Financial Concerns And Productivity

Flora L. Williams,[1] Purdue University
Virginia Haldeman,[2] University of Nevada-Reno
Sheran Cramer,[3] University of Nebraska-Omaha

Financial problems and concerns of people are increasing in an uncertain economy, and their effect upon productivity is critical. Documentation of these effects to date is needed to promote financial counseling and education programs for the worker at the workplace. The costs and benefits of programs are addressed to promote the improvement and continued programs of employee assistance or human resources in cooperation with other financial professionals.
KEY WORDS: *financial concerns, financial problems, financial counseling, productivity, employee assistance*

Productivity is a critical concern of both the public and private sectors of the economy. The current knowledge about financial concerns of employees and their effect on workforce productivity is examined in this paper. Selected employee programs to address financial concerns are reported as examples of current efforts to reduce financial stress. Worker stress is known to result in lower productivity behavior identified as absences, tardiness, leaving early, mistakes, lack of job concentration, accidents, and lower output. The frequency of worker stress is reported in general but not in specifics by different types of employees. As financial stress or problems are increasing in general, the need for financial counseling and education in the workplace, particularly, is addressed in this paper.

Employers' interest in personal financial concerns is increasing because of the increased need to improve productivity and to lower other costs. The employer's efforts in improving total well-being of employees contribute to better employee-employer relations, higher morale, retention rates, lower fringe benefit costs, lower transaction costs, and increased output.

The current focus on productivity and employee wellness upholds the necessity to examine financial problems, stress, and programs. An assessment of the relationship between financial concerns or stress and aspects of productivity behavior can provide justification for employee benefit program development, financial education endeavors, and financial counseling services. Results can provide information for documenting the need and exploring the cost-effectiveness of financial counseling provided as a community and/or as an employee benefit service.

Productivity is of concern to many sectors of the economy (e.g. Ferleger & Mandle, 1994; Hall, 1994; Heikens, 1994; Heinemann, 1993; Key, 1994; Leichtling, 1994). However the phenomena of productivity is a construct that does not have a single definite criterion measure or operational definition. Neale and Liebert (1980) suggest that the study of such constructs should be guided by a theory which would hypothesize the network of associations between the construct and directly measurable variables. Thus, we present *Choice and Exchange Theory* (Nye, 1978) as a guide to the explanation and prediction of worker productivity as it is impacted by behaviors associated with family financial concerns.

Theoretical Construct

Choice and Exchange Theory as developed by Nye (1978) has roots in both economics and sociology. The theory has four active components: alternatives, costs, rewards, and outcomes. When an individual or family is

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[1] Flora L. Williams, Associate Professor, Family & Consumer Economics, Department of Consumer Sciences & Retailing, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907-1262, Phone: (317) 494-8297. E-mail: floraw@purdue.edu

[2] Virginia A. Haldeman, Ed.D., Human Development and Family Studies, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, Phone: (702)784-6490, E-mail : haldeman@unssum.scs.un.edu

[3] Sheran Cramer, Ph.D., University of Nebraska at Omaka, Omaha, Nebraska, Phone: (402) 554-2450, E-mail: scramer@cwis.unomaha.edu.

faced with a problem, there is an array of alternatives from which to choose. Each alternative has associated costs and rewards. The alternative(s) chosen, with accompanying costs and rewards, determine the outcome. Nye (1978) states that many choices are based on the individual's perception of the rewards and costs of the alternatives at the moment of choice without, necessarily, reviewing and evaluating all possible outcomes. Even with review and evaluation of possible outcomes, the choice may be based on overestimation of the anticipated reward, or there may be a lack of perception of the costs associated with the selected alternative. The theory allows for later realization that a decision was not rational.

