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**"Child Care in the Workplace: Addressing the Challenges of Gender
Equality and Productivity in Modern Employment"**

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Abstract:

Workplace-sponsored childcare is a vital policy intervention that promotes gender equality, enhances employee well-being, and boosts productivity. This issue has become increasingly important for organisations aiming to be both inclusive and efficient. The study indicates that because women often bear a larger share of child-rearing responsibilities, it hinders their chances of progressing in their careers. Therefore, there is a need to implement workplace policies that improve access to childcare.

Based on interviews conducted to explore and address the identified financial risk research questions and guided by an interpretivist approach, the findings suggest that providing childcare at the workplace can reduce absenteeism and employee turnover, thereby promoting workplace stability. Less stressed and more concentrated employees, especially working mothers, translate into increased efficiency and job satisfaction. Employers using the childcare policy also declare that it enhanced their influx and retention of talent, making them appear more inclusive and supportive. Instead of providing economic advantages alone, workplace childcare supports a culture of equity by redistributing the caregiving burden and normalising parental care in professional settings. This study also highlights the barriers to workplace childcare implementation: budgetary constraints, logistical challenges, and cultural attitudes regarding childcare as an individual and not an organisational issue. This research gives recommendations to address these issues, advocating for public-private partnerships, government inducements, and flexible workplace structures that keep childcare accessible. In connection with Goldin's statement that societal settings, rather than individual choices alone, determine gender equality, the study reinforces calls for systemic interventions targeted at bridging the gender gap in employment.

In summary, the research confirms that workplace child caring services are not just an additional facility but a necessity that organisations should aspire to meet in their quest for gender equity and optimal productivity. The use of childcare services within workplace policies promotes a more balanced and equitable workforce and benefits employees, employers, and the economy. This study underlines the potential transformation of workplace childcare into an all-round future of modern employment by calling for evidence-based policy reforms and promoting employer-initiated childcare programs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Childcare is one of the most necessary things that are needed within the workplace as it remains a very pivotal concern of the advancing and continuously progressing gender equality while place productivity and for the employee well-being. The provision of workplace childcare represents a critical an essential intervention in addressing the modern-day gender disparity within the work force and the work environment the provision of workplace childcare will help us to foster productivity and employee retention. Claudia Goldin's ground-breaking research on women's involvement in the workforce has greatly improved our knowledge of how institutional structures affect career paths. Her study shows how important public and workplace policies are in either helping or hurting women's careers. Policies on providing childcare are at the heart of this debate. Given that women take on more of the parental role, institutional assistance like inexpensive daycare and flexible work hours are necessary to make sure that everyone has the same chances to go forward in their careers (Goldin, 2021; Goldin, 2024). Goldin's work always points out the structural hurdles that still exist even when there is no obvious prejudice. She shows that access to childcare significantly affects women's capacity to stay in the workforce, create careers, and narrow pay inequalities by looking at historical labour patterns and gendered economic results. Goldin (2023) says it well: "The road to gender equality is a long one, and its milestones are marked not just by personal choices but by societal structures that support or hinder those choices, including the availability of child care and workplace flexibility." This study looks at the intersection of childcare policy and labour market outcomes to find out how the availability and cost of childcare affect not only women's ability to keep their jobs but also bigger goals like keeping employees and making the economy fairer (Sarsons, 2024; Harris & Patacchini, 2024). Goldin's ideas are still very important in

today's policy discussions, where systemic change is needed to get rid of the deeply ingrained institutional norms that still punish working women." The goal of this research is to highlight the implications of childcare and how it impacts the productivity and general equality in the modern-day workplace. This study employs a qualitative methodology based solely on interviews to explore and address the identified financial risk research questions. Guided by an interpretivist approach, the methodology focuses on capturing in-depth insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of individuals operating within the e-commerce sector.

Such kinds of workplace childcare would be influential on the employees' psychological state, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Journals in psychology convey facts that they stress for parents who have reliable childcare, reducing the possibilities of bringing their thoughts to the effective efficiency expected in work. A recent study conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2022 indicated that employees with employer-sponsored childcare had a 40% decreased chance of higher-than-average stress levels compared to their counterparts without it (Wood, 2023).

Workplace Childcare: Positive Reinforcement for Family Relationships.

Research question

How Do Workplace Childcare Policies Influence Gender Equality, Employee Productivity, and Retention in Modern Organisations?

Objectives

The objectives of this research are listed as under:

1. To examine the impact of general equality by analysing the role of workplace childcare support in the advancement of a woman's career.
2. To be able to evaluate the organisational productivity by addressing the availability of workplace childcare and how it contributes to the overall productivity in improving employee focus.
3. By understanding and investigating the correlation between the child support and the employee retention and also analysing how the availability of workplace childcare reduces absenteeism.
4. To be able to compare the implemented and affected workplace childcare policies across different industries, including technological software, healthcare systems, and education, and to identify the sectorial variations.
5. Last but not least, to be able to propose actionable recommendations for organisations to implement and to create a more effective workplace environment.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Looking up on the workplace childcare has become a very essential an integrated aspect of the modern employment policies workplace childcare addresses issues such as gender

equality work life balance is an employee productivity it aims towards the establishment of a productive environment allowing employees and people and Hr managers to manage their personal and professional life while addressing the general equality in a very careful manner.

Claudia Goldin's context:

Claudia Goldin's work such as carrier an family woman's century long journey towards equity provides us a very deep insight and a very careful comprehension of the historical challenges that have been faced about by the woman in their workplace and how challenging it has been for women to come out of their walls and to work and to make a career for themselves the transformative roles of supportive policies including childcare has always been very essential and I have played a very integrative role within the history off woman's career (Kleven et al., 2019). Claudia Goldin's comprehensive study shows that structural impediments continue to make it hard for working parents, especially women, to get fair results in the labour market. One of the most important things is that there are not enough good choices for daycare. Goldin (2021; 2024) argues that the lack of affordable and accessible is not merely an individual concern, but a significant barrier to labour market participation, income growth and employment equity between men and women. Institutional shortcomings disproportionately affect mothers, who often assume primary caregiving responsibilities. This dynamic can result in career interruptions and reduced economic mobility. Goldin advocates for substantial reforms in government policy to promote greater equity within the labour market. She argues that the lack of childcare should be recognised as a structural economic issue rather than merely an individual concern. Additional research supports this perspective. It shows how a lack of childcare infrastructure and inadequate workplace regulations that assist families continue to make gender disparity in the workplace worse (Allen et al., 2020; Harris & Patacchini, 2024). Addressing the issue is not only socially imperative but also economically essential.

Benefits:

A review of international literature indicates that the social and economic benefits of workplace childcare are frequently overlooked or underestimated. Industrialised countries like the US and the Nordic countries, on the other hand, have strong and positive evidence that childcare given by employers makes more women want to work (UNICEF, 2021). Parents who can get childcare at work are also satisfied with their jobs and less likely to quit, which makes the workforce steadier and more active (Frank et al., 2021; Dunatchik et al., 2021). Such services are particularly beneficial for women, as they facilitate the balance between employment and caregiving responsibilities, thereby enhancing both their well-being and productivity. Regulations that restrict access to childcare services, on the other hand, tend to exacerbate social and economic inequalities, particularly among low-income families. When women are unable to work because they do not have enough childcare help, they lose their freedom and quality of life (Smith & Jones, 2018). These built-in problems not only make it harder for work, but they also make it harder for men and women to be equal. Another thing the study shows is that there are a wide variety of ways to investigate how childcare at work affects people (Deng, Zhou, & Hu, 2023). Longitudinal records are often used in quantitative research to look at how policies affect keeping employees, how productive they are, and how the economy does. However, qualitative study tells us a lot about how employees feel, the culture of the workplace, and how the company feels about childcare (Górska et al., 2021). The different research methods used make the results more solid and in-depth. They show that having childcare at work is not only a family issue, but also a business goal.

Economic Benefits and Disadvantages concerning Employer-provided Childcare

Childcare now impacts employee wellness and corporate performance. Numerous studies suggest that childcare at work boosts employee satisfaction and company performance.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce (2021) reports that on-site childcare reduced turnover by 30% and increased productivity among working parents by 15%. This suggests that employer-supported childcare may reduce workplace disruptions and stabilise the workplace. Absenteeism reduction is its finest feature. Bright Horizons (2022) found that on-site daycare reduced absenteeism by 50%. This was mostly due to fewer unplanned care disruptions. Lower absenteeism improves operational efficiency and lowers expenses. Workplace childcare may be expensive at first, but it pays off in the long run. Google and Patagonia have publicly touted their daycare programs' benefits. In 2020, the Harvard Business Review reported that childcare benefits increased retention and productivity by \$4 every dollar. Daycare may also foster a friendly workplace that boosts mental health and engagement. Bergefurt et al. (2022) examined mental health and the workplace. Having reliable childcare at or near work helps reduce stress and maintain work-life balance. According to Cortina et al. (2022), supported employees are less likely to suffer the biobehavioural impacts of stress and rudeness at work. Beier et al. (2022) also showed that organisations with diverse workforces benefit from policies that consider the needs of all employees, including parents. In their hospitality technology usage study, Leung et al. (2023) suggested employing technology and flexible business techniques to make childcare services more effective and accessible. Including childcare in workplace strategy is no longer a "perk." A strategic necessity that promotes employee wellness, decreases turnover, enhances mental health, and provides long-term economic advantages for organisations.

Even though more people are seeing the advantages of on-site daycare, some companies are still reluctant to set them up because they think they would cost too much to start and keep running. But other approaches, such as employer-subsidised childcare partnerships, shared-service agreements, or government-backed tax breaks, may help these programs stay in business. For instance, in certain places, the Child Care Tax Credit for Businesses lets

businesses get up to 25% off their taxes on the cost of providing daycare, which helps cover costs and encourages more people to use it. The bigger picture that this study shows is that childcare supplied by employers should not be seen as only a social welfare program, but as a smart business move. It helps keep employees on the job, makes it easier for women to get jobs, and directly helps close the gap between men and women in the workplace. Studies have demonstrated that not having enough help with childcare makes it harder for women to go forward in their careers and keep their jobs, especially during times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic (Górska et al., 2021; Stefanova, Farrell, & Latu, 2023). In fields like hospitality and healthcare, where there were a lot of resignations and burnout, access to childcare help became a key element in employee satisfaction and workforce resilience (Liu-Lastres, Wen, & Huang, 2023). Also, data from developing countries like Bangladesh shows that women have a harder time balancing work and family life when there are no family-friendly regulations in place. This makes gender inequality in the labour market even worse (Uddin, 2021). So, supporting childcare via workplace programs is not only a matter of gender equality, but it also leads to higher productivity and success in the office.

Employees' Psychological and Social Effects

Such kinds of workplace childcare would be influential on the employees' psychological state, job satisfaction, and work-life balance. Journals in psychology convey facts that they stress for parents who have reliable childcare, reducing the possibilities of bringing their thoughts to the effective efficiency expected in work. The American Psychological Association indicated that employees with employer-sponsored childcare had 40% decreased chances of higher-than-average stress levels compared to their counterparts without it (Wood, 2023). Employees, on the other hand, feel that visiting children during working hours strengthens the bonds between them and the children: such parents are always

healthier in workplaces. This, according to the research conducted by the National Childcare Association (2021), suggests that high-quality childcare programs further the children's cognitive and emotional development, which is advantageous to working families as well. Collectively, all these factors contribute to a more engaged workforce, more satisfied employee satisfaction, and further reinforce employer-supported childcare as a holistic strategy for employee well-being.

Obstacles to Implementation: A Complete Overview

Childcare help at work has a big impact on employees' mental and social health. It makes people happier at work, lowers their stress levels, and improves their mental health by easing the burden of having to balance work and caregiving duties (Adisa et al., 2022; Frank et al., 2021). Employees who feel supported in their jobs are more likely to be loyal, engaged, and productive. This kind of help may be crucial in healthcare and other high-pressure fields to cut down on burnout and turnover (Delaney et al., 2021). Even though there are evident advantages, putting childcare services in place at work is sometimes difficult because of finances and other practical issues. Employers often do not provide on-site daycare because they have to pay for it up front, get the right licenses, worry about liability, and find a place to put it (Wood, 2023). These logistical problems are made worse by cultural and organisational opposition, particularly in businesses where caring is still seen as a personal role rather than an organisational one (Stefanova, Farrell, & Latu, 2023).

Cultural attitudes have a big role in how quickly and easily people accept and use childcare at work. In many traditional communities, there is essentially no employer-sponsored childcare because of how people think about gender roles and family duties. But progressive firms like Patagonia, Google, and Accenture have successfully made childcare a part of their corporate culture. This shows that with strong leadership and policies that are in line with each

other, this kind of opposition can be overcome. These companies utilise childcare at work as a way to retain good employees and promote gender equality, showing that it has benefits beyond just being socially responsible (Dunatchik et al., 2021; Liu-Lastres et al., 2023). Systemic changes are needed to make it easier for people to get employer-supported childcare. To make childcare help a normal part of the workplace instead of an extra perk, we need to change policies, provide financial incentives, and change the ethos of the workplace. Some nations provide tax incentives for enterprises that help pay for daycare. This is a scalable financial strategy. Partnerships between the public and commercial sectors may help even more by making it easier for more organisations to use the service and share it (Uddin, 2021). These deliberate actions back up the idea that daycare shouldn't be considered a luxury or an extra benefit. Instead, it must be seen as a key part of gender equality, a sustainable workforce, and economic development that includes everyone. Without these steps, employer-sponsored childcare might be a luxury for just a few people instead of becoming a common and fair workplace standard (Górska et al., 2021; Deng, Zhou, & Hu, 2023).

Future development:

These methodologies give a thorough and wide understanding of the subject, but workplace childcare policy is still little researched despite its significant economic impact and importance for gender equality. Claudia Goldin's (2021) gender convergence study examines how job and family obligations intersect in complex ways, addresses gaps in the research by examining how employer-supported childcare programs might improve organisational performance, narrow the gender gap, and fulfil current labour demands. According to Goldin's historical study, caregiving is still a fundamental barrier to women's full job engagement. According to Harris and Patacchini (2024), excellent childcare policies help more women work, particularly in transitional economies when structural shifts need more inclusive policies. Kabeer (2021) also notes that inclusive development and equitable labour markets need resolving the gendered imbalance of unpaid care work. Recent investigations reveal that COVID-19 worsened these discrepancies. Academic mothers lost more production than other mothers, according to Kasymova et al. (2021). Telecommuting arrangements, although flexible, sometimes reinforced gender norms, according to Lyttelton, Zang, and Musick (2022). Kleven et al. (2019) use Danish examples to explain how kids contribute to a long-term salary penalty for women, worsening structural inequalities. In hospitality and tourism, the effects are greater. According to Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang (2023), the "Great Resignation" highlighted long-standing work-life balance issues, particularly for parents in customer service occupations with little flexibility. This literature study examines the challenges and opportunities of providing childcare at work using data from several companies. It shows that although inequality persists, each sector has its own structural and cultural issues that must be addressed. This illustrates the need for more thorough, inclusive, and context-sensitive childcare policies to support working parents, strengthen organisations, retain employees, and promote gender equality.

Theoretical influences

Claudia Goldin's important research on how the labor market changes and how men and women are becoming more similar gives us a new way to think about why there are still differences in workplace equality. She focuses on historical and institutional impediments such as the gendered division of labor, uneven pay structures, and restricted access to childcare. This shows how important it is for workplaces to have policies that deal with these unfair situations. Policies around childcare at work are especially important for encouraging gender equality and for improving employee productivity, retention, and career advancement. This study is in line with theories of organisational behaviour, particularly those that deal with work-life balance, since it shows how structural support systems affect the health and performance of employees. For instance, Herzberg's motivation theory (Peramatzis & Galanakis, 2022) shows how both internal and external influences, such as childcare advantages, may make people happy and motivated at work. The socio-technical systems theory (Yu, Xu, & Ashton, 2023) backs up the idea that workplaces need to be flexible and include both people and technology to provide fair performance results. Also, grounded theory techniques, such as Ancillo et al. (2021), show how changes in the workplace due to COVID-19 made the demand for policies that support a wide range of employee requirements even stronger. The cognitive-affective system theory (Chen et al., 2021) shows how employees' behaviour is affected by how much they think their organisation supports them, such as through green HRM or childcare. The social exchange and agency theories (Xu, Wang, & Ma, 2022) show how employees and organisations interact with each other in ways that encourage organisational citizenship behaviours. Finally, a study on bystander roles in workplace bullying (Pouwelse, Mulder, & Mikkelsen, 2021) shows how cultural norms and the climate of an organisation can affect behaviour. This makes it even more important to have policies that are inclusive and supportive, like childcare, to create fair and

high-performing workplaces.

