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Pickering, Kathleen A. *Child Care Job Satisfaction and Education*

Abstract

This research was completed to determine if there is a link between the level of education of the child care worker and job satisfaction in the Early Childhood Education field. To determine if there is a link, a child care job satisfaction survey was distributed to students who work in the field and are enrolled in Early Childhood Education program classes at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The survey results revealed that there was a slight correlation between the level of education and the job satisfaction of the individual. The level of job satisfaction went up slightly as the education level of the individual went up. This research also found that when asked about the more intrinsic elements of job satisfaction, the results were higher than when asked if the participant was satisfied with their job as an early childhood professional. It is important that child care job satisfaction and ways to improve it are taken into consideration as we move forward in this ever changing field. The benefits of high job satisfaction in the child care field are numerous. These benefits are critical for children, their families and society overall.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Quality child care is crucial to our present and future society. Seventy percent of all children in Wisconsin are cared for by someone other than the child's parent (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2010). Studies have shown that good quality early education can have a lasting effect on a child's life.

Childcare teacher job satisfaction contributes to quality child care in a very substantial way. When a teacher has high job satisfaction, they stay in their jobs longer, they are better teachers of young children, and they provide developmentally appropriate activities and environments. The relationships they form with children are also stronger and more nurturing. Teachers are more willing to be open to change and education and they tend to stay in the field for a longer period of time. The turnover rate of staff in an early childhood education program can drastically affect the quality of care for young children (Whitebrook, Sakai, Gerber, & Howes, 2001).

When child care teachers do not have a high job satisfaction, they are more apt to leave the field of early childhood education. The turnover rate in the state of Wisconsin is 21% annually (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2010). This turnover rate is significantly less than the previous study of the early childhood workforce study done in 2006, which was 35 to 45%. The turnover rate has a very significant effect on the quality of care children receive. When children do not have a consistent primary caregiver in the first years of their life, it can affect their attachment to adults, brain development, and emotional development. The lack of consistent care also has negative effects on children, families, and the child care programs themselves. This lack of consistent care can also have long lasting effects. Children who had closer relationships with their child care teachers had fewer problem behaviors and better

thinking skills. Warm teacher-child relationships also had some influence on children's language and math skills through grade 2 (Jacobson, 1999). When an experienced, trained teacher leaves the field, the replacement is usually a teacher that has little experience, and new relationships need to be formed.

In the state of Wisconsin, a person can work as an assistant teacher in an early childhood program with the completion of a 40 hour course. To qualify as a teacher a person would need 80 hours of course work and 120 half days of experience in the classroom. A teacher that is prepared in the classroom and is educated in child development, classroom management, and teaching methods, will have more success in the classroom and that, in turn, would lead to higher job satisfaction. A person, with the amount of education the state of Wisconsin requires, may not feel confident in their abilities to provide quality care for children in a classroom setting. Without training and education, a teacher may not provide a developmentally appropriate environment or activities and may not use best practices when handling children's behavior and in building relationships with children. This, in turn, could lead to frustration in the classroom, which would lead to poor job satisfaction.

The goal of this research paper is to determine if there is a link between the level of education of the child care worker and job satisfaction in the Early Childhood Education field. To determine if there is a link, a child care job satisfaction survey will be distributed to students who work in the field and are enrolled in Early Childhood Education program classes at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. If we can determine what the variables to high child care teacher job satisfaction are, we can help to change public policy to provide children with high quality, consistent child care, and we can provide teachers with a rewarding and satisfying career.

Definition of Terms

DPI Certified. Department of Public Instruction, a teacher with a state license to teach would be DPI certified.

T.E.A.C.H. Teacher Education and Compensation Helps is an early childhood education scholarship program for child care providers who work in the field.

Chapter II: Literature Review

When researching the topic of child care job satisfaction and its relation to the education level of a teacher I found five commonalities that were frequently mentioned. The level of education and how that affected quality care, the intrinsic rewards of the child care profession and how that related to job satisfaction, job satisfaction in general, a child care job satisfaction survey and pay. I have divided these topics into subcategories in my literary review.

Level of Education and Quality Care

There have been many research studies that show there is a correlation between the education of an early childhood teacher and the quality of care given to the children they work with. Other research has shown that there is not a significant link between the teacher's formal education and the quality of care that is provided in the early childhood classroom.