Nye (1978) identified nine theoretical propositions which can be used to guide hypothesis development. They are considered to be general in application and substance and culture free. These propositions can be strategic starting points for applying theory:

1. Human beings seek rewards and avoid costs to maximize outcomes.
2. Costs being perceived as equal, individuals will choose the alternative which supplies or is expected to supply the most rewards.
3. Rewards being perceived as equal, individuals will choose the alternative which exacts or is expected to exact the fewer costs.
4. Immediate outcomes being perceived as equal, individuals will choose those alternatives which seem to promise better long-term outcomes.
5. Long-term outcomes being perceived as equal, individuals will choose alternatives seen as providing better immediate outcomes.
6. Other costs and rewards being perceived as equal, individuals will choose the alternative which supplies or can be expected to supply the most social approval.
7. Other costs and rewards being perceived as equal, individuals will choose the alternative which appears to provide the most autonomy.
8. Other costs and rewards perceived as remaining equal, individuals will choose activities and positions which provide the greatest financial remuneration and/or the smallest financial expenditures.
9. Costs and other rewards being equal, individuals choose associates and friends with opinions and values which agree with their own and try to avoid those who consistently disagree with them (Nye, 1978).

Application of the Theory

Choice and Exchange Theory enables a researcher to investigate the question of whether there are significant associations between the existence of family financial problems (or having concerns about family financial decisions) and the existence of behavioral factors associated with employee productivity. The theory is conducive to the investigation of associations between alternative actions workers can take to alleviate the financial problem (or concern) and enhanced worker productivity. Positive and negative outcomes resulting from the decisions made and actions taken can be measured.

Some financial problems may be identified as sources of concern. When these concerns are perceived by the worker as an especially troublesome or grave problem, that perception may contribute to personal physical or emotional conditions which, in turn, may be associated with a decrease in productivity. Financially related concerns and behaviors associated with decreases in productivity are listed in Table 1.

The following are some classic scenarios associated with experiencing financial difficulties. Each is examined using the Choice and Exchange Theoretical framework.

In some cases, experiencing financial problems may serve as motivation to increase productivity in hopes of increasing income, and thus solving the financial problem. One cost is that it would take time to increase productivity and gain the reward of increased income. Another possible cost would be that additional income would not be sufficient. In this option, there is a high risk of delay to secure adequate financial resources. This may result in another dip in productivity.

Another option is to take on a second job, or for another household member to seek gainful employment (or if already employed to seek a second job). The reward of additional financial resources is attainable. A cost may be further reduction in productivity at the place of original employment due to overwork.

When credit over-extension is accompanied by inability to meet credit payments and repossession or wage attachment is threatened, the worker may contact a local credit counseling agency or a financial counselor affiliated with the industry or business. The costs of this option include the time it takes to participate in such a program and the loss of personal control over the allocation of financial resources. The rewards are that financial pressures are reduced and dunning by creditors usually ceases once they are informed that the debtor is a program participant and revised payment plans have been arranged. Ash, O'Neill, and Haldeman (1985) reported that once individuals were participating in a counseling program, they no longer perceived themselves to be in a crisis situation.

Table 1
Financially Related Concerns and Behaviors Associated with Decreases in Productivity

Concerns	Behaviors
Action by a collection agency	A grievance being filed by the worker
Bankruptcy	High incidence of accidents/illness
Divorce	High rate of absence, tardiness, and/or leaving early
Excessive indebtedness	
Inability to meet credit obligations	Incidence of physical or verbal aggression or low tolerance levels
Loan consolidation	
Medical bills	Increased incidence of mistakes,
Rendering of a legal judgment	errors, faulty judgments related to financial Low morale or poor attitude problems
Repossession	
Support payments	
Use of a consumer credit counseling agency	
Utility turn-off	
Attachment	

In companies where the employer has established an employee assistance program, on-site financial counseling may be available. The rewards of participation would be much the same as working with a local credit counseling agency. However, there may be an associated cost when the individual perceives having co-workers know he/she is engaged in counseling, a social stigma. A positive alternative may be the provision of financial management workshops at the worksite or in collaboration with educational agencies within the community. A more costly option is for the worker to place the management of family finances into the hands of a pro-rater or attorney. The associations between any one of these actions and the level of worker productivity is unknown at this time.