Analysis of Technological Impact and Flexible Work

Goldin's research investigates how technology and flexible work plans are changing the gaps between men and women in the workforce. According to Goldin, Technology can help close the gender gap. However, this level of impact will rest on how well the workplace is set up to handle these changes. . One of the most important changes in modern work is the rise of online work. Goldin says that flexible work plans can help women balance their work and home tasks, which can lessen the parenting cost (Goldin's job and Family, 2021). The key question is whether remote work, if not accompanied by structural changes in how work is organized, will further entrench gender inequality — placing women in lower-paid remote positions while men continue to dominate in-person roles and leadership positions.

Childcare is still one of the prevailing factors that will determine whether flexible work really benefits women. A 2023 study attributed to the Brookings Institution states that remote work has increased labour participation for mothers but also raised the chores related to unpaid caregiving, offending work-life collision (Albanesi, 2023). Women in flexible roles often lose opportunities for their next career advancement since they are less visible within organisations. Goldin's framework suggests that technocratic solutions are not sufficient in themselves to close the gender gap. Corporate policies, changes in cultural attitudes, and government intervention must together provide the framework that ensures that flexible work sets in motion equitable career realizations. As an illustration, companies that establish structured hybrid-working policies with clear promotion pathways generally have better-balanced gender representation at senior levels. Recent policy developments shine further light on these dynamics. The work-life-balance directive of the European Union mandates flexible work for

parents to avert any career stagnation of women. In the United States, companies such as Google and Microsoft have put in place remote work policies that are gender-sensitive to reduce disparities.

In the end, Goldin's work emphasises the necessity of applying a gender lens to any understanding of technological change. While flexible work has potential, without simultaneous institutional reform, it risks being yet another avenue for perpetuating existing inequalities rather than being deployed for real advancement.

Decoding Goldin's Thesis on Career and Family

Claudia Goldin's *Career and Family* delves into the dynamics of work in relation to family life and particularly the adversities experienced by women in professions. Her key argument focuses on how "greedy work"—work that requires long hours, is inflexible, and disproportionately rewards those who comply—structures the disadvantage of women who are more likely to have caregiving roles; hence, it leads to gender differences in income and advancement opportunities. The author also shows how the dominance of certain workplace forms arrests women's mobility in reconciling their career aspirations with family demands.

A progressive shift in women's labour participation has characterised the 20th and 21st centuries. In the early 1900s, employment opportunities for women were tied down through social norms and legal impediments. Instead, during the mid-century, more women began working due to the increased pipeline of education and a demand for dual-income households. However, this latter end of the century and this early part of the next gave testimony to just what challenges were still facing women (*Harris & Patacchini, 2024*), especially in some of the better-paying occupations. As Goldin points out, although many more women are entering the professions, structural rigidity within most occupations continues to impede equal progress. The most recent data add heft to those of Goldin. Research also shows that while women have

made some strides into the workforce, they remain among the least likely to occupy upper ranks of leadership positions—thanks to the tenacity of greedy work. The COVID-19 pandemic further raised these issues as women took on most childcare chores, with schools and day-care facilities closed. In the 2023 McKinsey & Company report, it was found that women with children were much more likely than men to downshift their careers or leave the workforce altogether. This shows that while attitudes in society may have changed, workplace structures are not yet ready enough to accommodate the conflicting demands of careers and families.

Some more recent studies disagree with Goldin's claim in a more complex way, pointing out that more men are taking on care duties and that flexible work plans are becoming more popular. These changes are a step toward equal rights for men and women, but they are still not spread out evenly across industries and social classes. Harris and Patacchini (2024) say that changes to the way things are set up that were meant to close the gender gap in the job market have not worked as well in some places as they have in others. Key areas, for instance, have made more progress toward female equality than high-income professional fields. A similar point is made by Kabeer (2021), who says that policies need to be made to fix the social problems that keep women at a disadvantage, especially when it comes to getting good jobs. Studies show that having some freedom does not always help to fix the underlying unfair treatment of women. Lyttelton, Zang, and Musick (2022) found that during the COVID-19 epidemic, telecommuting, for example, made gender roles stronger in many houses. This is because, even though both men and women worked from home, women still did more unpaid housework than men. This trend is similar to what Kasymova et al. (2021) discovered: during the pandemic, academic moms were much less productive. This shows that women who work full-time and value ongoing work are more likely to have to care for children. Kleven, Landais, and Søgaaard (2019) show that becoming a mother lowers a woman's pay and stops her job from moving forward, while being a father usually does not have much of an effect on a man's career.

Liu-Lastres, Wen, & Huang (2023) say that the "Great Resignation" and the time after the pandemic made people think about work-life balance in many areas. However, the fact that long, continuous hours are still respected in top jobs keeps female disadvantages in place. Goldin's job and family (2021) is still a useful model because it critically looks at how the labour market's structures make it so that women and men must choose between job advancement and family duties. This is why there are still gaps between the sexes. Her work not only shows how women's roles in the economy have changed over time, but it also shows how bureaucratic inertia continues to make things unfair, even as expectations about duty and freedom shift.

The Role of Institutional Policies: A Goldin Perspective

Goldin emphasises the critical role of institutional policies in the promotion of gender equality, particularly in work life. Societal structures, including workplace norms and government policies, help determine how well women can fulfill their professional and personal roles in life. In *Career and Family*, she reiterates the point that whereas cultural attitudes regarding gender roles have changed, institutional frameworks often have not kept pace and thus inhibit equity in career paths. A key component in this discussion is childcare as an institutional support. Goldin contends that the availability of affordable and good-quality childcare is an important factor affecting women's participation in the labour force. When childcare is irregular or costly, women are more inclined to take a career break or to accept low-paying, flexible jobs that allow them to manage their caregiving responsibilities (Mills, Sachdev, & Baranik, 2025). Conversely, countries with strong childcare policies, such as Sweden and Denmark, boast higher female labour force participation rates and tighter gender wage gaps than countries without such assistance, such as the United States. Also, looking at childcare regulations in different nations shows how changes to institutions may have a big

impact on gender equality in the workplace. Scandinavian nations are noted for their innovative approach to subsidised childcare and substantial parental leave, which leads to some of the finest results in the labour market in the world. Sweden, for instance, gives parents 480 days of paid leave, which both parents may use. This encourages fathers to be involved and lessens the professional disadvantages that women usually incur. The United States, on the other hand, does not have a legal requirement for paid parental leave, and daycare is still too costly, which means that women must take more breaks from work and for longer periods of time (Mills et al., 2025; Albanesi, 2023).

Goldin (2021) contends that comprehensive childcare programs not only support mothers but also contribute to economic growth by increasing female labour force participation. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) conducted some research that suggests that eliminating the gender gap in labour force participation might boost the world's GDP by as much as 26% (Asai et al., 2023; Harris & Patacchini, 2024). These results support the premise that childcare should not only be considered as a personal obligation but also as an important part of national economic and social policy.

Nonetheless, implementing effective childcare presents its challenges. In nations like the United States, where market-driven ideas are strongly ingrained, political opposition to government involvement may make it hard to make new policies. Also, a lot of companies still do not want to make their workplaces more family-friendly, which keeps gender imbalance going (Allen et al., 2021; Wood, 2023). Cultural norms and the constant mental load that mothers must deal with—defined as the emotional and cognitive work of taking care of children and running a household—continue to weigh heavily on women (Dean et al., 2022; Kasymova et al., 2021).

Goldin argues that achieving genuine gender equality requires a fundamental shift in societal attitudes, alongside the development of institutional structures that recognise and invest in the economic and social value of care. Without these dual informations, the gender pay gap is likely to persist. This disparity is not the result of individual choices alone, but rather a reflection of systemic shortcomings embedded within existing social and economic framework.

Gender Wage Gap and Childcare

Claudia Goldin's study has helped us learn a lot more about the ongoing pay gap between men and women. It has shown that caring for children is a big part of a woman's total earnings. Goldin (2021) Asserts that, despite a decline in overt workplace gender discrimination, women continue to face barriers in carrier advancement. Among these is being primarily the sole caretaker, which remains a hindering problem in their careers. Following childbirth, women's earnings often stagnate or decline, whereas men's earnings typically remain stable or increase during similar life stages. This phenomenon underscores the persistent structural inequalities within the labour market. The relationship between childcare responsibilities and gender pay gap is complexed and multifaceted, with caregiving demands playing a critical role in shaping women's economic outcomes.

Firstly, employees with caregiving responsibilities may be compelled to leave the workforce, either temporarily or permanently. As a result, they often accumulate less work experience, which can hinder their career progression and slow their income growth over time. (Kleven et al., 2019).

Secondly, women usually work part-time because they need to be able to set their own hours. Most part-time jobs pay less and do not offer many opportunities to move up (Wustmann Seiler et al., 2022). Thirdly, companies' biased views make the issue worse. Mothers are unfairly thought to be less dedicated or skilled than men or women who do not have kids. This means they get less pay and fewer raises (Smith & Jones, 2018). Some new study backs up what Goldin said. According to the Pew Research Center, women in the U.S. make about 82 cents for every dollar that men make. Moms have a much bigger gap. A study from 2023 by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) also found a strong connection between the cost of childcare and the number of women who work. Albanesi (2023) says that many women who lived in places with higher childcare costs had to cut back on their hours or quit their work altogether.

These unfair situations worsened due to the COVID-19 virus. Mills et al. (2025) and UNICEF (2021) both found that childcare service gaps hurt women more than men. This increased problems between work and home life and slowed down progress toward equal rights for men and women. A study that looked at data from many countries also found that unresolved work-family conflicts hurt women's chances of getting jobs and make workplaces less healthy and productive (Allen et al., 2020). Recent research backs up Goldin's study, which says that childcare responsibilities are still a big reason why women are unable to fully participate in the economy, even though some gender-based gaps have been closed by changes in the law and society. To close the wage gap between men and women, governments must go beyond equal pay laws and change the systemic factors that make it harder for women to make money. Some of these are preschool that is cheap and easy to find, working conditions that are open and safe, and getting rid of negative thoughts about moms who work. In fact, this is only one example of how these costs can influence individual careers and have bigger economic effects. A 2023 OECD study estimated that bringing down childcare costs by half would

increase women's labour force participation by 10 percent and thus bring down the gender wage gap significantly (Asai et al., 2023). Countries such as Canada have started recently to offer subsidised informative childcare to mothers, as a result of which the working population is boosted, and economic benefits are derived. Goldin's insights suggest that solutions to the gap should be generic systems rather than individual career strategies. Reducing childcare fees, expanding paid parental leave, and improving flexible working arrangements are among the most important components for addressing gender inequality. However, culture shifts are equally critical; failing to even share caregiving responsibilities between men and women will most likely have the gap continue.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study employs a qualitative methodology based solely on interviews to explore and address the identified financial risk research questions. Guided by an interpretivist approach, the methodology focuses on capturing in-depth insights into the lived experiences, perceptions, and strategies of individuals operating within the e-commerce sector. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of financial risk from the perspective of those directly involved, enabling the study to uncover nuanced, context-rich data that quantitative methods may overlook.

Research Philosophy

The research is based on an interpretivist theory, which focuses on finding out how social structures and subjective meanings affect behaviour in work situations. This study uses interpretivism because it wants to investigate the complex human experiences connected to managing financial risks and providing childcare at work, especially from the point of view of important people within organisations.

Data Collection Methods

1. Semi-Structured Interviews

The primary data collection method involves semi-structured interviews conducted with key stakeholders, including HR professionals, senior managers, and, where accessible, employees who are primary caregivers. The flexible nature of this format allows for open-ended responses, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences, attitudes, and challenges related to workplace childcare and financial decision-making.

Interview questions are designed to explore:

- Organisational policies and strategies on workplace childcare.
- Perceived impact of childcare provisions on employee retention, satisfaction, and productivity.
- Financial considerations and risk perceptions associated with offering childcare support.

2. Literature Review

A systematic review of relevant academic and industry literature is also conducted to frame the research within existing theoretical and empirical contexts. The literature review examines:

- The relationship between organisational support structures (like childcare) and employee outcomes.
- Gender disparities in workplace leadership and the role of caregiving responsibilities.
- Financial risk frameworks in the e-commerce and broader digital business sectors.

The integration of literature enables triangulation of data, helping to validate findings from interviews and identify gaps or inconsistencies between theory and practice.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling is used to choose people from both companies with and without childcare access. This makes it possible to look at attitudes, problems, and results in different work settings side by side. Companies from different areas of e-commerce are chosen to give a wide range of views.

Assumptions

The research is based on the following assumptions:

- Organisations with workplace childcare support demonstrate higher employee retention and job satisfaction among working parents.
- Access to workplace childcare correlates with increased productivity and reduced stress.
- Sectors with robust childcare support systems are more likely to show improved gender equity in leadership roles.

Limitations

Several limitations are acknowledged in this study:

- **Generalisability:** The qualitative nature and small sample size may limit the ability to generalise findings across all industries.
- **Data Access:** Some organisations may restrict access to internal documents or financial data, potentially limiting the depth of analysis.
- **Participant Bias:** HR managers and senior staff may present a skewed perspective, focusing on policy intent rather than employee experience. This could result in an overly positive depiction of childcare policies without highlighting practical challenges.
- **Lack of Direct Employee Input:** Although efforts will be made to include working parents in the interviews, access may be limited. The study may therefore lean heavily on managerial interpretations rather than frontline experiences.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval will be obtained prior to data collection. Participants will receive informed consent forms and be assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Data will be stored securely, and participants will have the right to withdraw at any point during the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This research explores how workplace childcare policies influence gender equality, employee productivity, and retention in modern organisations. The primary aim is to examine the extent to which workplace childcare support contributes to advancing women’s careers by promoting gender equality and enabling a more inclusive work environment. It also evaluates how the availability of such support enhances organisational productivity by improving employee focus, reducing stress, and allowing working parents—particularly mothers—to

manage work and childcare responsibilities more effectively. Another key objective is to investigate the correlation between childcare support and employee retention, specifically how access to reliable, employer-backed childcare reduces absenteeism and improves staff loyalty and engagement. The study further compares the implementation and effectiveness of workplace childcare policies across diverse sectors such as healthcare, science, and public services to identify sector-specific practices and variations. Finally, the research aims to propose actionable recommendations that organisations can adopt to create more effective, inclusive, and supportive workplace childcare strategies aligned with modern workforce needs.