Research studies have shown that the education of an early childhood professional is an important component of high quality early childhood programs (Caroline Abecedarian Project, 1999). In a study done by the National Center for Early Development and Learning (2007), the findings concluded the outcomes in an early childhood classroom are more positive when teachers had higher levels of education, more notably a bachelor's degree, than a teacher with less formal education (Kelley & Camilli, 2007).

Studies have shown that a teacher's education level has a direct effect on the quality of care a child receives. The biggest predictor for a teacher's ability to provide developmentally appropriate activities and positive interactions with children is the amount of higher education the teacher has (Center for Child Care Workforce, 1990). Teachers with higher education were more likely to be nurturing, and reinforce early literacy skills and changes that increase learning for children (National Child Care Resource and Referral, 2005). According to Wisconsin's

Child Care State licensing rules, to become a child care teacher, the minimum requirement is to take two 40 hour courses, which include “Introduction to the Child Care Profession” and “Skills and Strategies of the Child Care Teacher.” Both class curriculums are written by the State of Wisconsin. In the Child Care Professionals in 2010 study, it stated about half of the respondents, child care center employees and family child care providers, earned a two or four year degree or higher. Less than 40% of preschool teachers in the United States have a four year degrees and 62% do not have any early childhood education training (Early & Winton, 2001).

Teachers with Bachelor’s degrees or more were more sensitive, less harsh and detached, and more appropriate with infants, toddlers and preschoolers than were teachers with less formal education. This suggests that not only more education, but college degrees, make a difference in teaching behavior (Whitebrook, Howes, & Philips, 1988). More recent data collected has shown conflicting results to the above research. The Child Development Publication collected data using seven studies of four year old preschool, early childhood programs. The results indicated there was no significant relationship between teacher education and the quality of care provided in the classroom. One of the studies found that teachers with higher education provided a lower quality of care (Early, 2007; Pianta, 2005).

An early childhood scholarship program, Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.), is designed to help those currently working with children to meet their professional development goals through credit-based education. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship helps to connect the education, pay, and commitment to improving the quality of early childhood programs. The scholarship is available through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association. The recipient of the scholarship is sponsored through the child care program they work for. The program and the recipient pay a portion of the tuition but the scholarship pays the main share.

When the contract (scholarship agreement) is complete, the recipient needs to commit to the child care program for the time written in their contract, and the program agrees to increase the recipients pay or offer a bonus. Participants of this scholarship program have an 11% turnover rate (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2010). This lower rate of turnover may reveal the higher the education of a child care teacher, the less the turnover rate will be. This lower rate may also explain the more education the teacher receives, the higher job satisfaction the teacher has, and it is easier to keep him/her in the field. The pay increase, bonus, and the time commitment that is in place for scholarship recipient, may be another reason for the lower turnover. In the Status of Wisconsin's Child Care Workforce Study it was determined that 90% of TEACH scholarship recipients agreed that the scholarship encouraged them to stay in the field.

Quality jobs in early childhood education lead to quality early childhood education programs. The Local Child Care Wage Initiative in the City of Madison and Dane County, Wisconsin showed that annual bonuses, amount of education and training, and the long term commitment to the early childhood education position made a positive difference in the quality of care that was given to children in early childhood education programs (Center on Wisconsin Strategy, 2003).

Job Satisfaction

In 2001, a study was done to assess characteristics of the child care work force. In this study, they found that the majority of assistant child care teachers and child care teachers would not change jobs, despite the low wages, lack of benefits and high turnover. Fifty percent of assistant teachers and teachers said they would not change their jobs for any other job and could not think of another job they would change to. Twelve percent said they would quit their job for

another that paid the same. Teachers with less job experience felt neutral about their jobs, where those with more years of experience either felt negative or positive about their jobs (Adams, Roach, Riley, & Edie, 2001). This same study found a notable difference in job satisfaction of teachers that felt positive about their jobs and those who felt negative. This difference was the perceived difficulty of the group of children they worked with. The study found that the more difficult the group of children, the less job satisfaction the teacher had. This may account for the fact that working with children with challenging behaviors and emotional issues may be stressful and frustrating if you are not educated or have the experience needed to guide the group of children in an appropriate, successful way. This was only significant with teachers that had more than a high school diploma. The study only represented programs that provided subsidized care, which helps low income families pay for the child care provided. Programs that did not provide this care were not included in the study.

