

Childcare Centre Facilities and their Impact on the Performance of Working Mothers in Dhaka, Bangladesh

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Abstract

In Bangladesh, it is common for working women to experience increased concerns about the safety and well-being of their children after childbirth. This study aims to examine the impact of childcare facilities on the occupational productivity of employed women in Bangladesh, specifically within Dhaka City. A quantitative research approach was utilized, with statistical analyses including frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and a chi-square test. The results of the chi-square test ($p < 0.05$) demonstrated a significant relationship between the availability of childcare center facilities and the job performance of working mothers. The study found that most participants believed that reliable childcare facilities positively influenced their work-life balance. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, highlighting the need for more reliable childcare facilities in Dhaka City to enhance the active participation of working mothers in the workforce and their ability to deliver high-quality performance. While the past decade has seen considerable research on women's empowerment and increasing female representation in the labor market, this study is the first to specifically address the impact of childcare center facilities on the workplace performance of working mothers.

Keywords

Childcare facilities, working mothers, Dhaka city, work performance

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Introduction

The phenomenon of work-life conflict has experienced a significant rise, particularly in the aftermath of World War II, due to the increased involvement of women in the labor field as a response to the scarcity of male labor. Throughout history, women have played a significant role alongside males in the advancement of economic and social progress within societies (Kelliher et al. 2019). Over the past few decades, there has been a notable increase in the level of female engagement in the workforce (Hosseini et al. 2023; Hartman and Barber 2020; Stephan 2019; Greider et al. 2019). In addition to their professional obligations, women who are employed also bear the primary responsibility for managing domestic tasks, tending to childcare needs, and attending to the care of older family members (Ajala 2017; Tayal and Mehta 2023; Adisa et al. 2021; Amah 2021). This study looks at the correlation between work-family-conflict, family-work-conflict and job performance of working mothers. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised all working mothers in public hospital (nurses). The correlation between job and family life is bidirectional. This implies that the influence of work on family concerns is reciprocal, as family affairs can also have an impact on the workplace (Soomro et al., 2018).

The labor force participation rate of women in Bangladesh has witnessed a significant increase, reflecting a similar pattern observed in various other developing countries. Nevertheless, despite these advancements, women continue to encounter obstacles in the workplace. Policies and work settings that consider the distinct challenges faced by women can contribute to their professional growth and job satisfaction (Raihen et al. 2023; Khainum et al. 2020; Ahmen and Hyndman-Rizk 2020; Jaim 2021). In Bangladesh, it is a prevalent occurrence for working women to experience heightened concerns over the safety and well-being of their children following childbirth. Consequently, some women opt to discontinue their employment in order to prioritize the care and protection of their

children. Despite individuals continuing their employment, their ability to perform optimally in the workplace may be compromised due to persistent concerns about their childcare responsibilities. Over the course of the last decade, a significant amount of scholarly inquiry has been dedicated to the area of women's empowerment and the augmentation of female representation within the labor market.

Despite the existence of previous studies on working parents and childcare centres (Moom and Hasan 2024; Cheng et al. 2021; Arpino and Luppi; and Coleman and Cottell 2019), there is a lack of study concerning the importance of reliable childcare center services and its influence on the work performance of employed women in Bangladesh. Therefore, this paper will fill this gap by analyzing the impact of childcare centres on the work performance of working mothers with a special reference to the case of Dhaka City in Bangladesh. The primary aim of the study is to investigate the impact of childcare facilities on the occupational productivity of employed women residing in Dhaka City. In order to accomplish this purpose, I have identified two specific goals: 1) To ascertain the existing childcare facilities in Dhaka city; and 2) To determine the impact of childcare facilities on working mothers' performance at office.

The results of this study will offer significant insights for policymakers in tackling the various issues faced by working mothers and will be more concerned about establishing reliable childcare facilities in Dhaka city so that the active participation of working mothers in the workplace increases and they can promote their ability to deliver high-quality performance at their workplace. Hence, it is of the utmost importance to do this investigation in the present time.

Childcare, Women and Work

Men in Bangladesh are much more likely to participate in outdoor activities than women. However, this is changing as nowadays Women's access to education and employment opportunities,

particularly professional and managerial positions continues to grow (Islam & Khan 2015; Ahmen and Hyndman-Rizk 2020; Noor and Hoque 2021; Akter and Francis-Tan 2021). The significant increase in maternal employment is one of the most frequently observed trends over the past quarter-century (Phillips & Adams 2001) The current prevalence of women with young children engaging in the labour sector has led to a notable concern over childcare centres in contemporary society. Due to this situation, the demand for daycare centers has increased (Blau 2001). The centers serve as a secure and enriching atmosphere where parents can entrust their children, fostering mutual benefits for both the mother and the child.(Tholen, 2021).