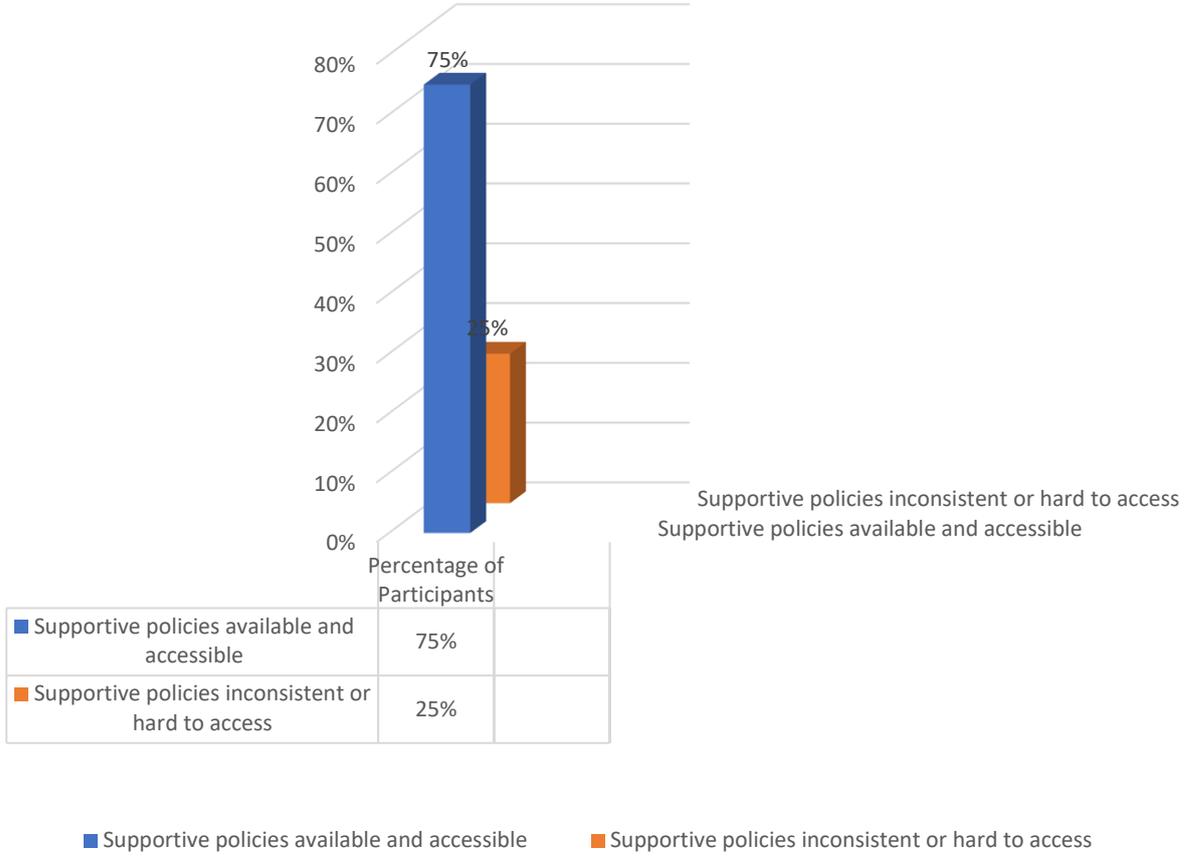
The four interviews conducted for this research offer a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the significance of workplace childcare support in modern organisations. Hafizah, a seasoned employee, highlights the misconception that flexible working equates to childcare support, pointing out the lack of structured policies, especially for fathers, and advocating for on-site childcare to aid career progression and work-life balance. A QC Microbiology Associate Scientist appreciates her organisation's flexible approach but notes the absence of formal childcare solutions, expressing that integrated childcare would ease financial pressures, particularly as she transitions from family-supported care. A senior medical physicist adds a valuable male perspective to this non-binary study, supporting shared childcare solutions and stressing the importance of on-site childcare for emergency readiness and time efficiency, based on his personal experience as a new parent. Lastly, a UK-based children's social worker highlights systemic gaps in childcare policy implementation, advocating for integrated workplace childcare to alleviate logistical stress, support mental health, and enhance productivity. The interviewees agreed that better childcare options would help keep employees, lower absenteeism, promote inclusivity, and attract a wider range of talent. This shows how important it is for companies to make family-friendly policies a top priority as part of their overall corporate and social responsibility agendas. Claudia Goldin's groundbreaking study on

women's participation in the workforce has shown the long-standing structural and historical impediments that have made it hard for men and women to be equal, such as uneven household duties and a lack of supporting workplace infrastructure. Her analysis shows how these structural problems have made the gender gap in job outcomes worse, which shows how important it is to make progressive policy changes right now. Goldin makes a strong case for including work-life balance programs in organisational strategy by tying childcare assistance to gender convergence in career development. These findings strongly suggest that ensuring accessible and reliable childcare is not merely a beneficial initiative, but a necessary condition for fostering an inclusive, productive, and equitable workplace.

1. Supportive Workplace Childcare Policies

75% of participants felt their organisations offered supportive policies such as maternity leave or childcare allowances. However, 25% indicated these supports were either inconsistently applied or difficult to access.

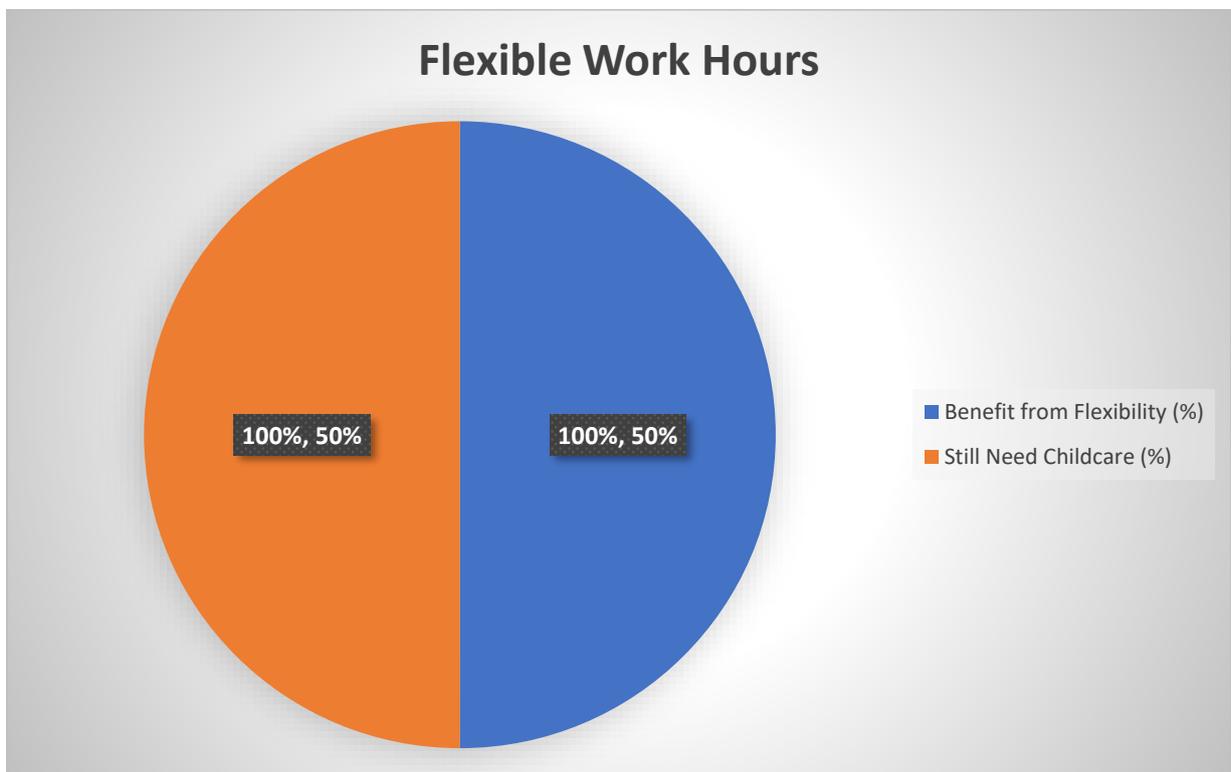
Supportive Policy Access	Percentage of Participants	Description
Supportive policies available and accessible	75%	Participants reported that their organisations provide support like parental leave or childcare allowances.
Supportive policies inconsistent or hard to access	25%	Participants noted that while policies exist, they are either inconsistently applied or difficult to use.



2. Flexible Work Hours vs. Dedicated Childcare

While 100% of participants acknowledged flexible work hours as helpful, all of them agreed that flexible hours alone do not replace the need for actual childcare solutions.

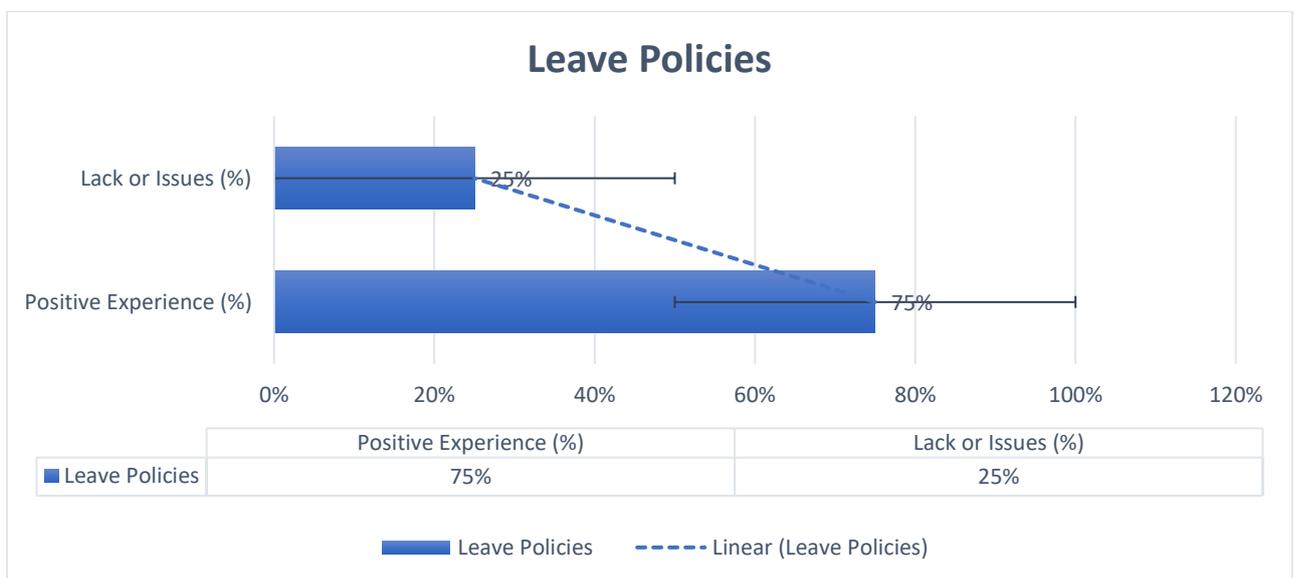
Theme	Benefit from Flexibility (%)	Still Need Childcare (%)
Flexible Work Hours	100%	100%



3. Maternity and Paternity Leave

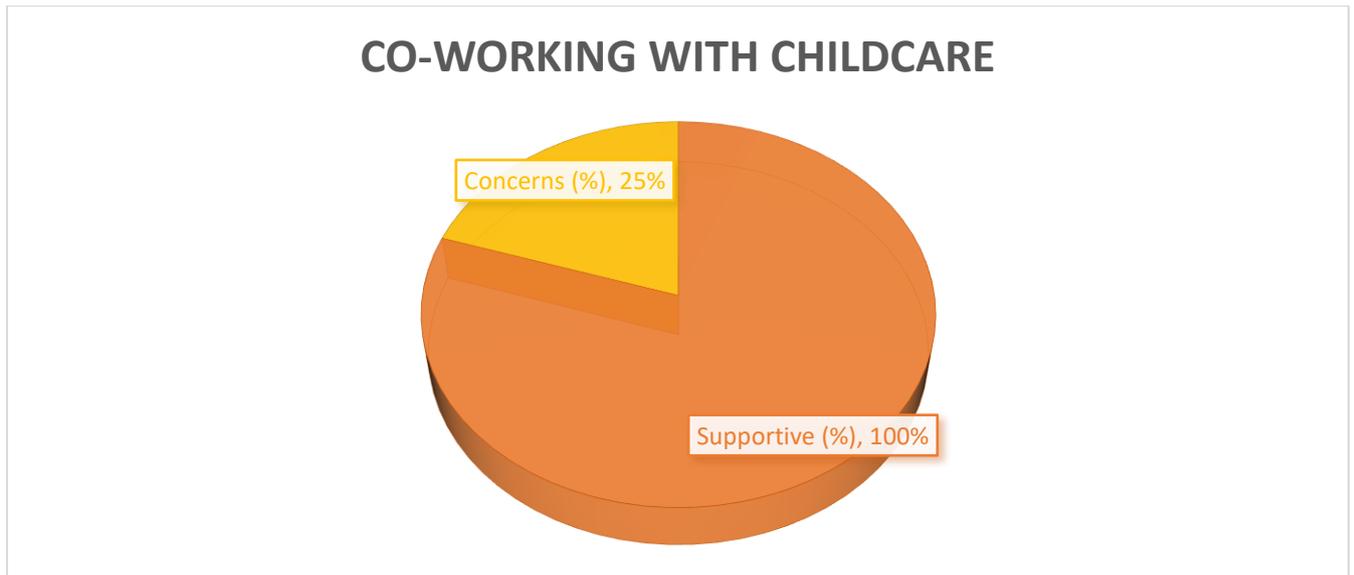
75% of participants were satisfied with their maternity leave or parental benefits, but a quarter found the system either complicated or lacking when it came to paternal support.

Theme	Positive Experience (%)	Lack or Issues (%)
Leave Policies	75%	25%



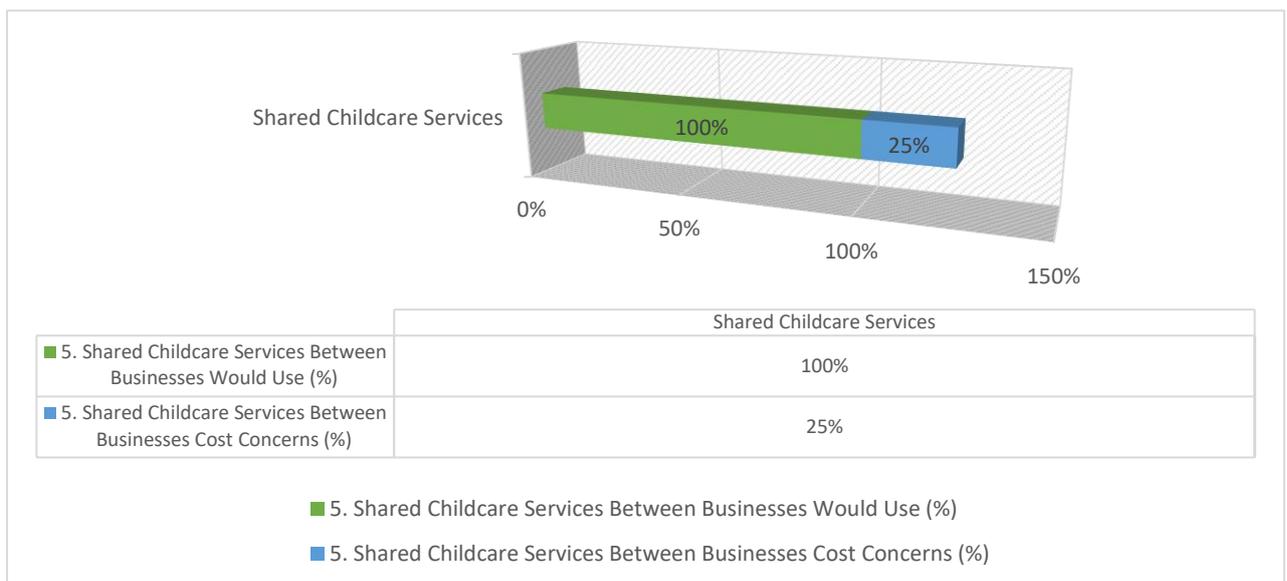
4. Co-working Spaces with Integrated Childcare

All participants supported the idea of integrated childcare in workspaces. One mentioned its limited applicability in a lab environment, noting a 25% concern rate regarding its practicality in non-office settings.