The propositions from Choice and Exchange Theory can serve as the basis for developing hypotheses which will test associations between the independent and dependent variables. The three factors present in all propositions can serve as constant operational definitions for studies. Suggested definitions are:

Rewards = positive individual evaluations such as: wages that support an adequate level of living, salary increases, reduced stress, and the possibility of advancement.

= positive corporate evaluations such as: higher morale, increased productivity, and higher profits.

Costs = negative individual evaluations such as: docked pay, wage attachments and garnishments, and using overtime or having a second job as a means of meeting financial demands.

= negative corporate evaluations such as: increases in absenteeism and accidents resulting in lower productivity.

Outcomes = a change in behaviors associated with worker productivity or actual productivity of goods and services.

It is assumed that workers choose to work where rewards can be exchanged for costs with a resulting maximization of productivity.

Using Choice and Exchange Theory as the theoretical construct, several hypotheses are suggested for future research. For each hypothesis, the number of the corresponding proposition stated above is given.

1. Given a set of established actions designed to reduce financial stress, which of the alternative actions are perceived to be the least costly and most rewarding and yield the desired outcome of increased worker productivity? (Proposition 1)

2. When a worker perceives the immediate outcome of any of the possible actions to be decreased stress and enhanced ability to concentrate on the job at hand, the worker will select the action which promises the best opportunity for eliminating future financial problems. (Proposition 4)

3. When a worker perceives that the long-term outcome for each action is reduction of the possibility for future financial problems, the worker will choose the alternative which will give the greatest and most immediate financial relief. (Proposition 5)

4. When a worker perceives that the costs and rewards of the alternatives are equal, the worker will choose the action which will enable him or her to have the

greatest personal control over his or her personal financial situation. (Proposition 7)

The challenge is to develop reliable and valid instruments to measure financial concerns and behaviors associated with productivity. Results of assessments utilizing such instruments can provide information about providing alternatives that can enhance worker productivity. Such findings would serve as the basis for making informed decisions about implementing financial counseling or educational programs for employees.

Literature

A review of the literature or related works further delineates the components of Choice and Exchange Theory for assisting in explaining and predicting work productivity. First, the problem component is discussed in terms of financial problems/concerns of employees and the effects of these problems and concerns on productivity. Secondly, employer efforts/programs to address employee financial problems constitute the alternative section of the model. Finally, outcomes resulting from such employer efforts and programs complete the section of related works. The outcomes evident from the examples of currently provided employer efforts and programs suggest the need for additional research related specific types of financial programs and efforts and their resulting costs or rewards.

Financial Problems

Financial problems affect people in various walks of life. Not only is the family life effected but financial problems affect productivity in the job market also. A worker with financial problems experiences lack of concentration resulting in poor quality or quantity of work, fatigue due to stress, becomes more accident prone and exhibits higher grievance rates (Bailey, 1986). Lower output and the tendency to default requires companies to spend more in the way of transactions, benefit costs, and medical costs.

Estimates of the effects of financial problems have been based on records of the numbers of people in the workforce who have sought employee counseling, and the percentage of these who had financial problems. Brown (1993) suggests that 10% is a conservative estimate of the proportion of employees in the workplace with financial difficulties affecting productivity. This estimate comes from a company providing well above national average pay and benefits. Another research report was that personal financial problems affected nearly one-third of America's corporate workforce performance (Financial Services Study, 1988).

The relative importance of financial problems contributing to lowered productivity can be documented by its rank with other problems of those who seek counseling. The disentanglement of financial problems from other problems is difficult. One such report of those who had problems with alcohol or drug affecting productivity, related problems were financial - 35%, legal - 55%, worker compensation claims - 12%, and accident or sickness claims - 14% (Brown, 1993).

