



Childcare Research in a Global World

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Editorial

Childcare research in a global world

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'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.'

Margaret Mead

The care of children features highly in discourses about modern society and it is critical that our understanding of childhood and childcare in practice crosses international boundaries in a progressively globalized world. Punch (2016 p.360) outlines some of the identifiers of a 'global society' as 'migration and global care chains as well as crisis events such as natural disasters and war' which have opened up new avenues for research and childhood study. Jung and Tripodi (2007) advocate Research into social phenomena involving such shared problems across nations. and the articles reflected in this edition of the Child Care in Practice Journal provide a rich contribution to the global research agenda in childcare. This edition brings together studies from Jordan, Bangladesh, Poland, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Italy, Pakistan and Ghana. The articles focus our attention on global issues of child abuse and cooperation in child welfare, theories of play and feeding practices along with contributions to our understanding of specific social phenomena relating to child marriage, the trauma of terrorist attacks, children of prisoners and the impact of inspection on Early Years Services as well as cultural competence and the role of the linguistic and cultural mediator in the Paediatric Health Service.

Hanson et al (2018 p. 274) refer to 'global' and 'local' research positing that the former research considers macro issues of social structure and exclusion often with minority and vulnerable populations whereas the latter research focuses on the micro specifics of children's daily lives and experiences. The articles in this issue of Child Care in Practice represent a range of global and local studies and as such aim to address some of the perceived gaps in cross cultural learning and understanding of childhoods in the 'majority world' formerly known as the third world (Punch, 2016 P. 353). The papers challenge us to question globalised and normative perspectives of childhood which Nieuwenhuys (1998) argues are predominantly western and fail to take account of the continuously evolving experiences of children which are influenced by their cultures, histories and economic and political structures. Rather, Campbell-Barr and

Bogatić (2017 p.1462) emphasises the need for personal awareness of our subjectivities and consciousness of 'personal readings of both the global discourses and our interpretations of a cultural other'. James (2010) suggests the need for a focus on cross cultural studies of childhood and childcare which respect diversity and the worthiness of all childhoods as a focus of study. The articles challenge us to think about what works in supporting children exposed to terrorist attacks and pose questions about the impact of child marriage and infant feeding practices in non-western sociocultural contexts and enhance our understanding of the political, structural and cultural realities impacting on children, childhood and childcare provision in the global context.

Child abuse is a multifaceted global problem (Barth et al., 2013) with research predominantly undertaken in Western societies (van der Put et al., 2018). The article by AL Khatib (2020), *A Comprehensive Review of Research on Child Abuse in **Jordan*** widens our understanding of this phenomenon in an international context by providing a synthesis and critique of published research literature on child abuse in Jordan from 2000 onwards. The review affords valuable insights into the prevalence, understanding of and consequences of child abuse in Jordan and illuminates the pathway for future research.

Effective child welfare practice requires the collaboration of an array of services and professionals and there is much evidence attesting to the benefits of joint working across professional disciplines and organisations in childcare (Munro, 2011; Thompson, 2013). Przeperski and Taylor (2020) in their *Cooperation in Child Welfare Decision Making: Qualitative Vignette Study* collected data from **Poland** to explore the multidisciplinary context of child welfare decision making. The paper helpfully describes the legislative, policy and service delivery structure within Poland and. The findings from data collated across nine occupations contribute to our understanding of the extant models of cooperation between professions and organisations in the decision-making process. The study reflects on the merit of game theory (Luce & Raiffa, 1957) in understanding boundary protectiveness and raises interesting questions about the extent to which a duty to collaborate is mandated on organisations by the primary legislation.

The theme of regulatory impact is the focus of Rouinea, McDonnell and Hanafin's article, *Making a Difference: The Impact of Statutory Inspection on the Quality of Early Years Services* which considers the role of early years inspection processes in promoting service quality in **Ireland**. Quality childcare is correlated with better outcomes for children (Burchinal et al., 2010; Rand Europe, 2014) and this study of a random sample of noncompliant regulations undertaken in 2017 demonstrates the positive impact of regulatory inspection in highlighting the responsive approach to quality improvement on the part of service providers in taking corrective action on a range of issues relating to child welfare. The theme of quality childcare provision is continued the article *Childcare Worker's Understanding of the Play Cycle Theory: Can a Focus on "Process not Product" Contribute to Quality Childcare Experiences?* In this research study King and Newstead (2019) focus on play as an indicator of quality in childcare provision in the **United Kingdom** and provide valuable insights into the

correlation of childcare practitioner understanding of Play Cycle theory and service quality.

Jahidur Rahman Khan, Nabil Awan and Md Tuhin Sheikh in their article on *A Multilevel and Spatial Analysis of the Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices and Associated Factors among the Under-2 Aged Children in Bangladesh* examine Infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in children under two. The study provides important information on regional variations in IYCF aimed at improving practices and promoting targeted approaches to optimal nutrition and dietary diversity.

