
- Think back to the last really great day (bad day) that you had, what was that like for you?
- How do you go about your economic situation?

Procedures: Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Status</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly business revenue</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly business expenses</td>
<td>$325</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly earning (revenue-expenses)</td>
<td>$675</td>
<td>$125</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual household income</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$16,800</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of Strong Family Support

- About her children’s support, “They love it… my daughter enjoys it, and she knows how to run a daycare by herself.”

Examples of Prompts

- “I was always scared about when these kids leave, if I couldn’t replace them, what should I do with my mortgage? What should I do with my son’s medical school’s tuition? … It’s a lot of scary things. It’s not secure job actually.”

Example of Low Time Availability

- “I want to close it for a week, go away, and then, I don’t have to worry about what is going on in the childcare. That’s the hardest part.”

Analysis: Code Development

Step 1: Informed by the Family Resource Management model (Deacon & Firebaugh, 1988) and the interview structure, we proposed various financial well-being categories related to family and home business resource management for open coding.

Step 2: After reading the six providers’ interview transcripts, we collapsed them into four central themes: income status, family support, community resources, and time.

Step 3: For each theme, we assessed the objective and perceived wellbeing.

Results

High Objective and Perceived Financial Wellbeing

- High weekly profits
- Valuable support from their own family members
- Used time effectively and had a sense of control over lives
- Enjoy what they were doing

Examples of Strong Family Support

- About her children’s support, “They love it… my daughter enjoys it, and she knows how to run a daycare by herself.”

Low Objective and Perceived Financial Wellbeing

- Low weekly profits from the business and around median household income
- Family members generally supportive
- Resources available from community agencies useful
- Low objective and perceived time availability

Examples of Prompts

- “I was always scared about when these kids leave, if I couldn’t replace them, what should I do with my mortgage? What should I do with my son’s medical school’s tuition? … It’s a lot of scary things. It’s not secure job actually.”

Example of Low Time Availability

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Discussion

Conclusions

- Unlike previous studies that captured perceive financial wellbeing using a simple quantitative measure of perceived financial strain or material deprivation (Arber, Penn, & Meadows, 2014), the current study explored a variety of aspects of perceived financial wellbeing among the providers.
- Also, the determinants of the providers’ perceived financial wellbeing were identified and examined.
- Providers’ perceptions of income status were highly relative, and thus, objective and perceived income status were not always consistent:
  - Relative to previous financial situations.
  - Changes in enrollment
  - Changes in husbands’ employment status
- High level of objective and subjective support from providers’ family members offered helped the providers feel appreciative of their professional choices despite the many challenges.
- Community resources, such as neighborhood safety, convenience, and the services community agencies provide, including networking opportunities with other providers, all made the providers feel that they were a part of a larger community that could be either supportive or threatening.
- Time availability throughout the day, when they were not serving daycare children, on weekends, and the possibility of taking vacations, play a significant role.

Next Steps

Evaluate all 24 interviews to solidify our findings.

Acknowledgements

- Child Care Resource Center for their help in recruiting participants
- Members of the Infancy and Early Childhood lab (Director=Tonyan)
- NIMH Research Infrastructure in Minority Institutions (RMI) from the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, P20 MD003938,
- Department of Psychology, and Office of the Provost of California State University Northridge

References