Absenteeism of work place behavior has revealed that financial problems are increasing due to more single-parent households, divorce, second marriages, more one-income households due to corporate downsizing, other downsizing, over-spending, addictions, and not enough money (Tagtmeier, 1992). Focus groups of employees indicate that about 13% report financial problems as a primary issue and 20% report them as secondary issues resulting from other problems.

Financial concerns and employers' way of dealing with them have changed over the last two decades (Lecky-Thompson, 1995). Whereas twenty years ago, employees were expected to leave their problems outside the workplace, now employee assistance programs help with a variety of difficulties. Financial concerns "are assuming greater proportions" and are multifaceted. Whereas eight years ago, the concern was a simple issue that worried an employee, a higher percentage have multiple problems. These problems, according to Richard Hopkins, president of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, can be distinguished among types. They involve work problems (15%), personal (25%), family or marital (25%), substance abuse 10%), financial or legal (15%) and miscellaneous (10%) (Lecky-Thompson, 1995).

A recent report (Byrne, 1996) also surveyed the request for financial counseling as well as frequency of financial concerns. Data were collected through the administration of the Business & Industry Needs Assessment (BINA) Survey, a 174-item questionnaire which measures employee wellness, in areas including: exercise, diet, job satisfaction, stress, substance use, family satisfaction, depression, anxiety, driving. The BINA survey was developed over nine years with funding from the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse (NIAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Of 10,308 survey participants at nearly 40 organizations, primarily in the northeastern states, responses regarding financial concerns were: "concerned" or "very concerned" by 43% and "somewhat concerned" by 32%. Concern about over-use of credit cards was reported by 30% who were "concerned" or "very concerned" and 21% who were "somewhat concerned".

Of respondents, 60% indicated they would like counseling, a workshop or course, or information regarding finances. The distribution was as follows: 11% responded they would like counseling; 19% responded they would like a workshop or course; and 309% responded they would like information.

The current level and trend of personal bankruptcies and consumer debt is evidence of the financial difficulty of some workers and is indicative of the continuation of a similar trend for the future. For more than 50 million Americans, credit means bills they can't pay, phone calls from collection agencies, and rejection letters from credit card companies (Detweiler, 1993). Additionally, 110 million people are in debt to credit card companies, many perched precariously on the edge of a debt cliff with a small downturn in the economy pushing them over the edge. The number of consumers who can't pay their bills has skyrocketed and bankruptcy courts and credit counseling offices are clogged with persons seeking assistance. In excess of 400,000 people contacted consumer credit counseling offices for help in 1990 because they were too deeply in debt to handle their situation by themselves. More than 800,000 Americans declared personal bankruptcy in 1991, more than double the number who did so one decade earlier (Detweiler, 1993). In 1995, the number was over one million who filed for bankruptcy.

Respondents to a Survey of Virginia's largest corporate employers identified the main causes of employee financial troubles as overuse of credit, overspending, lack of budgeting, too many debts, inadequate shopping and spending skills, salary or wages too low, and lack of knowledge about money (Garman, Porter & McMillion, 1989). The survey, sponsored by Employee Benefit Offices, represented manufacturing, banking, and other service sector firms.

The cost of personal problems and debilitating life styles is estimated for Canadian business to be $25 million per workday (Tittemore, 1994). The estimate is that "68% of all workers will experience workplace problems severe enough to prevent them from coping with day-to-day duties" (p. 49). "At any time, 10-20% of working Canadians will be performing at a reduced level because of personal difficulties." Personal problems are estimated to cause more than 30% of all absenteeism.

Effect of Financial Problems/Concerns Upon Productivity

Financial problems affect productivity both directly and indirectly. Based on information from managers in U.S. corporations who worked with EAPs, Harris (1987) estimated that financial problems cost U.S. companies a minimum of $40 billion each year. Financial problems also affect family and marital relationships, physical and emotional health that can further lead to a decrease in productivity. A worker can heighten his financial problems through indecision over financial planning, inadequate knowledge and through incorrect decisions and management.