Childcare poses a significant concern for working parents, with particular importance in relation to endeavors aimed at enhancing women's employment prospects and productivity in both official and informal sectors. Inadequate access to affordable childcare prevents many women from entering or reentering the labor force. It also restricts the employment and income-earning opportunities available to women (Devercelli & Beaton-Day 2020). Due to the double burden of work and childrearing, working mothers experience heightened mental stress. If a working mother is anxious and agitated, she may be less productive and more likely to make errors that require correction (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 1999). If mothers are confident in their children's safety and security, they can contribute more to society and they can give their best in their workforce.

In the context of Bangladesh, it is observed that the rate of female participation is notably lower in comparison to the rate of male participation. The absence of childcare support centers for working mothers is one of the causes of this difficulty (Islam 2020). Home-based creche could be an excellent entrepreneurial skill for empowering women (Afzal 2021). The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA) operates 43 daycare centers nationwide. Twenty-four of these are located in Dhaka. The

remainder are located outside of the capital. This facility is absent in 36 districts. According to MOWCA officials, the majority of daycare facilities are intended for low-income families. Particularly garment factory proprietors, banks, and non-governmental organizations have opened on-site daycare facilities for their employees (Parvez, 2017). Early childhood development is for infants from birth to age eight. This Framework focuses on the time from pregnancy to age three, which is a very important time for brain growth according to science (World Health Organization 2018). Daycare centers are one of the most widely recognized institutional settings for early childhood care and development. In Bangladesh, daycare centers shelter children while their parents fulfil their professional obligations (Islam 2016).

The provision of inexpensive and secure daycare is a crucial necessity for employed women. Mothers who possess reliable access to regular child care services have a higher likelihood of sustaining employment and demonstrate enhanced capacity to focus on their professional responsibilities as they possess the assurance that their children are receiving adequate care during their absence from home (Boushey & Wright 2004). According to Section 94 (1.2) of the Bangladesh Labour Law of 2006, any establishment with at least 40 female employees is obligated to offer and maintain an appropriate room or rooms for the use of children under six years of age. Additionally, it is stated that these rooms must provide sufficient illumination, ventilation, and maintain a state of cleanliness and sanitation. Furthermore, they must be under the supervision of a woman who possesses the necessary training or experience in the care of children and babies (Liakat 2022).

Work-life equilibrium has become a pressing concern in the contemporary world. In Bangladesh, women have significantly contributed to and participated in our economy. However, working women face numerous obstacles in both their occupational and personal lives. The inability to balance job and personal responsibilities is a significant barrier to women's participation in social engagements. When trying to strike a work-life balance, many women experience

pressure from multiple directions. Since women must perform a variety of roles in society, it is especially difficult for them to strike a work-life balance (Tasnim et al. 2017). Studies conducted reveals that low-income women want to work but cannot do so because there are not enough childcare facilities for their young children (Clark et al. 2019; Arpino and Luppi 2020; Nandi et al. 2022). Public day care is provided as part of India's largest child development program, which also includes a pre-school education component. Additionally, this program provides extra food, immunization, and health check-ups to children. In the context of rural India, it has been shown that mothers who avail themselves of the facilities provided by the Integrated Infant Development Scheme (ICDS) for their infants have a 15% higher likelihood of engaging in employment activities (Jain 2016). There is research stating that in high-income nations, the availability of formal, center-based childcare services has a positive impact on the level of maternal labor force engagement (Brown et al. 2014; Halim et al. 2023; Berger et al. 2021).

Method

This study involved 309 employed mothers who have utilized or are presently utilizing childcare facilities. It was conducted following a quantitative research approach. The area of study was Dhaka City. Purposive sampling was used to select individuals who meet the inclusion criteria. A combination of primary and secondary data sources was used in the research. The collection of primary data involved the utilization of the survey method and a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from the existing literature sources. A structured questionnaire was designed in accordance with the research objectives, utilizing Likert scale questions. The survey was administered to participants using two modes of data collection: online platforms and face-to-face interviews. The choice of mode was determined by the individual preferences and availability of the participants. For collecting data, a 5-point Likert scale was used in this scale, the value of 1 represents "Strongly Disagree," 2 represents

“Disagree,” 3 represents “Neutral,” 4 represents “Agree,” and 5 represents “Strongly Agree.” Then the analysis was done by using SPSS software. The tables present descriptive statistics by mean, frequency, standard deviation, and proportion.