This edition of Child Care in Practice highlights some specific global issues in childcare and child welfare. Luther (2015) argues that children of prisoners represent one of the most vulnerable populations in the world and there is a growing body of international literature attesting to the negative outcomes for children of having a parent incarcerated, including mental ill health, criminality, poorer educational outcomes and increased risks of intergenerational incarceration (Cho, 2009a; Arditti, 2012; Harte - Johnston, 2018; Eddy and Poehlmann-Tynan, 2019; Foster & Hagan, 2015; Wakefield and Wildeman, 2013; Wildeman, 2020). Caroline Leeson and Julia Morgan in their article *Children with a Parent in Prison England and Wales: A Hidden Population of Young Carers* discuss the caring experiences of children with an imprisoned parent. The article highlights the paucity of research on the caring responsibilities of these children (Children heard and seen, 2019,) and advocates the inclusion of this group as a category of young carers as a means of improving access to support services and addressing the limited foregrounding of children and families of prisoners within the discourse of social and structural inequality (Dani & De Haan, 2007). This article contributes to the global drive for change by attending to the impact on children and families of incarcerated parents across different cultures and supporting the ending of child blind justice (Jones, 2017).

In *Trauma and Post Traumatic Growth in Young Survivors of a Terrorist Attack: An Experiential Account of Supportive Interventions in a Tertiary Care Hospital in Pakistan* Tania Nadeem, Nargis Asad, Murad Moosa Khan, Sana Siddiqui, Fauzia Mahr, Sahar Nadeem Hamid and Shahina Pirani focus on the growing global problem of violence and terrorism (Lindert et al., 2018) and the impact of such traumatic experiences on children. The American Psychiatric Association, (2013) highlights the range of acute and chronic post traumatic symptoms which can be observed in children following such incidents. Their study explores the experiences of survivors of a 2014 school terrorist attack in the North West of Pakistan which resulted the world's highest number of child fatalities (Khan et al., 2018). The study outlines a range of interventions provided in a tertiary care hospital setting which contributed to Post Traumatic Growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1996). The study contributes to the limited scholarship on such violent incidents (Peek et al., 2018) and makes recommendations for the development of trauma informed practice in less developed countries and extends our understanding of the concept of post traumatic growth in children.

Migration is becoming an increasingly universal problem and growing international conflicts have seen rising numbers of families forced to emigrate (Refugee Council, 2019). Services are increasingly being provided to a more ethnically diverse

population and there is evidence that these populations represent distinct challenges for service providers not least because of their increased levels of morbidity (Beach et al., 2005; Rechel et al., 2013). Conducting research exploring the needs of such vulnerable populations is important in illuminating their specific health needs and the training and development needs of practitioners (Hanefeld et al., 2017). Biga and Selicorni (2020) in *The Perceptions of Health Workers in the Relationship with Foreign Users in a Paediatric Health Service: The Role of the Linguistic and Cultural Mediator*, examine multi-cultural paediatric care in an acute hospital setting in **Italy** and consider the experiences and perceptions of medical and nursing staff in treating 'foreign children and their families' Biga and Selicorni (2020, p.6). The study findings demonstrate the perceived workload burden in working with this group of children and consider the benefit of a linguistic and cultural mediation role in such circumstances. The study confirms the findings of Verrept (2019) in the World Health Organisation synthesis report on the positive contribution of such roles in improving quality of care and service outcomes. This research effectively contributes to the literature on cultural competence in childcare provision and the need to promote positive health service outcomes by attending to cultural issues (Napier et al., 2014)

While child marriage is a global occurrence and is regarded as a breach of human rights, UNICEF (2018) there has been a paucity of research on the subject, (Glinski et al., 2015) Elizabeth Anokyewaa Sarfo, Joana Salifu Yendork and Anthony Vernon Naidoo (2020) in their article *Understanding Child Marriage in Ghana: The Constructions of Gender and Sexuality and Implications for Married Girls*, explores the practice in **Ghana**. The paper reviews the literature on the practice of child marriage and the impact of the practice on the girls involved. The article draws conclusions about the social and cultural beliefs about of gender and sexuality which contribute to the phenomenon of child marriage in Ghana and calls for further research into the psychological effects of the practice on the children and families involved. This article contributes to our further understanding of the social and cultural construct of childhood which varies across nations

Conclusion

Changing world politics, economics and scientific and technological advances continue to situate childcare as a global agenda (Rostgaard, 2018) and Jones and Truell (2012 p. 436) cite the importance of making global connections to inform local situations and sharing the wisdom of this selection of international research studies can only serve to make a difference, enhance global social justice endeavours and 'change the world'. The articles included in this issue of Child Care in Practice share research and generate an evidence base for a global conversation designed to transform childcare policy and practice and ultimately aimed at improving and recalibrating the lived experience of our children (Rostgaard, and Eydal 2018).

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