A study that was conducted in 1988 (Riley & Rodgers) suggested the higher level of education of child care workers, the less job satisfaction they experienced. This may be due to the fact that teachers with a higher level of education expect better pay, better benefits, and working conditions. Teachers with a higher level of education may perceive themselves as child care teachers with a lower status level in society. Typically, child care teachers have lower pay and are offered minimal benefits, compared to Department of Public Instruction certified teachers with the same education. In 2009, the child care worker made an average of \$19,080 a year in the state of Wisconsin, with minimal benefits (sick, vacation, retirement), while a DPI certified elementary teacher made an average of \$51,140.00, with full benefits and a nine month contract (US Labor of Statistics, 2012). Though this study mentioned previously is 20 years old, there is still some validity to these findings. Pay, benefits, and turnover rates have not changed

substantially for early childhood educators since then. When inflation is taken into account, the average wage in 2010 was \$1.60 per hour higher than in 1980 (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2010). In 1980, the average wage for an elementary teacher in the United States was \$15,569, and in 2007, the average wage was \$50,224. When taking inflation into account, an elementary teacher in 2007 made \$5.95 an hour more than in 1980 (National Education Association, 2007). The perceived status in society of a child care teacher may have changed since this study was conducted. Since 1988, there are more parents who have children in child care, and I suspect they are more educated about quality care, teacher qualifications, and the importance of good quality care for their children. Hopefully, today's child care teachers feel that society as a whole, perceives their job with more respect and admiration.

In the 2010 workforce study, early childhood education professionals in the state of Wisconsin were generally satisfied with their jobs. When asked how satisfied they were with their current position, 65.4% said very satisfied, 30.6% said somewhat satisfied, 3.7% stated they were somewhat dissatisfied and .3% said not satisfied at all. In this same study, early childhood professionals were asked, if they could change one thing about their job, what would it be? The majority of responses were pay and benefits. The second most popular answer was professional development opportunities. When asked what one thing they were most satisfied with, 49% of respondents stated "the quality of care I can provide." The second most popular answer was "interactions with children."

The 2011 Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement survey of United States employees (society for human resources management) found 83% of United States employees were satisfaction with their job. Findings showed that 41% were very satisfied with their job and 42% showed they were somewhat satisfied with their job. These findings show that child care

workers in Wisconsin have an overall higher job satisfaction than the average American worker. The top five factors that contributed to job satisfaction were job security, organizations financial stability, relationships with supervisors, pay and benefits. Workers who are paid hourly were more apt to state that compensation was very important to their job satisfaction. While most child care teachers are paid hourly this may be a contributing factor to job satisfaction.

Intrinsic Rewards

The National Child Care Staffing Study was conducted in 1988 (Whitebrook, Howes, & Phillips, 1988). In this study, they found that, although there weren't outward rewards (pay, status, benefits) in child care, there were many intrinsic rewards that kept child care teachers in the field. The study found teachers with high job commitment had certain patterns of job satisfaction. Teachers were very satisfied with their job, especially their relations with co-workers, opportunities of autonomy, opportunities that provided challenge, and their working conditions. They received the most satisfaction from participating in the growth and development of children. They were, however, dissatisfied with their pay, benefits, and social status. In this study it appeared that teachers enjoyed the intrinsic rewards, but could not afford to stay in the field. The study also concluded that teachers who saw their jobs as a temporary job were more satisfied than those who viewed it as a career.

In a study done by Shpancer, Dunlap, Melick, Coxe, Sayre, Toto and Spivey (2008), determined the need for lower adult-child ratio's (27%), better pay (16%) and more parental involvement (10%) were changes that would improve the teaching environment. Childcare teachers felt optimistically about their work, such as their enjoyment and love of children, and negatively on pay and working conditions.

In 2010, early childhood educators in Wisconsin stated the top reasons they choose to stay in the field were the care they provided, child interactions, job duties, hours and parental interactions. This suggests that the teacher that has better pay and benefits, and feels respected in his/her job, would stay in the field of early childhood education and those factors would raise job satisfaction.

Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey

The Early Childhood Job Satisfaction Survey (ECJSS) was developed in 1988 by Jorde-Bloom. This survey was used to assess early childhood educator's job satisfaction in five areas: pay and opportunities of promotion, child care work, working conditions, relationships with co-workers and relationships with supervisors. When using this tool, Jorde-Bloom found job satisfaction in early childhood education occurs when existing conditions of the workplace match the expected conditions of the child care worker. They did not find specific criteria or conditions that led to child care job satisfaction but emphasized more on the child care workers personality and how that fit with the work environment. This is known as the "person-environment fit". The "person-environment fit" will be positive if the person's expectations of the job match the actual job itself.

Pay, benefits and opportunities or promotion were the second source of job satisfaction among child care workers (Jorde-Bloom, 1988). This same study found teachers have a high job satisfaction due to the relationships with children and the rewarding aspect of working with children. The Modigliani study found that 95% of child care professionals enjoyed their job working with children (Modigliani, 1988).

Signs of low job satisfaction among child care professionals included frequent absenteeism, changes in productivity, lack of follow through in routines, disorganized

classrooms, and defensive responses to peers, coworkers, parents and supervisors (Albrecht, 1989). Low job satisfaction of a child care professional can have a negative effect on children if these signs are continual.

Pay

The pay for childcare teachers is considerably low, with the average rate of pay at \$8.66 an hour. People who work in the field of child care are among the lowest paid individuals in any profession in the United States (Nelson, 2000). In the child care field it is more difficult to recruit and retain qualified, high quality staff, when wages are at the federal poverty level. Higher wages are related to lower staff turnover, which in turn relates to higher job satisfaction and quality of child care (Adams, Durant, & Edie, 2003). A study that was done in 1994, called “Valuable Work, Minimal Rewards,” asked teachers to rank the factors that would most likely keep them in their jobs. They ranked better pay and benefits as the first and second factors, and also cited more respect for staff, appreciation by parents, and programs offering preparation time for teaching (Burton, Whitebrook, & Sakai, 1994). In 2009, the child care worker made an average of \$19,080 a year in the state of Wisconsin, with minimal benefits (sick, vacation, retirement), while a DPI certified elementary teacher made an average of \$51,140.00, with full benefits and a nine month contract (US Labor of Statistics, 2012). When inflation is taken into account, the average wage in 2010 was \$1.60 per hour higher than in 1980 (Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, 2010). In 1980, the average wage for an elementary teacher in the United States was \$15,569, and in 2007, the average wage was \$50,224. When taking inflation into account, an elementary teacher in 2007 made \$5.95 an hour more than in 1980 (National Education Association, 2007).

This suggests that the teacher that has better pay and benefits, and feels respected in his/her job, would stay in the field of early childhood education and those factors would raise job satisfaction.

Research on the correlation between the level of education of a child care teacher and job satisfaction has been minimal. There is quite a bit of research on the education of an early childhood education professional and how that relates to quality care. Research has found there is a strong correlation between job satisfaction and the quality of care a child receive. When a teacher is prepared in the classroom and is educated in child development, classroom management, and teaching methods, they will have more success in the classroom and that, in turn, will lead to higher job satisfaction.

Chapter III: Methodology

To determine if there is a link between job satisfaction and the level of education of the child care worker, a child care job satisfaction survey was distributed to students who work in the field as teachers, assistant teachers, directors or administrators, and are enrolled in Early Childhood Education program classes at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. Northeast Wisconsin Technical College is located in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It is a community college which is funded mostly by state and local property taxes. The school has open enrollment, everyone who applies is accepted. There are approximately 41,000 learners per year and 85% of those students receive financial aid. Green Bay has a population of approximately 105,000 people. The median income in 2010 was \$42,000, with 15% living under the poverty level. The median income of a NWTC graduate in 2011 was \$36,085.

If a determination can be made on what the variables to high child care teacher job satisfaction are, we can provide children with high quality, consistent child care, and we can provide teachers with a rewarding and satisfying career. This research project is to determine if the education of the teacher is a factor to child care teacher job satisfaction. The education requirements for a child care teacher in most states are minimal, well below the requirements for teachers who are teaching in the public schools. This may be a factor that leads to unprepared, uneducated teachers who may find their jobs working with children frustrating which could lead to low job satisfaction.