This study proposed the following hypothesis: 1) Null Hypothesis (H): There is no relationship between the reliable childcare center facilities and the workplace performance of female employees; and 2) Alternative Hypothesis (H): There is a relationship between the reliable childcare center facilities and the workplace performance of female employees.

Findings

Statistical analysis was performed on the data using SPSS version 26. The statistical analyses conducted in this study encompassed many techniques, such as frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and chi-square test.

Profile of the Respondents

A total of 309 female respondents participated in this study. The focus of analysis in this investigation was each respondent. The sample comprises women who vary in terms of age, level of education, number of children, and occupation. The age variable has a range of 25 to 40, with a standard deviation of 4.547 and a mean of 32.46. The frequency of mid-range participants was discovered to be greater than that of older and lower age groups. The number of children variable goes from 1 to 4. The range of the number of children variable is one to four.

As seen in Table 1 and Table 2, Statement 1 elucidates the perception about the reliability of childcare facilities. Approximately (n=122) 40% of participants expressed a high level of agreement regarding the reliability of childcare centers in caring for their children while they are engaged in office-based employment. Once again, approximately (n=88) 28% of the participants agreed,

while approximately (n=56) 18% maintained a neutral stance. On a general note, the mean value of 3.72 indicates that the majority of the participants tend to agree with the given question. This is substantiated by the standard deviation value of 1.307.

Based on the findings of S2, it is evident that around (n=163) 53% strongly agree, (n=94) 30% agree and only (n=20) 7% disagree with the given statement. The mean value of 4.24 indicates a general consensus among respondents that Childcare centers have played a significant role in facilitating a more favorable work-life balance., which is supported by the standard deviation of 1.053.

The results of Statement 3 indicate that(n=162) 52% of respondents strongly agree, (n=99) 31% agree, and (n=18) 6% stay indifferent. The calculated mean value of 4.22 indicates that a significant proportion of the participants agree that Childcare centers have had a beneficial influence on their overall job performance.

Based on the data presented in the S4, it is evident that around(n=247) 80% of respondents strongly agreed, while(n=46) 15% agreed, and the remaining(n=10) 3% maintained a neutral stance and only (n=5)2% remain disagree The calculated mean value of 4.72 indicates a strong consensus among participants, suggesting that they strongly agree with the notion that Childcare centers have had a positive impact on their productivity in the workplace.

S5 was asked to know the perception of working mother whether childcare center has reduced their stress related to childcare. Here (n=146) 47% remain strongly agree, (n=109) 35%remain agree and (n=31)10% remain neutral. In the case of S5, the mean value is 3.21 which indicates that the majority of the participants remain neutral.

S6 suggests that around(n=171) 55% remain strongly agree, (n=108)35% remain agree, (n=22)7% remain neutral, (n=5)2% remain disagree and only(n=3) 1% remain strongly disagree. From Q6 mean value of 4.42 suggest that the majority of the participants agreed Childcare centers have improved their mental well-being as working mother which is supported by the standard deviation of 0.776.

S7 indicates that around(n=163) 53% strongly agree, (n=86)28% remain agree, (n=31)10% remain neutral, (n=20)7% remain disagree and only(n=9) 3% remain strongly disagree. The calculated mean of 4.21 suggests that a significant proportion of the participants hold the view that Childcare facilities have facilitated their ability to prioritize and advance their professional growth. S8 suggests that the mean value is 4.47 which indicates that on average the majority of the respondents agreed that Childcare centers have enhanced their ability to meet work deadlines and commitment which is supported by the standard deviation of .097.

Table 1 Percentage of the Respondents in the Likert Scale

Serial	Statement	Strongly Agree (5)	Agree (4)	Neutral (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
S1	A childcare center is a reliable option for me when I am at work.	40%	28%	18%	9%	5%
S2	Childcare centers have helped me to maintain a better work-life balance.	53%	30%	7%	7%	3%
S3	Childcare centers have positively impacted my overall job performance.	52%	31%	6%	7%	3%
S4	Childcare centers have improved my productivity at work.	80%	15%	3%	2%	0%
S5	Childcare centers have reduced my stress levels related to childcare.	47%	35%	10%	6%	2%

Table 1 continued

S6	Childcare centers have improved my mental well-being as a working mother.	55%	35%	7%	2%	1%
S7	Childcare centers have allowed me to focus more on my career development	53%	28%	10%	7%	3%
S8	Childcare centers have enhanced my ability to meet work deadlines and commitment	69%	19%	5%	4%	3%