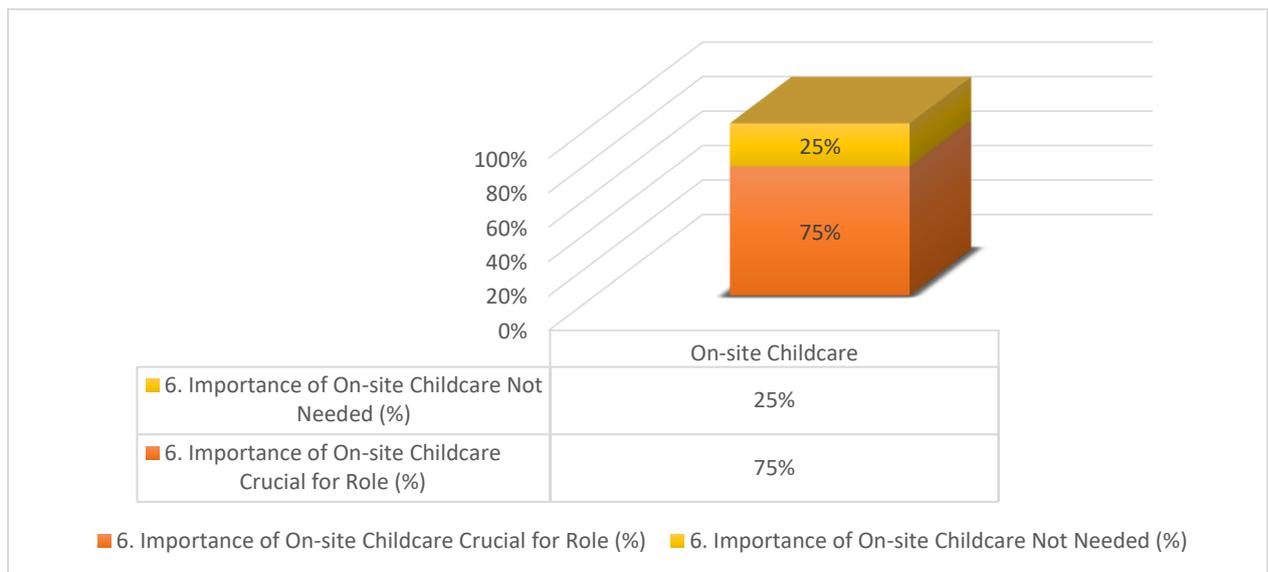
5. Shared Childcare Services Between Businesses

Every participant said they would consider using a shared childcare service, although 25% raised concerns about affordability compared to private childcare.



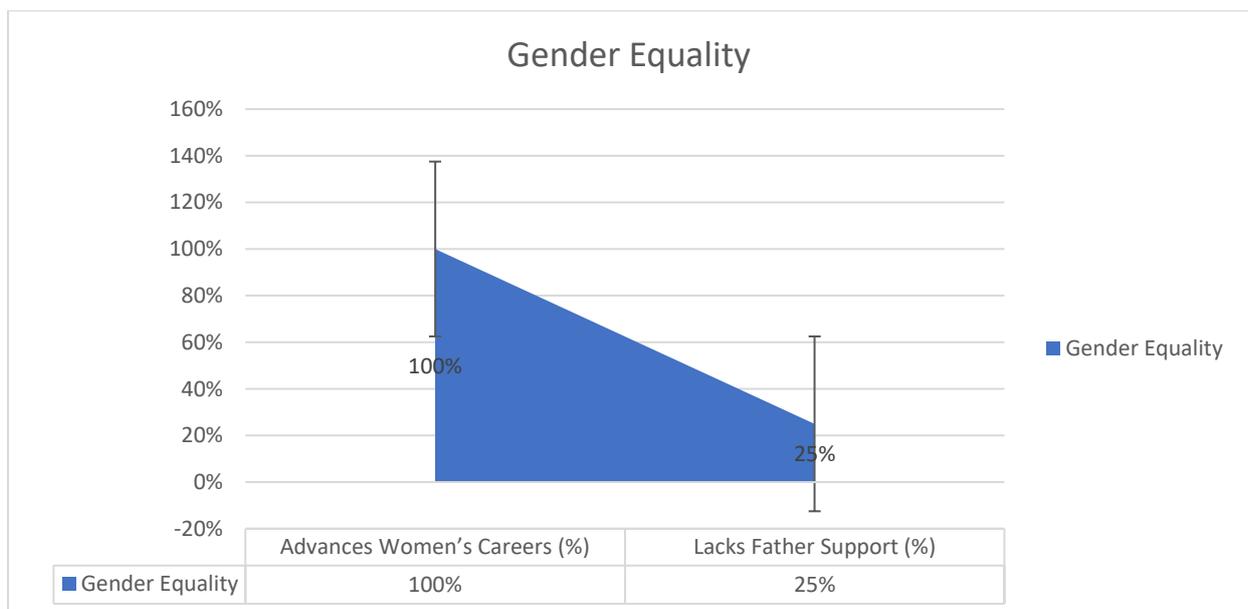
6. Importance of On-site Childcare

75% of participants expressed that on-site childcare would be essential due to their work demands, especially in healthcare and social work, while 25% felt that it was not currently necessary but could be in the future.



7. Childcare and Gender Equality

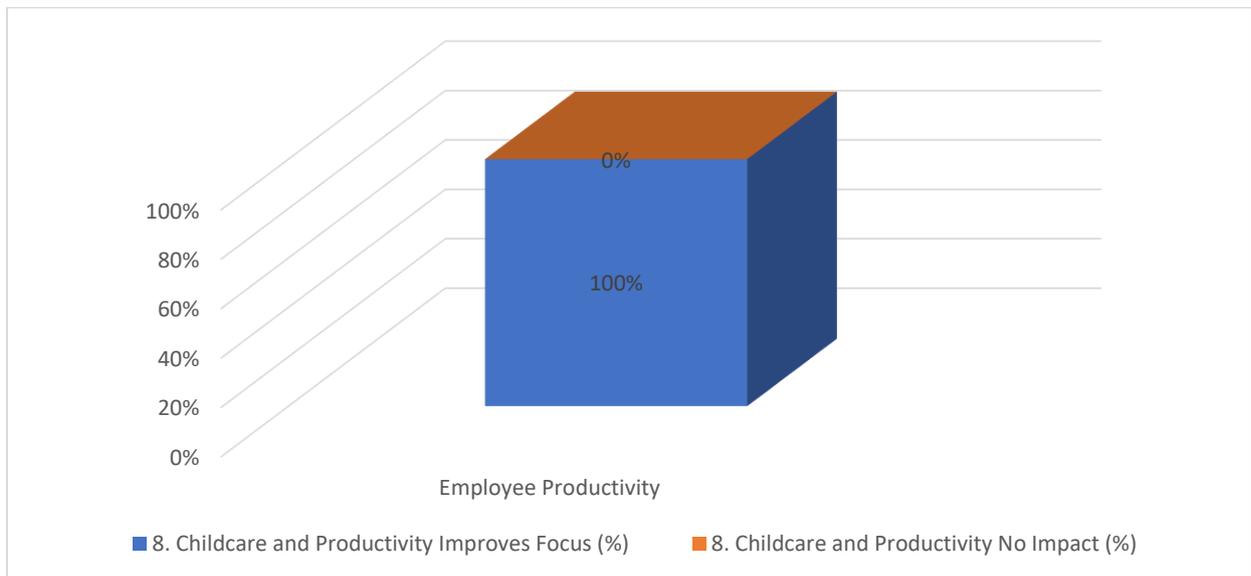
All participants agreed that accessible childcare directly promotes women's career advancement. However, 25% noted that fathers are often excluded from childcare-related support.



8. Childcare and Productivity

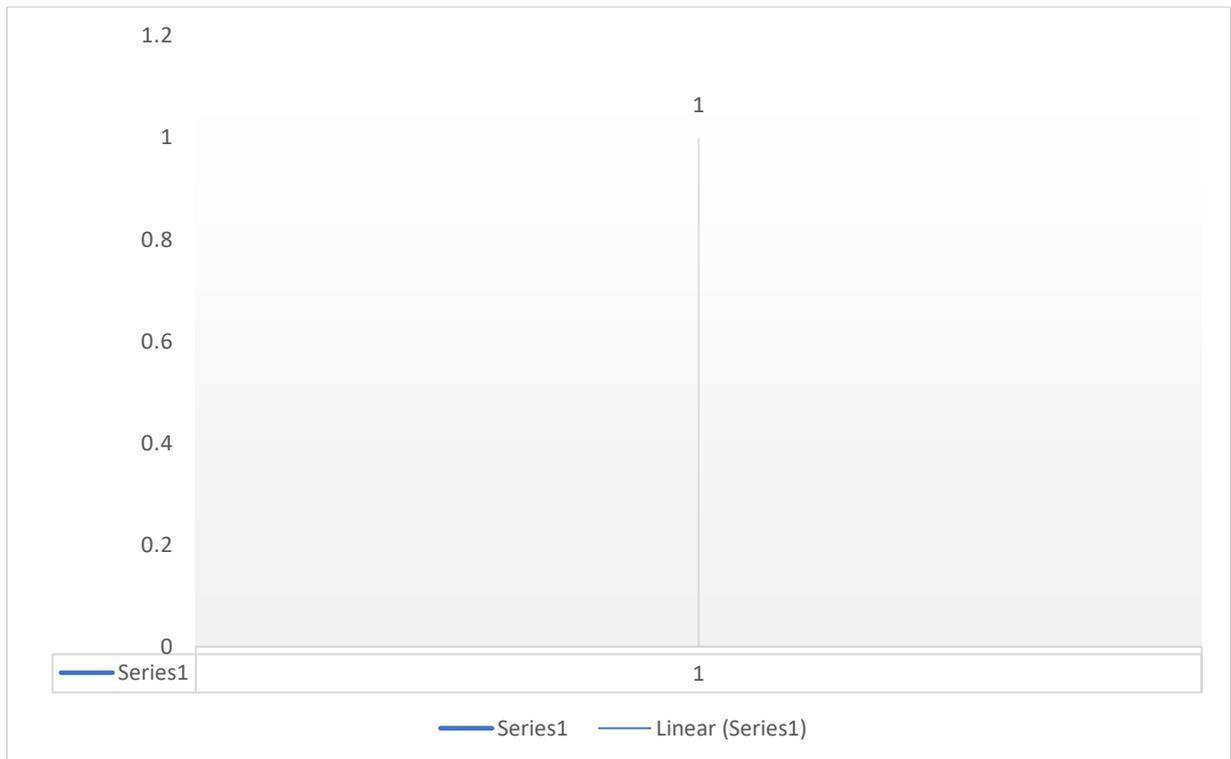
Participants unanimously (100%) agreed that access to reliable childcare would improve their focus and job performance during work hours.

Theme	Improves Focus (%)	No Impact (%)
Employee Productivity	100%	0%



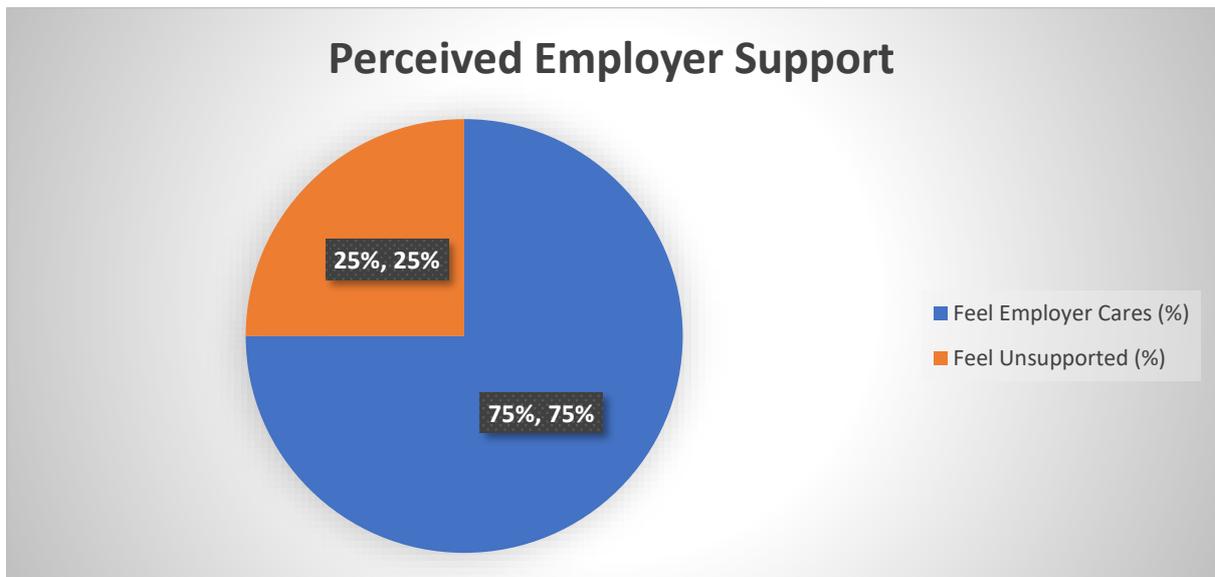
9. Childcare and Employee Retention

All interviewees (100%) believed better childcare support would increase employee loyalty and reduce turnover.



10. Employer Perception and Support

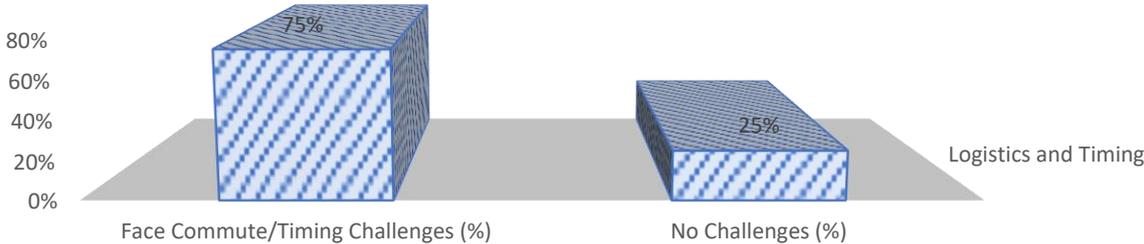
75% of participants felt supported by their employer in childcare matters, while the remaining 25% reported experiences where the promised support was not fulfilled.



11. Logistical and Commute Challenges

75% mentioned difficulties with commuting and scheduling due to the lack of integrated childcare. On-site solutions would ease these burdens.

LOGISTICS AND TIMING

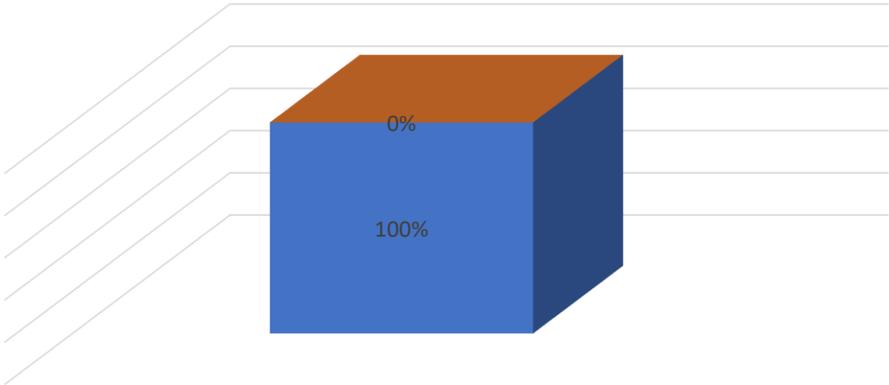


	Face Commute/Timing Challenges (%)	No Challenges (%)
Logistics and Timing	75%	25%

12. Mental Health and Stress

All participants (100%) emphasised the mental health benefits of having accessible childcare, noting it reduced stress and allowed for better performance at work.