To determine if there is a link between the level of education and job satisfaction of the teacher a survey was created. The survey was sent to the University of Wisconsin-Stout IRB board and received full approval. The survey was developed using an online survey service. The 20 question survey was distributed through online and in person, 3 credit early childhood

education program classes at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. A letter of introduction (see Appendix) was provided to all participants explaining the research project, the directions to completing the survey and reassuring participants that all of their answers were anonymous. A link (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8C5SRCC>) was provided for participants to complete the survey. The survey was made available in 32 early childhood classes with approximately 18 students in each class. The majority of students who are taking classes in the early childhood education program at NWTC are Caucasian and female. The ages of the participants in this survey covered all age groups equally (18-25, 21%, 26-36, 26%, 36-45, 27 % and 46 – above, 26%). Fifty-nine percent of the participants worked in a child care center setting, 81% worked full time and almost 50% had over 10 years of experience working in the field. The students were asked to only participate in the survey once and to participate in the survey they needed to be currently working in the field of early childhood education. There could be a number of students who received the survey in more than one class they were enrolled in. The Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Early Childhood Education program is an online program so students are located throughout the state of Wisconsin not just in the northeast region of the state, though a majority do reside in northeast Wisconsin. One hundred child care workers participated in the survey.

The survey included 20 questions with the first eight questions obtaining demographic information (age, age of children you work with, education level, program type, work schedule, job title, years of experience, TEACH scholarship recipient). The next 12 questions were put in a 5 scale Likert format (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The questions were worded in specific ways to determine if the participant felt confident in different aspect of their job in the child care field, if they enjoyed their job in the child care field and if

they felt their education has benefited them as an early childhood professional. A copy of the survey used is included in the appendix.

There are four questions that relate to feeling knowledgeable about different aspects of working in the child care field. These would include child development, developmentally appropriate practices, guiding children's behavior and best practices in the early childhood field. These questions used terms that are very familiar in the early childhood field. If participants are familiar with these terms it might be said that they either have education in the field or have years of good experience and training. There are five questions that relate to job satisfaction. These questions were worded differently to get a true picture of where that satisfaction lies. They include, enjoying your job as a child care professional, enjoy your job working with children, have chosen early childhood education as a career, am satisfied with your job as an early childhood professional and loving your job in early childhood education. There are many aspects of job satisfaction in the early childhood field, working with children, parents, coworkers, job conditions, schedules, etc. These questions may have hit on just a few and may be considered too broad and not specific enough. Lastly, there were three questions about how the participant's felt their education has benefited them as they work in the field of early childhood education. These included, your education has helped you to become more confident in your job, your education has prepared you to be a more effective teacher, and furthering your education would help you to improve your skills as a teacher.

Data analysis was obtained from the online survey service. The result of each question was compiled by the survey service's computer program in percentages and a graph format. The questions can be filtered so that the data of one question could be matched with another question or group of questions. Using this option the data from the question about education level was

filtered with each Likert scale question. All the participants that stated that had entry level training were matched up with the Likert scale questions, etc. These were put into percentage and chart format.

One limitation to the methodology is that the participants surveyed were all taking a course in early childhood education. They were enrolled in college which may alter the results of this research. If participants are enrolled in college credit courses and are working in the field of education already it may be assumed that they enjoy their work because they are investing time and money into professional growth and a career.

Chapter IV: Results

To determine if job satisfaction of an early childhood professional related to the education level of that individual a survey was provided to students who were enrolled in a class in the Early Childhood Education Associate degree program at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The students who work in the early childhood field were asked to complete the survey. The survey was distributed through a link to Survey Monkey and included 20 questions. The first eight questions provided demographic information and the remaining 12 questions used a Likert scale to gain information on job satisfaction and how that relates to the education of the respondent.

Demographic Information

One hundred students who work in the field of early childhood education responded to the anonymous survey. The age distribution of the respondents were considerably equal, 21% were 18-25 years old, 26% were 26-35 years old, 27% were 36-45 years old and 26% were 46 and above. Most of the respondents had over 10 years of experience in the field (48.5%). Most worked full time (81%) and most worked in a child care setting (59%). Ninety three percent (93%) of the participants have indicated that they have chosen the child care profession as a career. Of the respondents who completed the survey, 18% had entry level course, 56% had some college, 11% had an Associate degree, 6% had a Bachelor degree and 1% had a Master's degree.

Job Satisfaction

When taking the survey results as a whole the results indicated that when asked the question if the respondent enjoyed their job working as a child care profession 60% answered they strongly agreed, when asked if they enjoyed their job working with children 73% strongly

agreed and when asked if they loved their job in early childhood education 62% strongly agreed. When asked if they were satisfied with their job as a child care professional 35% strongly agreed while 52% agreed.