Source: The Author's Survey Questionnaire

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Mean	Standard deviation
S1	3.86	1.197
S2	4.24	1.035
S3	4.22	1.064
S4	4.72	0.634
S5	3.21	0.955
S6	4.42	0.776
S7	4.21	1.053
S8	4.47	0.979

Source: The Author's Survey Questionnaire

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is a popular statistical method for evaluating the consistency and reliability of research instruments (George, 2011). A higher value of Cronbach's α was observed, indicating greater internal consistency among the conceptions (Nunnally 1978). The

Cronbach's α values for all variables in the study fall within the acceptable range of 0.70 to 0.86, as determined by Shammi et al. (2020), where values above 0.60 are considered acceptable. This indicates that the research constructs are reliable for subsequent analysis.

Table 3 shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the present investigation is 0.71, surpassing the minimum criterion of 0.6. This suggests that the response values provided by each participant for a given set of questions demonstrate a satisfactory level of consistency.

Table 3 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.719	8

As shown in Table 4, the calculated chi-square value, also known as the test statistic, is 130.972 with 2 degrees of freedom. The p-value, which is the asymptotic significance value, is found to be .000, which is ($.000 < 0.05$). This result leads us to reject the null hypothesis, which claims that there is no association between reliable childcare center facilities and the working mother's performance at the workplace. Here the Phi (ϕ) coefficient of .651, indicates a high relationship between two variables.

Table 4 Chi-Square Test Between Reliable Childcare Center and Workplace Performance

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	130.972 ^a	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	146.757	16	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	27.458	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	309		

Table 4 continued

		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.651			.000
	Cramer's V	.326			.000
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.299	.048	5.482	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.478	.049	9.531	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		309			

Discussion

The main objective of this study is to evaluate how childcare facilities affect the work productivity of women employed in Dhaka City. Our results demonstrated that there is a high relationship between reliable childcare facilities and the performance of working mothers in Dhaka city. The study also disclosed that the majority of the participants expressed a high level of agreement regarding the reliability of childcare centers in caring for their children while they are engaged in office-based employment. Our findings also disclosed that daycare center had a positive impact on working mother because it helped them to balance their personal and professional life as well as enhance their ability to meet work deadlines and commitment.

These findings support several prior studies conducted in Bangladesh (Afzal, 2021; Moon & Hasan 2022; Gaidhani 2020). A study of similar research in India found that India's largest child development program offers public daycare services as part of its pre-schooling initiative. In the context of rural India, it has been shown that mothers who avail themselves of the facilities provided by the Integrated Infant Development Scheme (ICDS) for their infants have a 15% higher likelihood of engaging in employment activities (Jain 2016). Our finding indicates that most of the working

mother in Dhaka city finds childcare center is a reliable option when they are working at the office.

Another study also supports the belief that access to inexpensive and secure childcare is crucial for employed women. Mothers who possess reliable access to consistent child care services have a higher likelihood of sustaining employment and demonstrate enhanced capacity to focus on their professional responsibilities as they possess the assurance that their children are receiving adequate care during their absence from home (Boushey & Wright 2004). A research conducted by Swathi & Reddy (2016) revealed that female educator experience relatively higher levels of tension in comparison to their male counterparts due to the challenge of balancing professional obligations with traditional gender roles. Additionally, stress reduction interventions may enhance motivation and interpersonal aspects of job performance. This statement of the research provides support for our findings, as our results indicate that working mothers who utilize childcare centers experience a reduction in mental tension.

Conclusion

The challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities has increasingly led to inter-role conflict among workers. Such conflicts can result in negative consequences, such as diminished job performance. This research has investigated the impact of childcare facilities on the occupational productivity of employed women residing in Dhaka City. The research findings of this study indicate that there was a positive relationship between reliable childcare centers and the job performance of working mothers.

In practical terms, the findings of this study are highly significant for policymakers as they tackle the complex challenges faced by working mothers. These insights will also encourage greater efforts to establish reliable childcare facilities in Dhaka City, thereby enhancing the active participation of working mothers in

the workforce and supporting their ability to deliver high-quality performance in their jobs.

The study has some limitations. The constraint of the study was its exclusive emphasis on the city of Dhaka. The findings of our research may not be indicative of the perspectives held by all working mothers across the country as a whole. Another limitation of the study was that the study has been done entirely with quantitative data. Therefore, the study failed to capture the emotions, attitudes, and behaviors of the individuals. Further studies need to include large quantitative samples or a mixed method approach.

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