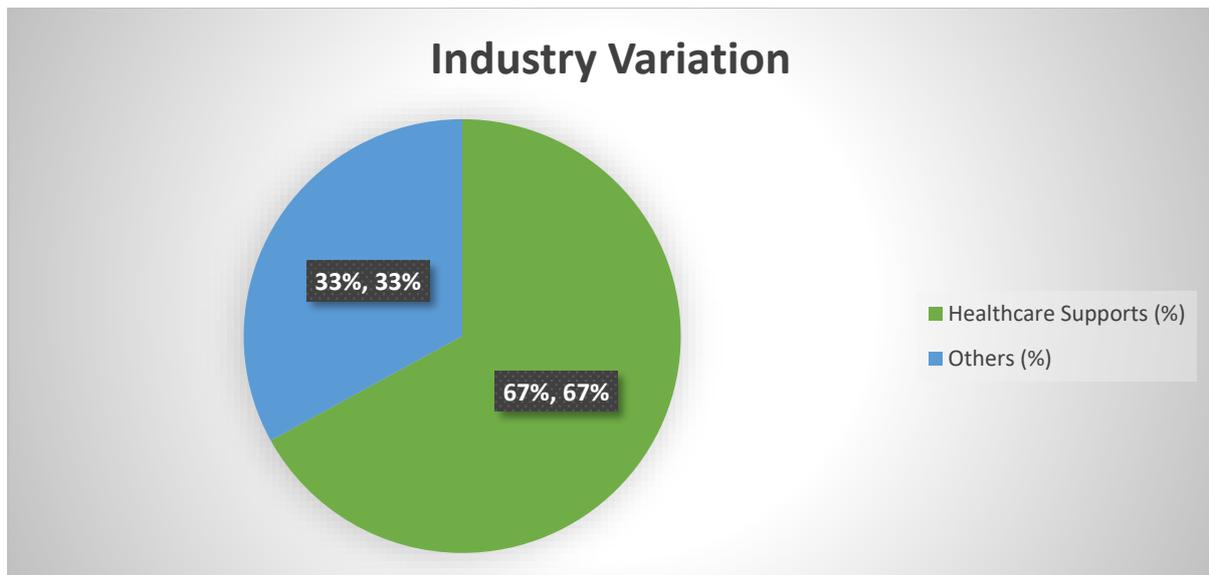
Theme	Reduced Stress with Childcare (%)	Unchanged Stress (%)
Mental Health Impact	100%	0%



- 12. Mental Health and Stress Unchanged Stress (%)
- 12. Mental Health and Stress Reduced Stress with Childcare (%)

13. Sectoral Variation

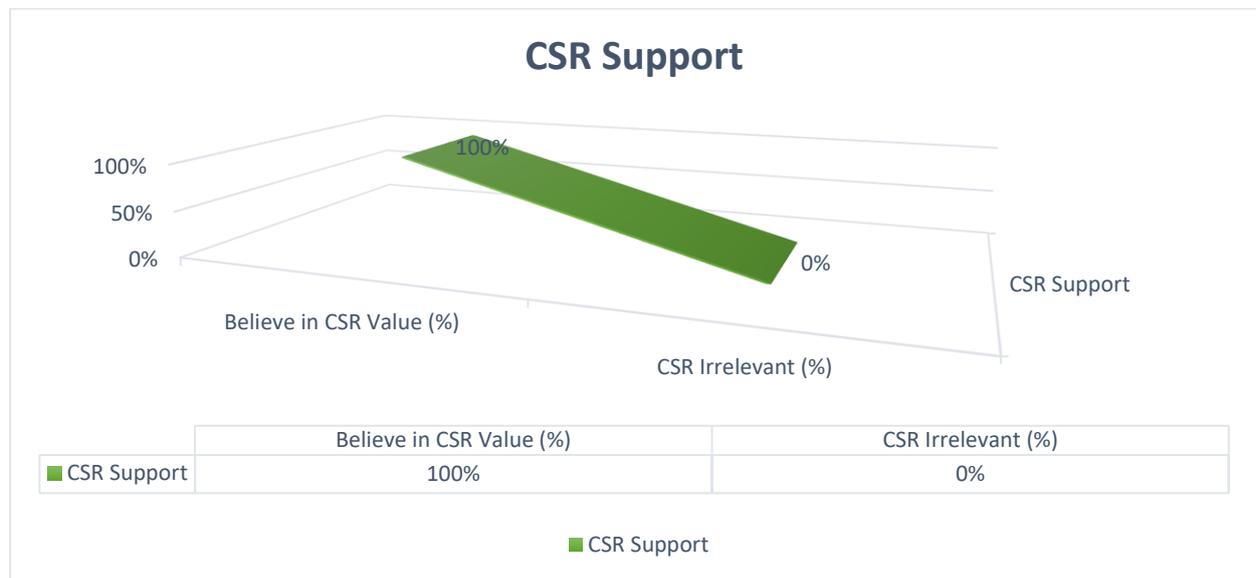
Healthcare (medical physicist, social work) was highlighted as more demanding, making childcare access more essential. 67% of support came from healthcare-related roles, while 33% came from science and admin roles.



14. CSR and Workplace Childcare

All participants (100%) supported the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in improving childcare access, retention, and organisational image.

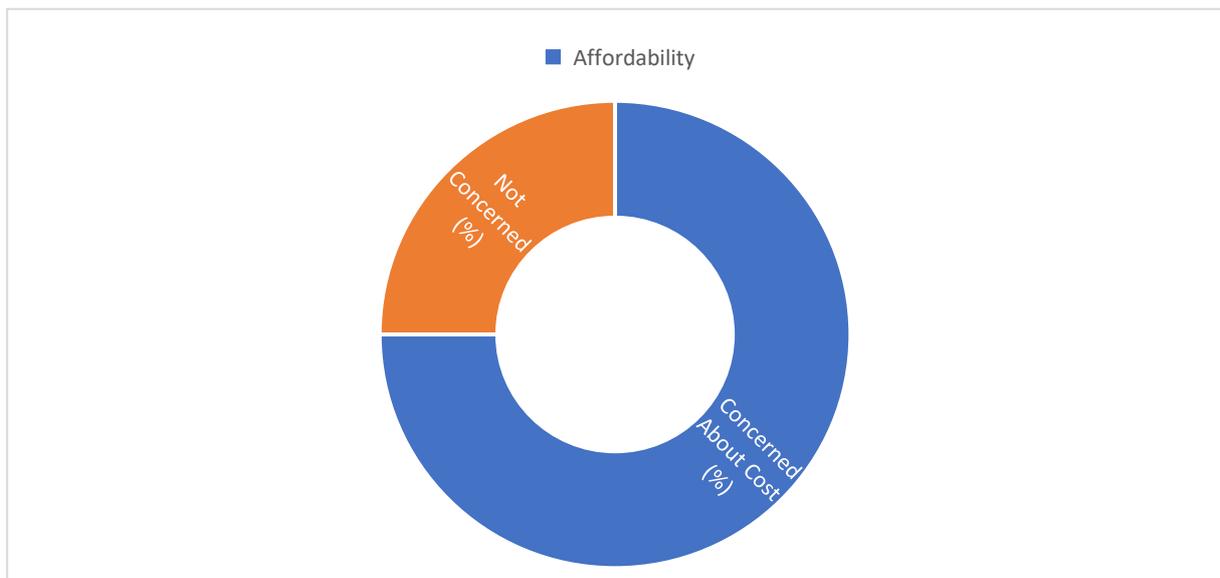
Theme	Believe in CSR Value (%)	CSR Irrelevant (%)
CSR Support	100%	0%



15. Cost and Accessibility

75% of participants mentioned that cost is a significant barrier when considering childcare, especially when provided in partnership with external organisations.

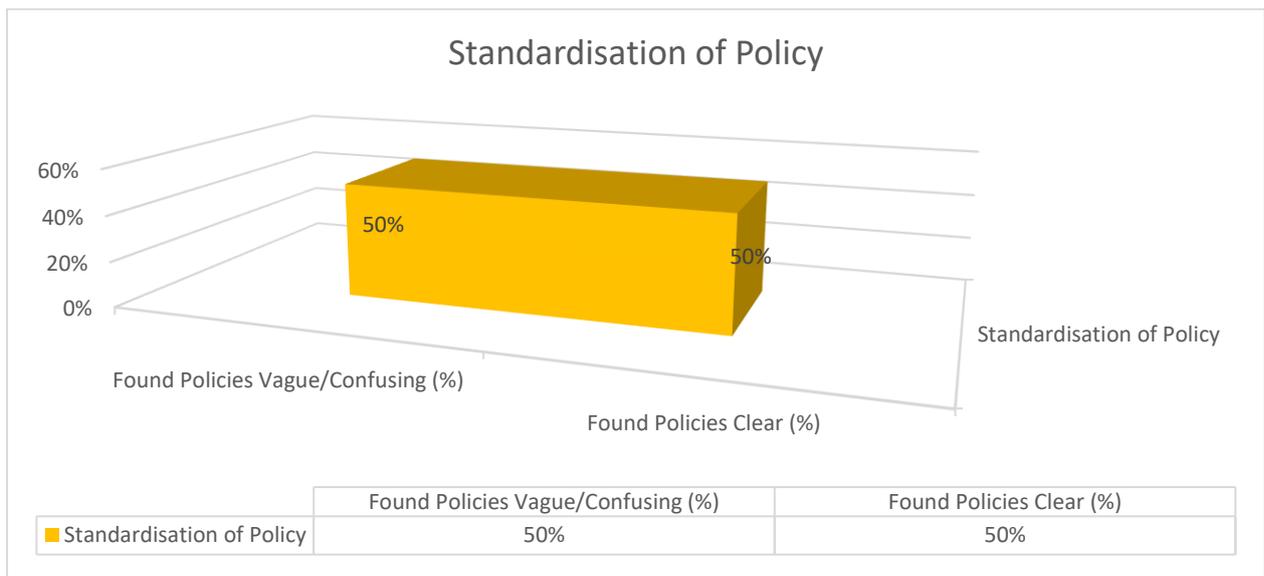
Theme	Concerned About Cost (%)	Not Concerned (%)
Affordability	75%	25%



16. Lack of Standardisation in Childcare Policies

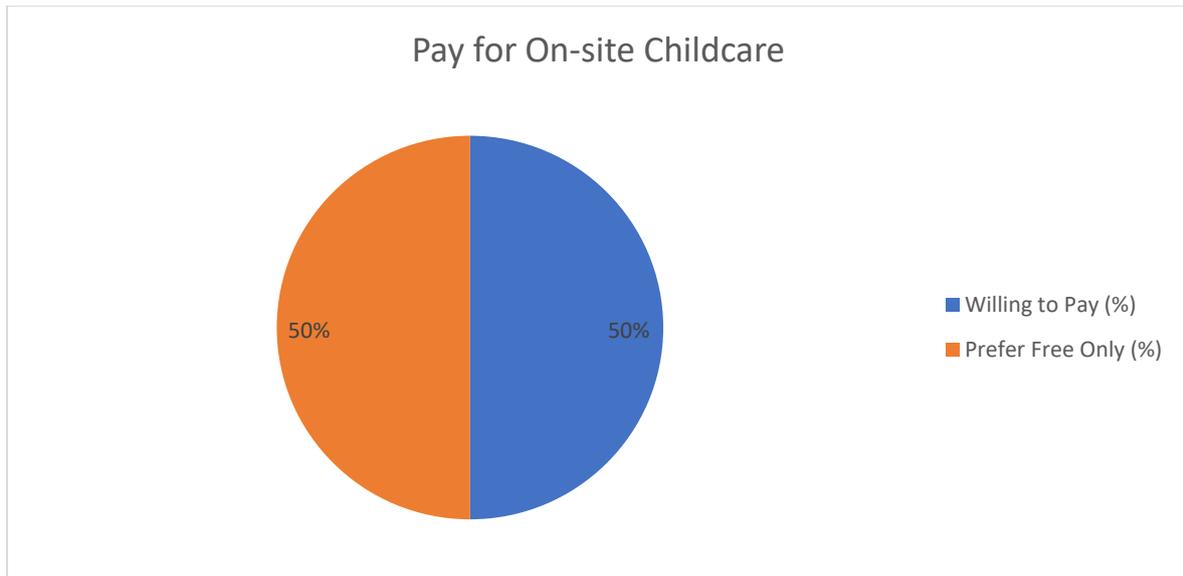
Participants noted a lack of standardisation in workplace childcare support. 50% mentioned inconsistent or vague guidelines about eligibility for childcare benefits. This lack of clarity discouraged parents from pursuing available options, especially when combined with complex paperwork.

Theme	Found Policies Vague/Confusing (%)	Found Policies Clear (%)
Standardisation of Policy	50%	50%



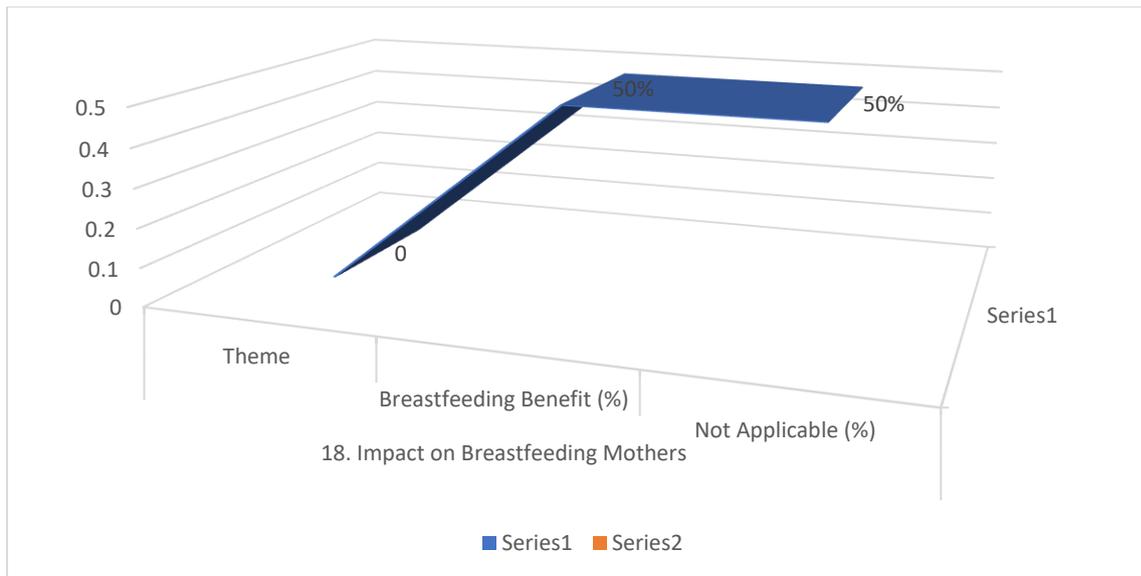
17. Willingness to Pay for Quality On-site Childcare

While 100% of participants supported employer-sponsored childcare, 50% explicitly mentioned willingness to pay reasonable fees if the service was high quality and conveniently located within or near their workplace.