Four questions included in the survey relate to confidence and knowledge in different aspects of early childhood education. These aspects helped the researcher have a better understanding of the respondent's skill set in the early childhood classroom and how that relates to job satisfaction. These aspects were guiding children's behavior, developmentally appropriate practice, child development and the use of best practices. The results to these questions showed that most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all four aspects. Both "agreed" and "strongly agreed" were evenly distributed with 45-49% for each.

Three questions on the survey related to the respondents education. Did their education help them to feel more confident in their profession as a teacher (agreed, 32%, strongly agreed 60%), did their education prepare them to become a more effective teacher (agreed 42%, strongly agreed 48%), and will furthering their education help them to improve their skills as a teacher (agreed 34% and strongly agree 60%)? These questions helped the researcher recognize the value the respondent put on education.

Job Satisfaction and Education Level

The survey results were sorted by the education level of the respondent and the results of the survey questions pertaining to job satisfaction. This helped the researcher determine if there was a link between job satisfaction and education level in this study. The results of this survey are calculated in the table below.

Table 1

Job Satisfaction and Education Level

Job Satisfaction Question	Education Level					
	Entry Level Courses (18%) Likert Scale	Credential (8%) Likert Scale	Some College (56%) Likert Scale	Associates Degree (11%) Likert Scale	Bachelor's Degree (6%) Likert Scale	Master's Degree (1%) Likert Scale
I enjoy my job as a child care professional	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0
	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0
	3-0	3-12.5%	3-0	3-0	3-16.7%	3-0
	4-58.8%	4-50%	4-35.7%	4-9.1%	4-33.3%	4-0
	5-41.2%	5-37.5%	5-64.3%	5-90.9%	5-50.0%	5-100%
I am satisfied with my job as a child care professional	1-0	1-0	1-1.8%	1-0	1-16.7%	1-0
	2-5.6%	2-12.5%	2-1.8%	2-0	2-0	2-0
	3-11.1%	3-12.5%	3-8.9%	3-0	3-0	3-0
	4-61.1%	4-62.5%	4-50%	4-45.5%	4-50.0%	4-0
	5-22.2%	5-12.5%	5-37.5%	5-54.5%	5-33.3%	5-100%
I enjoy working with children	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0
	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0
	3-0	3-12.5%	3-0	3-0	3-0	3-0
	4-47.1%	4-25%	4-23.2%	4-9.1%	4-16.7%	4-0
	5-52.9%	5-62.5%	5-76.8%	5-90.9%	5-83.3%	5-100%
I love my job in early childhood education	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-0	1-16.7%	1-0
	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0	2-0
	3-0	3-37.5%	3-7.1%	3-0	3-0	3-0
	4-55.6%	4-25%	4-32.1%	4-27.3%	4-33.3%	4-0
	5-44.4%	5-37.5%	5-60.7%	5-72.7%	5-50.0%	5-100%

The results found that most of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs as early childhood educators. There was a slight increase in job satisfaction of respondents that had an associate degree. There were similar findings in previous studies that are mentioned in the literary review. The data in this chart shows that there is a slight increase in job satisfaction as the education level goes up but then drops off a bit when it gets to the Bachelor's degree level. Research that was done previously determined the same outcome. The data shows that as the training and education of the respondent increased so did their job satisfaction. Most of the respondents indicated that their education was an important aspect of the quality of care they

gave to children and that their education helped them to feel more confident in their job as an early childhood educator.

Chapter V: Discussion

Limitations

The goal of this research paper was to determine if there is a link between the level of education of the child care worker and job satisfaction in the Early Childhood Education field. To determine if the education level of an early childhood educator related to the individuals job satisfaction a Likert scale survey was developed. The survey was distributed to students who were taking at least one 3 credit online class in early childhood education. The students were asked to take the survey only if they were working in the early childhood education field. The survey was a link through Survey Monkey. An introduction letter was put in the announcements in all early childhood education online classes offered at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. One limitation in this research may be that the participants of the survey were all enrolled in college, taking college credit class/es. This may have had an impact on the results because all of the participants have made the decision to further their education with college courses. They have made a financial commitment and time commitment to further their training as an early childhood professional. The participants value education and how it relates to their job as an early childhood educator. This may have an impact on the results because none of the participants would have only had the state required 80 hour noncredit class which would be limited training.