The cost of financial problems to a company can be estimated by the following procedure, using Brown's (1993) conservative estimate:

C 10% of Workforce with Financial Problems # ______

C 10% of Average Annual Wage in Wasted Productivity $ ______

= The cost of Doing Nothing - Estimated Annual Cost $ _____.

Employees burdened with financial problems are not likely to perform at their full potential. Therefore, employee financial welfare is a legitimate area for management. Superiors need to be alert to detect employee financial concerns, to advise employees on possible ways to achieve the necessary financial assistance and to convey employee financial needs to senior management so they can be used in formulating company policies and programs. Financial counseling programs may include professional advise related to employee stock ownership plans, credit unions, financial grants, tuition assistance and scholarships. Financial worries can result in erratic behavior, an item of particular concern in relation to managerial personnel (Adler and Leff, 1976). Employers, in order to increase the productivity of their workers can help them acquire information regarding financial assistance, personal finance and formulate policies and programs to help them in times of financial stress (Alder & Leff, 1976).

A survey of full-time personnel in companies with over 1000 employees who had household incomes in excess of $25,000 and who were eligible for company benefits documented the relationship of finances and productivity. Forty-three percent of those under the age of 45 indicated that their financial worries sometimes affected their job performance. Sixty percent of those under age 45 and 48% of those over age 45 desired financial planning assistance. Sixty-one percent of the respondents in the same study indicated that corporations had the responsibility to help employees reach financial goals (Farish, March 1988). A U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) study examined a number of factors including absenteeism and financial problems (Hendrix, Steel & Schultz, 1987.) Absenteeism increased with financial problems. The magnitude of employee problems resulting from the inter-relatedness of financial and personal and or family/marital problems has the potential to negatively influence work behavior to the extent that the employee may become a "troubled employee."

The theme is "minimize distraction for maximum output" and "employees who have worries about career advancement, finances and work-life balances don't perform to capacity" (Breuer, 1995, 71). Worries that cause some employees to function at roughly 70% capacity include their upward mobility chances, sending children to college and how they will retire. An example is told of a manager who was under such great stress from financial worries, work-life issues and concerns about career growth/employability, that he wore a heart monitor (p. 72). The analysis reveals that finances are the employees' biggest stress after career stability which, of course, involves family finances and economic security. A current worry is the escalating gambling problems in the workforce that are destructive patterns of behavior (Falzon, 1995).

Financial concerns affect productivity at all levels of employees. The rationale for providing financial planning services for senior executives is that the time and energy these employees would spend worrying about their money would keep them from being maximally productive (Tagtmeier, 1992). The rationale for providing financial counseling for non-executives is that stress directly affects their productivity and costs the company time and money.

Costs of financial difficulties to the employer include wage garnishments, firing and hiring a new employee after the second wage garnishment, processing and tracking creditors, and defaults on employer-sponsored credit union loans (Tagtmeier, 1992). These costs can be included in the formula to determine the cost/benefit of financial counseling for employees either in-house or contracted with an outside agency.

Employer Efforts and Programs

What have been employer efforts and programs to address employee financial problems and the resulting outcome of such efforts? The decades of the 1980s and 1990s evidenced a growing interest in financial counseling by employee assistance programs (EAPs). However, implementation of financial counseling programs did not keep pace as evidenced by the mention of financial problems last on their list. In the 1990s more employees added financial planning to their benefits to assist in decision making about retirement pensions and to reduce company liability. Programs of basic financial management an investment counseling increased during the 1990s although "financial illiteracy" is still under-addressed in the workplace (Cambridge Human Resource Group, 1994).