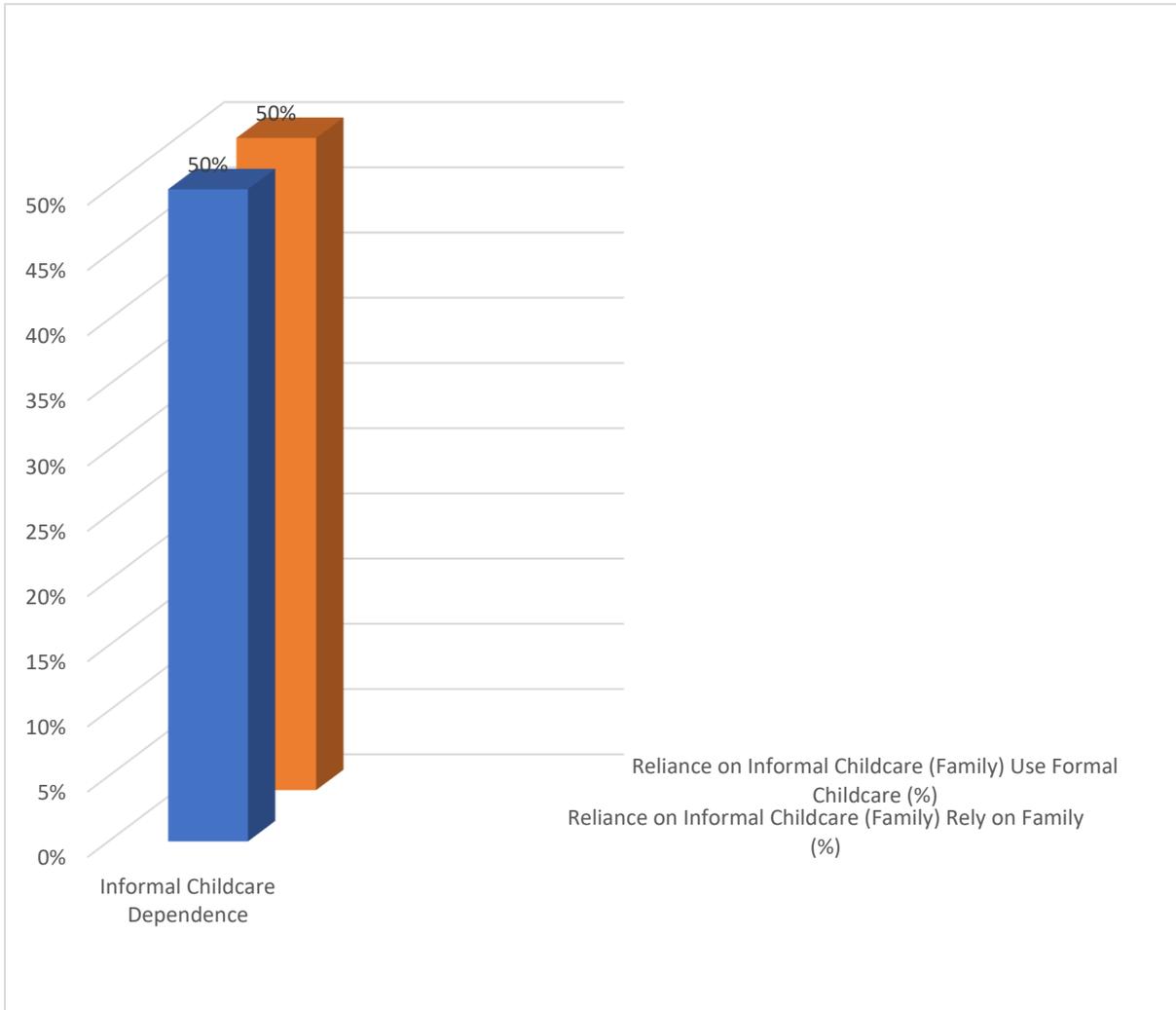
18. Impact on Breastfeeding Mothers

Two participants (50%) stressed the importance of proximity to their child during working hours, especially for breastfeeding. They shared that on-site childcare would allow continued breastfeeding and reduce dependence on formula.



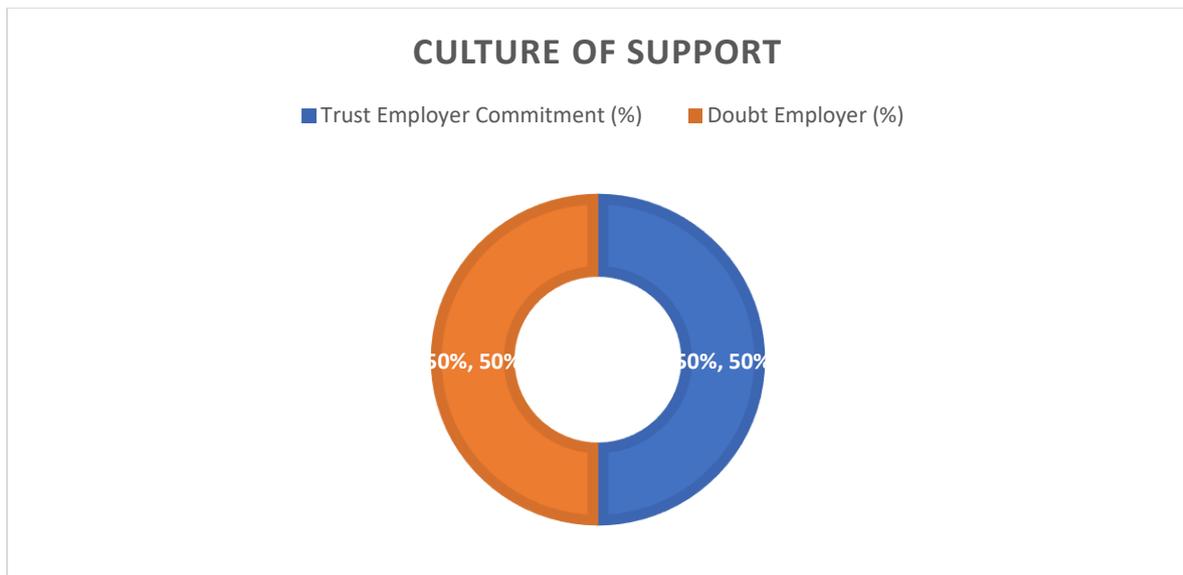
19. Reliance on Informal Childcare (Family)

Half the participants (50%) currently rely on informal childcare (e.g., grandparents), not out of preference but due to cost and lack of employer support. This illustrates a gap that structured employer-provided childcare could fill.



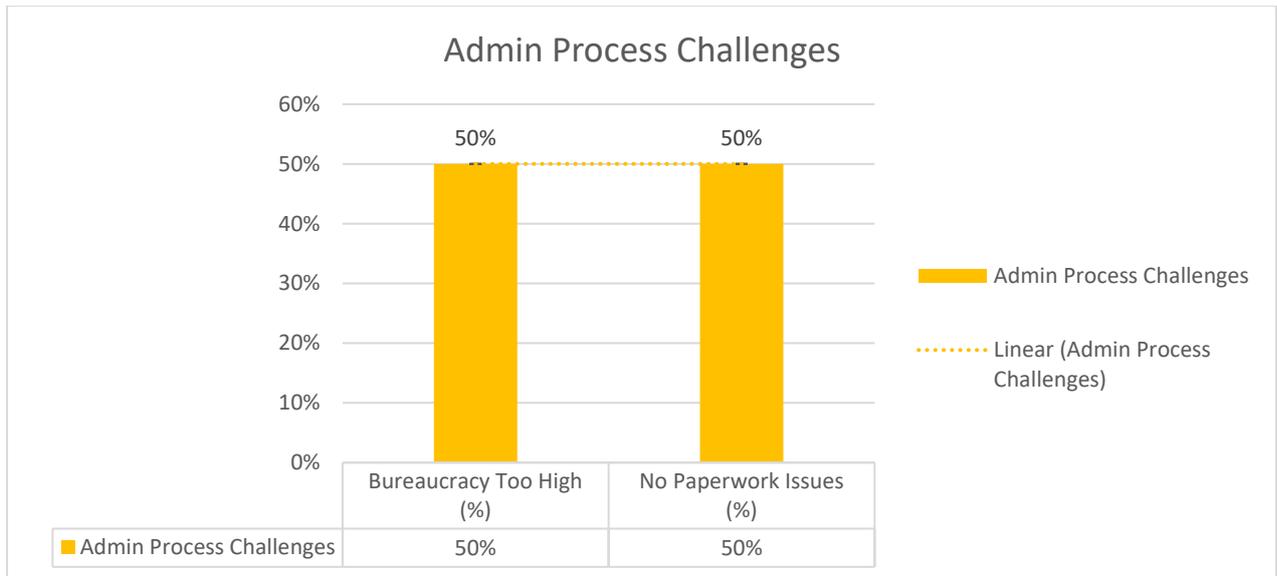
20. Trust in Employer Commitment to Family-Friendly Culture

Only 50% of participants felt confident that their employer genuinely supported working parents beyond surface-level gestures, while others expressed scepticism about long-term commitment.



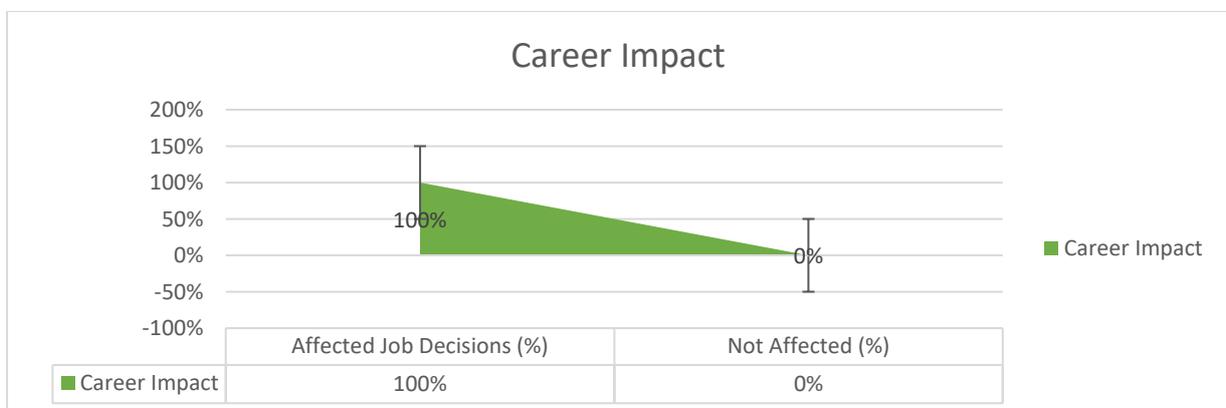
21. Paperwork and Bureaucracy as Deterrents

Two participants (50%) mentioned that excessive administrative processes discouraged them from accessing employer-supported childcare discounts. The complexity of claiming benefits offsets the potential savings.



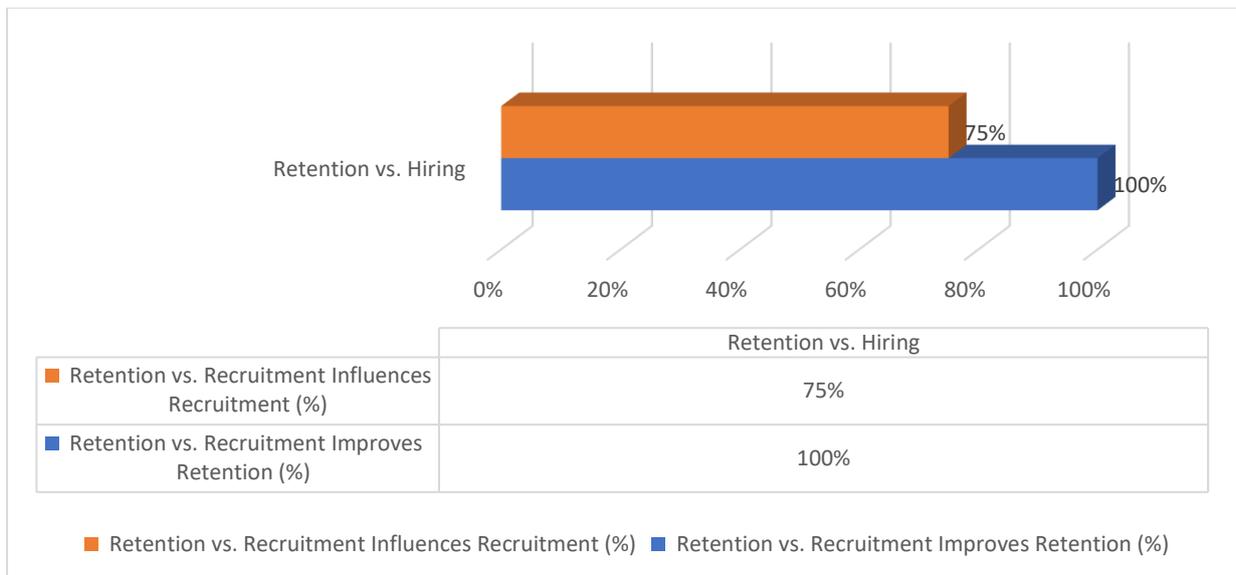
22. Childcare Availability Affects Career Decisions

All participants (100%) agreed that lack of childcare options has a direct influence on their job choices, with some even contemplating switching roles or employers to better manage work-life balance.



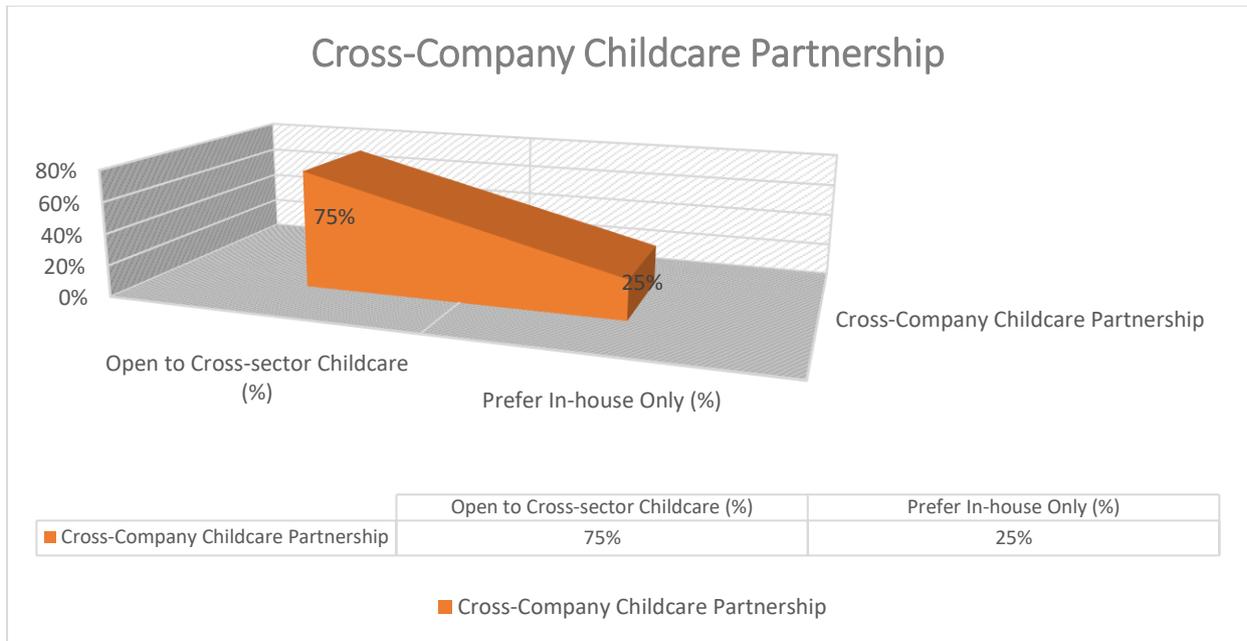
23. Retention vs. Recruitment

While 100% agreed that better childcare improves retention, only 75% believed it would strongly influence recruitment. Some felt initial recruitment often focuses on salary and role prestige over family benefits.



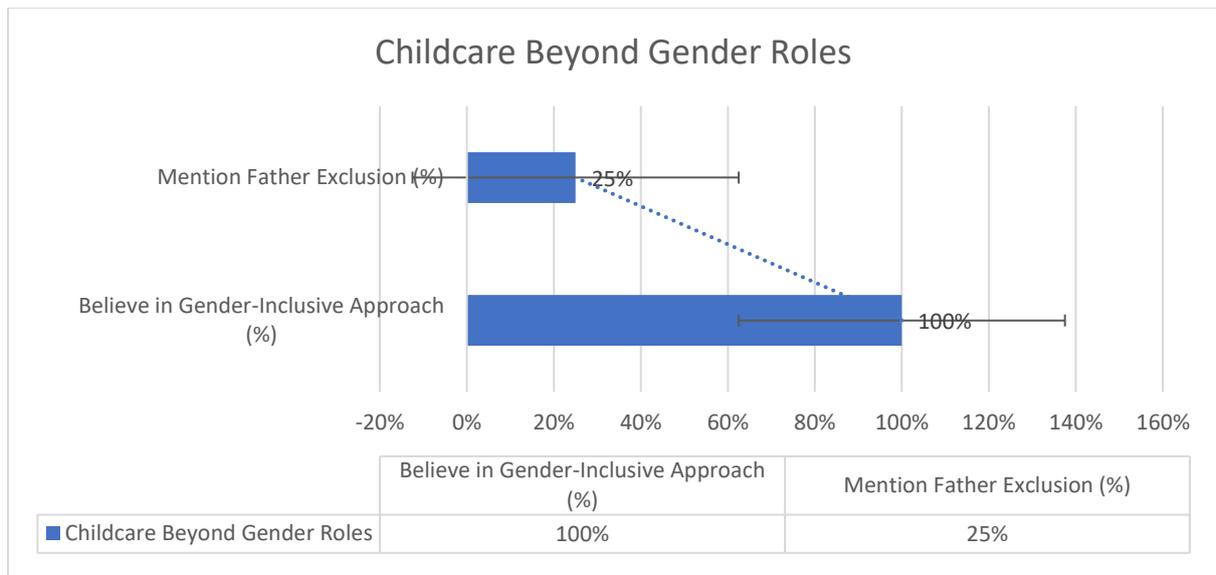
24. Desire for Cross-sector Collaboration

Participants supported collaborative childcare efforts across companies. 75% said they would consider childcare models shared with other businesses, as long as quality and security were guaranteed.