There are many aspects of job satisfaction. Some of them being, job conditions, relationships with coworkers, support from administration, being valued as a member of the staff, benefits, similar ethical and philosophical ideas etc. The survey that was distributed did not take into consideration these different aspects. The survey was a Likert scale survey which

only concentrated on specific aspects of job satisfaction. An open ended questionnaire may have given the researcher better results on the reasons for job satisfaction.

The survey also asked for education level but did not specify if the education was in Early Childhood Education. In the early childhood education field you can have a bachelors or associates degree in any area of study and still teach children. A participant could have had a bachelor's degree or associates degree but may not have been trained in early childhood education.

Results

The survey results revealed that there was a slight correlation between the level of education and the job satisfaction of the individual. The level of job satisfaction went up slightly as the education level of the individual went up. It did peak at the associate degree level and then at the Bachelor's degree level went down. In the research that was done by Riley and Rodgers (1988) this same finding was documented. At the bachelor's degree level most people would expect better pay and benefits, more job status, and better working conditions.

The researcher found that when asked about the more intrinsic elements of job satisfaction, enjoy working with children, love my job, and enjoy my job as an early childhood professional the results were higher than when asked if the participant was satisfied with their job as an early childhood professional. Being satisfied with their job was somewhat lower. This may be due to the conditions of the job, pay, benefits, working conditions, etc. It correlates with the results of research that was done by the National Child Care Staffing Study (1988) and Shpancer, Dunlap, Melick, Coxe, Saynre, Toto, and Spivey (2008) where they found that early childhood educators felt positive about their work such as working with children but felt negatively about pay and working conditions.

This research study found that most participants felt their education helped them feel more prepared as an early childhood educator. Most respondents stated they agreed or strongly agreed that their education prepared them to become a more effective teacher, improved their skills as a teacher and felt more confident as a teacher of young children. The research question for this project questioned if job satisfaction would be higher with early childhood professionals who had more training and education than the state requirement because they felt prepared and had confidence in the different aspects of successfully teaching a group of young children. This data showed that yes this is true.

A very high percentage (85%) in all education levels stated that they agree or strongly agreed that they have chosen early childhood education as a career. The participants in this research project all were enrolled in an early childhood course getting training and education in the field. This may be a factor in how education relates to job satisfaction. Participants believed that education helped them feel more prepared as an early childhood educator which in turn raised job satisfaction which led to choosing early childhood education as a career. The turnover rate in the early childhood field is quite high. High turnover is detrimental to children, families and the program themselves. Research showed that most participants have chosen this field as a career is very encouraging.

Recommendations

This researcher would recommend more qualitative research in what leads to early childhood education job satisfaction. Qualitative research would give the researcher more of an open ended dialogue with participants on their individual job satisfaction. This type of research may give more specifics of job satisfaction and may be more accurate when looking at job satisfaction as a whole. The research on early childhood educator's job satisfaction is minimal

and not up to date. The early childhood field has changed dramatically since past research was complete, teachers' roles and responsibilities have changed and there are higher training and education requirements. The National Association Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation process sets quality standards for early childhood programs. These standards have recently increased the education level of teachers working with children. All teachers need to have a minimum of an associate degree and 75% of teachers in the program need to have a bachelor's degree. Recently the Youngstar program has been initiated in Wisconsin. This is a quality rating system for early childhood programs that are licensed by the state of Wisconsin. The Youngstar program is tied to the reimbursement rate of subsidized care for children. The programs that meet high quality standards have a higher rate of reimbursement. Teacher education and training requirements have been increased. More current and in depth research may give the early childhood field a better understanding of how the increased training and education requirements affect a teacher and his/her job satisfaction. According to this researchers results these requirements would benefit teacher job satisfaction. A more in depth, qualitative study would aid the early childhood field to better determine what helps early childhood educators stay in their jobs, reducing the turnover rate which in turn would result in better quality care for children. This data may help in changing and/or keeping public policy and financial support related to early childhood education.