Employee assistance programs are based upon the premise that an employee's job performance is negatively influenced by financial problems, among other types of personal and family problems. A survey of companies indicated that almost half of them sponsored employee assistance programs for their workers and that financial problems were listed by 81% as one of the problems most often covered (*Wall Street Journal*, l987, p. 27). EAP programs offering assistance with financial/legal problems are described as broad brushed in their approach with staffs providing assistance directly through in-house counseling efforts or by referral to outside specialists and agencies.

Referrals to employee assistance programs are made by supervisors and, in many instances, employees themselves seek out the services. Approximately 15% of EAP referrals involved financial matters (Harris, 1994). Major benefits, i.e. reward or outcomes, claimed from EAP programs included: valued employees were helped and retained, absenteeism and turnover was reduced, productivity was improved and employee stress reduced.

The costs and benefits of employee assistance programs, although widely available and variable, help to interpret the actual outcomes of such programs. Although the reports are for programs in general, future research can isolate costs and benefits for financial counseling. The variables are costs per employee per year such as a range from $4 to $90 and an average per employee per year such as $30. Most studies of the benefits from employee assistance programs report a savings, for example about $3.50 per employee, in lower costs for health care claims, absenteeism, and workplace accidents for every dollar spent. For example, an $8.00 figure of savings per dollar spent includes higher worker productivity and reduced training costs (Thorne, 1987). A study reported by Bergmark (1989) concluded that an easily accessed, risk free, multi-disciplinary assistance program helped employees solve problems sooner, more effectively and more efficiently. For example, health care benefit costs in the EAP group were only 41% of a comparable non-EAP group with the EAP's average benefit costs being 28% lower.

A survey of the Employee Benefit Offices, at 47 of Virginia's largest corporate employers, based on number of employees per job site, revealed that 67% of the companies offered counseling for financial problems (Garman, Porter & Macmillan, 1989). These firms encompassed manufacturing, banking, and other service sector firms. Three-fourths of the firms indicated that employees had responded favorably to the availability of financial counseling services. Positive outcomes resulting from such programs, reported by 38% of the firms, included improved attendance and better on-the-job attitude toward work.

Among the models of financial education programs to help employees be more productive and less stressed is "Financial Crossroads," for example, which can be used as a self-study guide or a workbook for onsite workshops (Breuer, 1995). Crossroads are the times with financial aspects from serious illness, death of a family member, divorce, care of an elderly parent, job loss of a family member and retirement. After helping employees visualize their situations and possible consequences, and potential defensive strategies, it directs employees "to find an outside financial advisor" to help develop solutions (p. 75). Educational programs are aimed at improving employee moral and well-being (Sell, 1993). Programs are more effective if they are first field-tested. Focus groups are useful in reviewing materials. A program as a result was "Money Matters" which included five magazines: why begin planning, how to control spending, how to establish and reach goals and estate planning (Sell, 1993). In addition an Info Line was available to employees for further information and explanation. Continued evaluation included focus groups and records of frequency of questions, kinds of questions, satisfaction with answers, application of information, critique of the quality of information, change in behavior, and use of coupons to obtain collateral material.

A "personal money management program" instituted by one company taught employees and their families how to manage their money while helping them better understand and appreciate the company's operating needs (Jones and Matte, 1978). Components of the program included live instruction on how to determine personal financial needs, videotapes showing alternatives and specific recommendations for financial needs, textbook and workbook with pertinent personal money management forms. Outcomes reported included several benefits including development of interest in a well-managed operation, learning management by objectives, reduction of job time wasted on personal money matters and good public relations.

Two phases of the financial counseling process, "preventative" and "productive" have the potential for making an impact on the outcome of worker productivity. The preventative phase seeks to help a person avoid financial problems in the future. Prompt, careful delineation of sickness and retirement benefits to employees is a critical part of this phase. Gaining greater personal satisfaction for the employee is an objective of the "productive phase". Avoiding problems is inadequate (Adler & Leff, 1976).