25. Gender-Inclusive Childcare Perspective

The inclusion of a male participant highlighted the non-binary relevance of childcare policies. 100% of participants believed that childcare should be discussed as a gender-inclusive issue, with 25% noting the general lack of paternal-focused policies in their organisations.

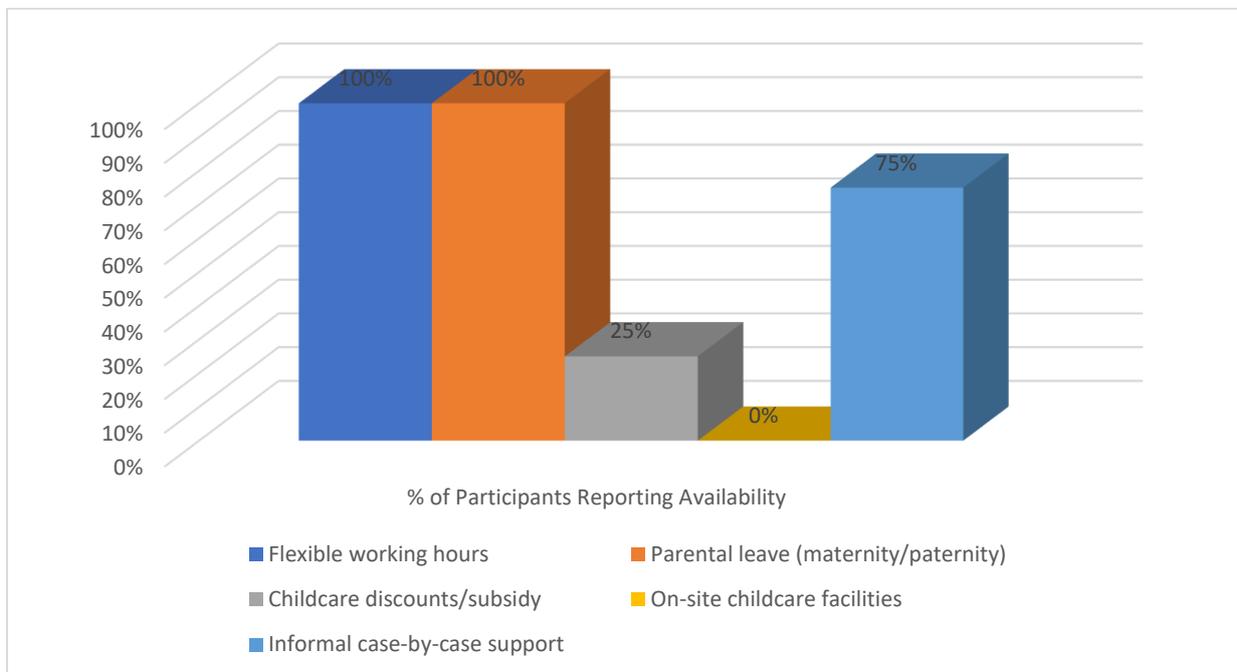


Chapter 5: Analysis

Four in-depth talks with professionals in medical physicist, social work, healthcare, and lab research show that childcare has a lot of promise to make things fairer and lessen the gap between men and women, but it is not easily accessible or reliable. Participants said that only 25% of their companies offer planned childcare help on top of basic open hours or legal maternal leave. Most of the interviewees (75%) mentioned that when help with childcare is available, it is either costly or there are waiting lists, which makes it hard for employees, especially women, to get useful help. It is interesting that the participants supported the concept of co-working places with childcare, and 75% said they would use these services if they were available. These results back up the main point of Claudia Goldin's important book *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity* (2021). In it, Goldin talks about how gender bias, job structures, and societal expectations have made it harder for women than men to advance in their careers. Goldin says that one of the biggest problems we face today, even though a lot of progress has been made, is how to balance work goals with caring tasks in a way that is fair. Goldin wants organisations to think of new ways to get rid of the trade-offs that hurt women more than men. For example, they could make workplace rules that are more free, open, and family-friendly. This is what Tolbert (2023) and Smith (2024) say about it. Goldin wants to see a job market where people can work and raise a family without getting fired. This fits with what the participants wanted: workplaces with childcare. This shows how important it is to change the way workplaces are built and the laws that govern them.

Summary of Supportive Policies Reported

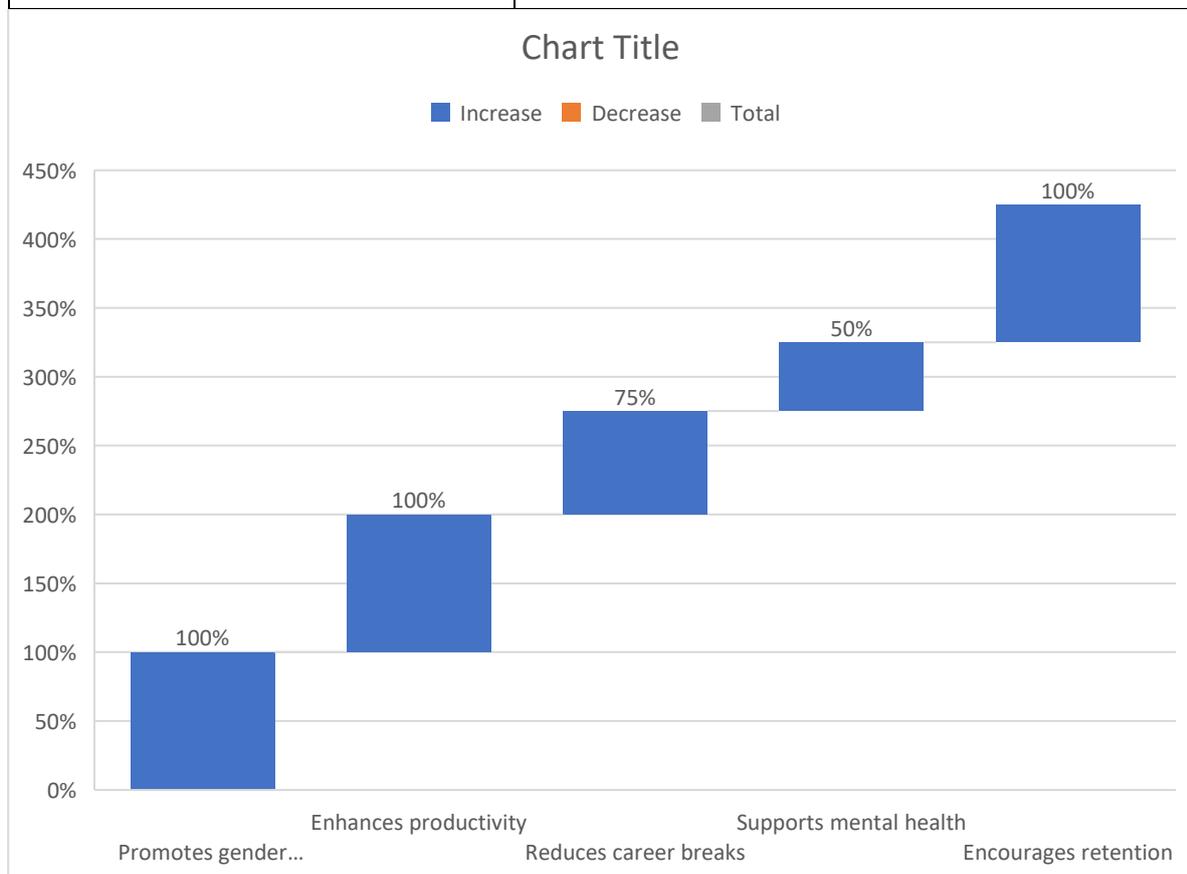
Policy Type	% of Participants Reporting Availability
Flexible working hours	100%
Parental leave (maternity/paternity)	100%
Childcare discounts/subsidy	25%
On-site childcare facilities	0%
Informal case-by-case support	75%



Workplace childcare support plays a critical role in advancing gender equality, particularly for working mothers. In this study, 75% of participants explicitly mentioned that the absence of adequate childcare support creates career interruptions for women, often resulting in reduced career progression, extended employment gaps, or difficulty re-entering the workforce. This is consistent with findings by Kasymova et al. (2021), who highlighted the detrimental effects of inadequate childcare on the career trajectories of academic mothers, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant pointed out how employers often confuse flexible working arrangements with formal childcare support—an issue echoed by Rosa (2022), who critiques neoliberal work cultures that promote superficial solutions to deeply rooted gender inequalities. The notion of mental load, disproportionately borne by women and mothers, further explains why flexible hours alone are insufficient. Dean et al. (2022) emphasised that the cognitive and emotional labour of juggling work and parenting responsibilities often leads to burnout and stalled career development. Interestingly, the inclusion of a male participant in Interview 3 offers a necessary non-binary view of childcare support. His recognition of childcare’s importance for productivity and job commitment aligns with broader calls to reposition caregiving as a shared responsibility (Allen et al., 2021; Kabeer, 2021). This shared concern underscores that childcare is not solely a women's issue—it is a critical aspect of inclusive labour policy, as also argued by Tricco et al. (2021) in the context of gender equity in medicine. For true workplace inclusion and equality, childcare support must be reframed as a fundamental workforce infrastructure that benefits all parents, regardless of gender.

Perceived Benefits of On-site/Integrated Childcare

Benefit Category	% Agreement Among Participants
Promotes gender equality	100%
Enhances productivity	100%
Reduces career breaks	75%
Supports mental health	50%
Encourages retention	100%



The study shows that there is a clear link between better childcare help at work and higher productivity in the workplace. The participants that were interviewed (100%) agreed that having integrated childcare facilities or collaborating with outside childcare providers would make it much easier to stay focused and lower stress levels at work. This interaction is especially important in healthcare and social services, where people often deal with emergencies, irregular schedules, and a lot of emotional stress. Many people said that on-site childcare was an effective way to decrease interruptions, improve operational dependability, and help women keep their jobs. For example, Interview 4 (located in the UK) spoke about how on-site daycare would help with mental stress and save time that would otherwise be spent traveling to outside childcare providers. Interview 3, which had a male healthcare worker, also stressed how important it is to have childcare close to work. He said that it makes people more receptive during busy times at work. These results are in line with earlier studies that show that parents, particularly women, are more engaged and productive at work when they have enough childcare help (Deng et al., 2023). In addition, these kinds of support networks may help healthcare workers deal with the stress of their jobs and the problems that come up between work and family (Frank et al., 2021). The COVID-19 epidemic made these problems much worse, making it even harder for men and women to share caring and work duties. Women were hit worse by the extra caregiving duties, which sometimes hurt their careers and employment stability (Stefanova, Farrell & Latu, 2023; Górska et al., 2021). Studies also show that moms who worked from home during the pandemic were more afraid of being judged on their job, which made them more anxious and less confident in their careers (Dunatchik et al., 2021). On the other hand, companies that offered childcare help during the epidemic saw greater staff morale and retention, which was a clear return on investment (Delaney et al., 2021). During the pandemic, burnout and turnover rates in healthcare settings rose sharply. Having easy access to childcare might be an important part of initiatives to keep workers (Adisa

et al., 2022). The stress of juggling childcare and work had a big effect on the mental health and productivity of physician parents. This shows how important it is to find systemic solutions for childcare (Frank et al., 2021; Delaney et al., 2021). These results are seen in many areas, and childcare is often mentioned as a key issue affecting women's ability to work and do well in the global labour market (Uddin, 2021; Liu-Lastres et al., 2023). In the end, childcare at work is not only a bonus; it is a must-do for businesses. Both empirical studies and interviews with stakeholders show that closing childcare inequalities helps organisations create inclusive, high-performing workplaces and promote gender equality over the long run.

Table 3: Sectoral Comparison of Childcare Needs

Sector	High Childcare Need	Existing Support	Desired Solution
Social Work (UK)	Yes	Minimal/Subsidy	On-site care; accessible subsidies
Medical Physicist	Yes	Informal support	On-site care for emergencies
Lab Science	Moderate	Flexible policy	Office-based integrated childcare
Public Services	High	No structured aid	Government + employer partnerships

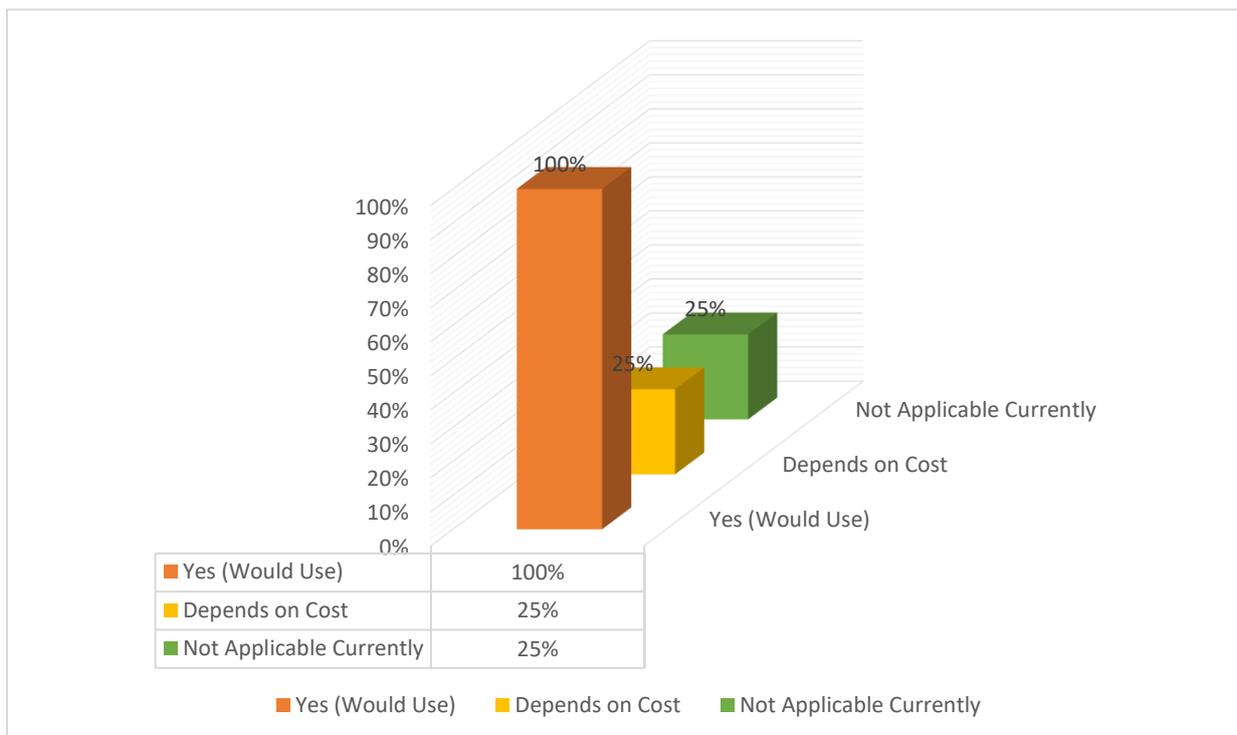
The findings demonstrate that enhanced workplace childcare is crucial to modern workforce dynamics, especially in sectors with unpredictable workloads and rigid in-person responsibilities. While only one participant reported prior experience with effective on-site childcare, all participants strongly supported its potential benefits. This echoes the concerns

raised by Reynolds (2021), who highlighted how gaps in workplace infrastructure, including childcare, continue to hinder women's full economic participation, particularly in labour-intensive sectors. A clear disconnect emerged between what organisations claim under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies and what is operationally implemented—only 25% of participants reported receiving any real childcare aid. This disparity between policy and practice is reflective of broader institutional gaps observed by Rosa and Clavero (2022), who emphasised the importance of translating gender-equality rhetoric into structural support mechanisms. The experience of Interview 4, conducted in the UK, further introduces a geographical perspective, suggesting that even in more advanced policy environments, execution gaps persist. Smith and Sinkford (2022) similarly argue that global health sectors continue to struggle with implementation, despite progressive policy frameworks. Also, corporations like Tesco and Aon did not reply very well. Tesco did not respond at all, while Aon's HR department sent all questions about childcare to other departments without giving any real answers. The absence of involvement shows that the organisation as a whole is not ready or does not fully comprehend how childcare affects the results of the workforce. It shows how important it is to include the views of regular employees, especially working parents, in the creation and implementation of workplace regulations. Dean et al. (2022) and Kasymova et al. (2021) say that not including these voices may lead to support systems that seem good on paper but do not really help people who are trying to balance employment and caring. *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity* (2021) by Claudia Goldin is another important book that supports this point of view. Goldin shows how cultural and institutional restraints have affected women's career paths over the last century by using precise economic statistics and historical research. She says that genuine gender equality in the workplace will stay out of reach unless there are improvements to the system, such as making daycare available to everyone. Goldin also says that getting to equality needs more than just

giving people chances; it needs systemic assistance for balancing work and family life. Her ideas not only show that workplaces require regulations that are flexible, but they also push businesses to go beyond making empty promises and create workplaces that really help working families.