Conclusion

Early Childhood Education job satisfaction is an important issue for our society. The level of job satisfaction and the education and training of the professional affects children, families, teachers, child care programs and communities. Research has shown that child care teacher's level of education has an impact on the quality of care children receive. In this

research most of the respondent's strongly agreed that their education has made them more confident, felt better prepared as teaches and that their education has improved their skills as an early childhood teacher. Feeling better prepared and confident as a teacher in the classroom has an impact on job satisfaction. Teachers who have higher job satisfaction will stay in their jobs longer which in turn affects everyone mentioned above. Children have the security of a primary caregiver, parents are reassured their child's teacher will be there, child care programs can count on consistent employees and communities can depend on their child care programming. This research and research mentioned in the literary review found that most early childhood teachers loved working with children but they were not satisfied with pay, benefits and working conditions. The intrinsic rewards were high but there are many teachers who cannot afford to stay in the field. In the state of Wisconsin the education requirements of an early childhood teacher has increased. The expectations and responsibilities of a child care teacher have increased. Through Youngstar, Wisconsin's new quality rating system, teachers need to use individual child assessments, adhere to the model learning standards, be evaluated using the environmental rating scale, and get more education and training. Though the child care field is very happy with these changes as it will increase the quality of child care programs there are minimal means for raising a child care teacher's pay.

It is important that child care job satisfaction and ways to improve it are taken into consideration as we move forward in this ever changing field. The benefits of high job satisfaction in the child care field are numerous. These benefits are critical for children, their families and society overall.

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Appendix A: Survey Documents

Introduction to Survey

My name is Kathy Pickering and I am an early childhood instructor at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. I am currently working on my Master's Degree thesis and researching Child Care Job Satisfaction/Education. The following survey will help me complete my research. If you are working in the field of early childhood education currently please complete this survey. Your feedback will be helpful as I collect data on Child Care Job Satisfaction/Education. This survey should only take about 5 minutes of your time. Your answers will be completely anonymous.

In order to progress through this survey, please use the following navigation links:

- Click the Next >> button to continue to the next page.
- Click the Previous >> button to return to the previous page.
- Click the Exit the Survey Early >> button if you need to exit the survey.
- Click the Submit >> button to submit your survey.

If you have any questions, please contact me at kapickering59@gmail.com

1. Your age:

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46- above

2. Age of children you work with:

- Infant/Toddler
- Preschool
- Kindergarten
- School Age
- Mixed Age Groups

3. Your educational level:

- Entry Level Courses
- Credential
- Some College
- Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education
- Bachelor's Degree in Education
- Master's Degree

4. Program type you work in:

- Child Care Center
- Preschool
- Family Child Care
- School Age
- 4 K

5. Your working schedule:

- Part time
- Full time

6. Job Title:

- Teacher Assistant
- Teacher
- Director
- Administrator
- Floater
- Substitute
- Family Child Care Provider

7. Years of experience in early childhood education:

- under 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- over 10 years

8. Do you have a TEACH scholarship?

- Yes
- No

9. I enjoy my job as a child care professional.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. My education has helped me to become more confident as a child care professional.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. I am knowledgeable about child development.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. I am satisfied with my job as a child care professional.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. I am knowledgeable about developmentally appropriate practices.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. I enjoy my job working with children.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. I am confident in my ability to guide children's behavior.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. I have chosen the child care profession as a career.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

17. My education has prepared me to be an effective teacher of young children.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. I am knowledgeable about best practices in the early childhood education setting.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

19. Furthering my education in early childhood education would help me to improve my skills as a teacher of young children.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

20. I love my job in early childhood education.

Choose one: Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. I appreciate your time. The information that you shared is completely anonymous when submitted. When you click on the "Done" button your survey results will be sent.

Thank you again for providing data for my thesis.

Hi Everyone,

I am currently working on my Master's Degree thesis and researching Child Care Job Satisfaction/Education. The following survey will help me complete my research. If you are currently working in the field of early childhood education and are willing to provide feedback for this research project please complete this survey. Your feedback will be helpful as I collect data on Child Care Job Satisfaction/Education. This survey should only take about 5 minutes of your time. Your answers will be completely anonymous. Your participation in this research is not part of your class and is optional. I appreciate your time as you provide me with feedback for my research.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8C5SRCC>

In order to progress through this survey, please use the following navigation links:

- Click the Next >> button to continue to the next page.
- Click the Previous >> button to return to the previous page.
- Click the Exit the Survey Early >> button if you need to exit the survey.
- Click the Submit >> button to submit your survey.

If you have any questions, please contact me at kapickering59@gmail.com

Thanks,

Kathy
Kathleen Pickering
Early Childhood Instructor