Financial counseling programs addressing financial problems and concerns of employees can result in improved benefit packages, decreased unrest or conflict on the job and with management, reduced stress and the possible resulting breakdown of physical and mental health. Additionally, reduced confusion in selecting various company benefits related to insurance, savings and investing, pensions and retirement plans can reduce employee financial concerns. Appropriate choices can lessen stress from decisions about longer term plans for financial security. Finally, reduced confusion related to tax laws can also lessen stress with the ultimate objective-improved productivity.

The focus is on productivity and creativity and requires a new system of management (Breuer, l995). Assisting employees with financial concerns involves indirectly helping the employee to balance work and family. New systems of work involve adjusting schedules for child care responsibilities, flextime, personal leave days, flexplace, and reshaping the work environment. The advice for employers in helping their employees with financial planning or financial difficulties is built on theories of psychology, sociology, management and economics. A financial counseling theory is evident in this advice: "To eliminate financial problems, employees must realize that personal money management is a lifelong process because their needs change as they progress through the financial life cycles; they must also be aware that no individual or institution can completely manage their money for them" (Tagtmeier, 1987).

Concerns by employers include attracting and retaining talented personnel to increase their productivity. Employers recognize that preparing their employees for the future and resolving financial stress currently they can accomplish both these goals (Sheley, 1995). Employees are concerned that only about half (52%) who have access to 401k plans actually contribute the maximum and one third do not participate. Furthermore, Secretary of Labor Robert Reich testified to the Senate in 1994 that "45 % of current workers participate in a private pension plan" (Sheley, 1995, 89). Human resource departments are now offering financial education programs to promote pension and personal savings in response to retaining personnel and overcoming problems with events such as divorce, illness, or children's college, which of course reduce retirement contributions (Sheley, 1995). They are advised to first analyze their "workforce by demographics, reading level and education level" (p. 92) and then present creative and innovative programs.

To determine the effect of Employee Assistance Programs, the following method has been established (Tittemore, l994,50); but to determine the effect of financial counseling the percentage of personal problems due to financial concerns must be established:

Number of employees in the company	= _____ (A)
10% (.10xA) are experiencing personal problems (As mentioned, statistics indicate that 10% to 20% of the workforce is incapacitated by disruptive personal problems)	= _____ (B)
Average employee's salary	=_____(C)
Total salary of employees with personal problems (BxC)	=_____(D)
Costs due to reduced productivity (Dx.35) (Employees experiencing personal problems are at least 35% less productive)	=_____(E)
Your savings are (Ex. 75) (Seventy-five percent of your employees' personal problems can be corrected through professional counseling).	=$ _____ .

Conclusions

The concern over financial problems and productivity is critical due to increased financial difficulties and uncertainty in the workplace. Information from research on how to improve productivity related behavior and the implementation of services are needed by business and families in times of economic prosperity as well as downturn since there will always be those experiencing financial stress.

The review of literature has revealed a very limited amount of research to date and a lack of precision tools for determining the effect of financial concerns upon productivity. Research tools need to be developed and refined to assess the specific education and counseling concerns of various industries and businesses. Although basic financial management knowledge and skills are always needed, specific financial concerns for the unique workforce and changing era need to be identified.

The interrelatedness of financial concerns and other personal problems and their resulting impact on productivity had received little attention 10 years ago (Felstehausen, 1983). Now that attention is increasing, definitive and careful research is needed to disentangle the relationship of financial problems to other personal problems and the resulting impact on worker productivity.

Research is needed to identify lowered productivity in certain behaviors by percentages of employees with financial problems that can be reduced by financial counseling and education. Research is needed to document the direct and indirect effects of financial concerns on the various types of productivity and for different types of industries or businesses. Research is needed to better document the cost/benefit of financial counseling programs to improve productivity, employer-employee relations, retention, and well-being.

Financial counselors and educators need to prepare more programs in cooperation with industry and business based on the excellent services or models already available from a variety of current providers. The means for effective and efficient evaluation of these programs need to be developed.

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