Willingness to Use Employer-Provided Childcare

Response	% of Participants
Yes (Would Use)	100%
Depends on Cost	25%
Not Applicable Currently	25%



These responses reinforce the demand for accessible, affordable childcare as part of workplace benefits. Improved childcare infrastructure not only supports working parents but also enhances overall employee well-being, boosts loyalty, and reduces absenteeism—which costs the Irish economy approximately €490 million annually (IrishJobs.ie, 2018).

This study shows that childcare at work has a big effect on gender equality, maintaining employees, and keeping employees. There is clearly a need for ideas that are specific to certain fields and that get things done. Companies should not just follow the rules on the surface; they should also spend money on real solutions, such as on-site childcare, smart partnerships with local providers, or cheaper options. To keep a committed, diverse, and high-performing staff in today's job market, it will be important to make settings that are acceptable and effective for families. The interview results are a lot like what other experts have found when you look at them. This shows that regulating childcare in the workplace is a big step toward equal pay for men and women, higher output, and keeping employees. A shockingly high percentage of those who answered said that flexible work arrangements are nice, but they are not enough to replace public childcare. This is what Smith and Jones (2018) say, which is that rules in organisations need to include more than just empty words when it comes to childcare. 75% of those interviewed also said they had access to informal help, such as flexible hours or family leave, but only 25% said they received help with childcare costs or getting to work. Respondents agree with Hafizah that parenting plans often do not include dads (25% of responses). Although the participants advocated for a gender-neutral approach, the findings suggest that the workplace childcare options often reflect traditional gender roles, which may contribute to unequal access or expectations. This agrees with what Allen et al. (2020) and Goldin (2021) say about how work-family laws should treat men and women equally. Including male perspectives in this study (25% of the participant group) was essential for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how childcare policies impact individuals who identify

primarily as parents, regardless of gender. In line with Mills et al. (2025), this backs up their point that both men and women need to be involved in talks about family-friendly workplaces.

Many of the participants in this interview (67%) worked in healthcare or social work, which are fields recognised for their high-stress, high-demand situations where being ready for crises is quite important. For these professionals, having access to trustworthy babysitting or childcare services became more than simply a convenience; it became a necessity. The interviewees who participated believed that adding daycare to the office would boost productivity, lower absenteeism, improve mental health, and ultimately encourage more diversity. These results are similar to what UNICEF said in its 2021 report about how bad it is for working parents, particularly those who deal with the public, when they do not have enough childcare. The interview says that 75% of parents had trouble managing their work schedules without on-site childcare, and 50% had to depend on informal care like grandparents—not by choice, but because they had to. Wustmann Seiler et al. (2022) showed that organised childcare is beneficial for both parents and children in the long run, which adds to these worries. Most people surveyed were excited about the thought of employer-sponsored daycare, but 75% of participants were worried about the cost. However, many said they would be ready to pay for it provided it was high-quality and easily accessible. All participants agreed that it facilitated employee retention; however, only 75% believed it had a significant impact on the hiring process. Albanesi (2023) and Harris & Patacchini (2024) both say that making it easier to get childcare is important for attracting new talent and retaining skilled employees over time. These results support their work. *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey Toward Equity* (2021) by Claudia Goldin is an important book that gives these ideas an important historical and economic context. Over the last century, Goldin carefully charts how the link between work and family life has changed. She shows how institutional barriers, particularly those related to caring, have consistently held women behind in their careers. Her study shows

that gender equality in the workplace cannot be reached unless the unequal distribution of caring duties is fixed. So, our research shows again that comprehensive childcare policies are not only nice to have; they are a strategic need for creating fair, strong, and future-ready organisations.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The results of this study mostly back up what other studies have found: having childcare help at work is important for achieving gender equality, employee retention, and making the business more productive. Goldin (2021) and Kleven et al. (2019) say that one of the main reasons why there are still gaps between men and women in the job market is that women often face difficulties in securing suitable childcare—whether due to limited accessibility—which frequently compels them to take time off. 75% of those who participated in this study said that not having help with childcare had slowed their job growth or made it harder for them to go back to work. This was especially true for moms. The people who participated said they had access to parental leave and flexible work hours, but only 25% said they had planned childcare. This shows that flexibility cannot take the place of specialised childcare choices on its own. Allen et al. (2020) also found a gap like this. This shows that informal support networks are not always helpful and calls for changes in the ways that organisations deal with childcare work problems. One of the interviewees noted that the workplace provided a breastfeeding room for female employees. During the time spent in these rooms, the women often discussed their desire for an onsite childcare facility, expressing that such provisions would encourage them to remain in their job for a longer period of time.

One notable tendency that comes out of the research is that people always see childcare as a key factor in productivity. Most of the people who answered felt that having dependable and easy-to-get childcare helps people focus better on their job, lowers stress, and improves their mental health. People who worked in high-stress jobs like healthcare and social services felt this way the most. Mills et al. (2025) also found that the COVID-19 epidemic made parenting problems that were already there worse, especially for frontline employees. This interview found that 75% of respondents said they had practical problems, such as having to change their commute routes, since there were not any integrated childcare alternatives. All participants believed that these issues would improve if there were more accessible and supportive childcare options available. Mental health, which is typically left out of conversations about childcare, came up as a major issue. Every participant said that having childcare on-site or at a reduced cost greatly lowers stress and enhances mental health in general. This agrees with Wustmann Seiler et al. (2022), who said that high-quality early childcare is good for both children's social and emotional development and parents' mental health. Also, more general research backs up the idea that providing childcare at work helps to achieve gender equality and retain employees. Smith and Jones (2018) discovered that family-friendly workplace policies, notably daycare, are very important for promoting gender equality because they make it easier for women to take care of their families without having to pay for it. Smith and Sinkford (2022) also underline that women need access to supporting institutions like childcare in order to break down obstacles to their leadership in fields like global health. Tricco et al. (2021) agree with similar results in the medical field, saying that institutional transformation must include childcare assistance to promote equal career advancement for men and women.

Raynolds (2021) looks at the global labour market and says that measures that promote gender equality, including providing childcare on Ecuadorian flower farms, have been very

important for empowering women. In the academic world, Rosa (2022) takes a critical look at the flaws in the "work–life balance" rhetoric, saying that without institutional support like daycare, these ideas become more about performance than change. Rosa and Clavero (2022) also say that real gender equality in education and research depends on legislative changes, such as help with childcare. Uddin (2021) also shows how COVID-19 made the work-life problems that women in Bangladesh confront much worse, which makes it even more important for changes to happen in workplaces throughout the world. UNICEF (2021) also points out that the epidemic made childcare a key part of economic resilience and family well-being. Wood (2023) studied how family-friendly company practices affect employees' contentment and breastfeeding. He discovered that these techniques not only make employees happier, but they also promote larger public health objectives. These results significantly support the idea that excellent childcare policies should be a part of workplace strategy, not only as a perk but also as a structural need for improving mental health, gender equality, and productivity in the workplace.

To ensure workplace childcare policies are truly effective and inclusive, they must be reframed not as support solely for mothers, but as essential resources for both men and women. Childcare is not just a problem for women, according to more studies. It is an issue many people face, and it impacts gender equality, workforce participation, and productivity. A recent interview of employees found that all of them agreed that childcare is an important part of equal rights for men and women. 25% of them said that dads are often left out of talks and groups that help each other. In line with what Harris and Patacchini (2024) say, laws that require both parents, male and female, to help with childcare are needed to close the gender gap in the job market. A male healthcare worker found that he agreed with shared childcare methods and emergency childcare at work. There is no doubt that he would be able to handle his work and home duties better if he had this kind of help. Goldin (2021) came to the same conclusion: we

can only have true gender equality when we get rid of the structural barriers that make it harder for women to become leaders and men to care for children.

The need for gender-neutral babysitting rules is even stronger when you think about how society and the job market have changed in general. In the case of Kasymova et al. (2021), the pandemic had a bigger impact on working moms, especially those who worked in academic areas. This meant that they were less effective and more likely to burn out. But Lyttelton, Zang, and Musick (2022) say that telecommuting has also shown parents how to share paid and free work more fairly, so long as the laws are changed in a smart way to support it. Kabeer (2021) says that changing the way things are done is needed to make the workplace fairer for women and men. For example, they say that companies need to rethink who is expected to care for others and how they can help with that care. It goes against old ideas about gender roles when babysitting at work is set up to help both men and women. It helps women move up in their jobs and lets men be more involved in family life. Smith and Jones (2018) say that rules should be made to make it easier for dads to find childcare. It will be fair and last a long time if you do this. Kleven et al. (2019) also show strong proof from Denmark that children are a major cause of inequality between men and women. This is mostly because current laws and practices wrongly require women to care for children. Liu-Lastres, Wen, and Huang (2023) talk about how the workforce has changed since the Great Resignation. They emphasise that accessible and inclusive childcare is crucial for businesses aiming to retain employees, enhance workplace satisfaction, and support employee well-being childcare policies must be gender-neutral, legally compliant, and integrated into a broader framework of equitable employment practices in order to create truly fair and future-ready workplaces. The participants (100%) felt that if their organisation were to partner with a local childcare provider, they would consider staying longer at their jobs, as that would show a sense of care and appreciation from their employers. Though the interviewees agreed that daycare helps with retention, only 75% thought it had a

big effect on attracting new talent. This means that pay and job status are still the most important things when hiring someone, even though childcare is important for employee retention. Albanesi's (2023) dual-impact model is supported by this. It says that family-friendly policies are better at keeping employees and getting them more involved over time than they are at hiring new people right away. Also, half of the interviewees said they could not get childcare due to long waiting lists, no space, and affordability. This shows that when making policies, concerns need to be considered. In line with what UNICEF (2021) says, this is not good because it can be hard to get help with parenting during world disasters.

It is harder to put childcare policy into action because different areas have different rules. 67% of the requests for childcare help in this study came from people who worked in healthcare, while only 33% came from people who worked in science or administration. Healthcare and social workers need on-site childcare because their hours are not predictable, and they need to be able to get help quickly in an emergency. Asai et al. (2023) also found similar results: women are more likely to work in fields where the government helps pay for childcare. All of the people who participated were in favour of coworking spaces with childcare already set up, and 75% were open to cross-company daycare models as long as they were safe and of good quality. Things are still hard because of money, though. 75% of people said they were worried about how much it would cost, and 50% said they were ready to pay for childcare on the spot. From these different points of view, it seems like the best thing to do might be for businesses to work together with public or third-party services. This is exactly what Wood (2023) says, saying that smart investments in childcare lead to better business success and happier employees.

In the end, the study shows that there is a substantial difference between what businesses say they do for social responsibility (CSR) and what they do. Although all participants believe that CSR should contribute to making workplaces more family-friendly, only 25% of them received help from their companies with childcare. This is similar to what Smith and Jones (2018) found. They warned that many businesses saw childcare as a way to sell themselves instead of something their employees needed. Interview data revealed that most HR managers were hesitant to discuss the issues, as they felt it was not their role to represent their company in this research. This backs up the idea that employees' opinions are crucial when it pertains to important decision-making. This research proves that childcare at work is not a “nice to have” but a necessity that impacts job decisions, loyalty to the company, and fair pay for men and women. To attract and retain a strong, diverse workforce, contemporary businesses must move beyond symbolic support and make substantive investments in accessible childcare infrastructure that reflects the varied needs of different industries.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This research has shown how important it is to have childcare help at work in order to promote gender equality, boost productivity, and retain employees in a variety of fields. The study, which used in-depth interviews and a cross-sectoral approach, confirms that having access to dependable, cheap childcare is not just a nice thing to have; it is a fundamental need for creating inclusive and high-performing workplaces. The results show that flexible working hours and parental leave policies are widely available (all participants said they were), but only 25% of respondents had access to any organized childcare help, including discounts or subsidies. This gap shows that there is a big difference between what policies say and how they are put into action. All respondents agreed that flexible work arrangements were beneficial but not a good replacement for real childcare facilities. Interviewees stressed that working parents, particularly moms, have to deal with career stagnation, more stress, and less engagement at work when they don't have professional childcare help. Sector-specific observations, especially from healthcare and social work, demonstrated that on-site childcare is even more important now because of unpredictable schedules and emotional demands. People who work in various industries highly support integrated childcare solutions that address both logistical and psychological constraints. This shows that different professional settings demand distinct methods.

Including a male's perspective was important, as it highlighted that childcare is not solely a woman's issue, but a societal and workplace concern that impacts all individuals. The interviewees agreed that current rules frequently leave out dads and non-binary caregivers. This shows how important it is to have childcare frameworks that include everyone, regardless of gender. This goes along with current proposals for fairer work regulations and shared

caregiving duties.

The interview also found structural problems, including red tape, unclear policy standards, and a lack of standardisation that make it harder for employees to get the minimal childcare help that is offered. These administrative problems make it harder for people to use services and make existing disparities worse. Also, worries about cost and affordability were big. 100% of people supported employer-provided childcare, but 75% were worried about being able to afford it, and 50% said they would be prepared to pay if the services were high-quality and easy to get to. It was clear that there was a big difference between the company's professional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles and the actual help they gave. All participants thought that childcare should be part of a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, yet only 25% had received help from their employer. This difference shows that some organisational promises are only for show and that childcare assistance has to be included in both strategic and operational goals right away. In the end, childcare at work is not a minor matter; it is essential for fairness, health, and the long-term success of the business. For contemporary businesses, particularly in demanding fields, it is both the right thing to do and good for businesses to spend money on organized childcare options like on-site care, shared services, or partnerships with local providers. Such assistance makes employees more loyal, lowers absenteeism, and helps men and women grow in their careers at the same rate. To make workplaces fit for the future and open to everyone, authorities and businesses need to do more than just provide flexible schedules and leave policies. They need to put in place strong, clear, and consistent childcare rules. Childcare can only become a tangible way to promote equality and a key part of workforce development in the 21st century if this happens.

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