Child Care Strategies of Working Women in Lahore

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Abstract
Effective child care techniques are required in order for women to achieve balance between professional life and parental duties due to the increased number of women entering the professional workforce. This study is based on grounded qualitative study. In this study participants are working women and all are related from profession of teaching. This study attempts to give readers a thorough overview of the child care practices used by modern professional women. In order to overcome the difficulties related with child care, the study investigates here numerous strategies used by professional women. It looks at official and informal child care systems, highlighting both of its benefits and drawbacks. The distinction between official and informal childcare arrangements is made by the presence of nursery facilities, preschools and nannies. Cost, availability, convenience, and quality of care are just a few of the variables this study covers in relation to choosing child care alternatives. The results suggests different child care tactics used by professional women, with a focus on the value of a variety of child care options, supportive work settings, personal networks, technological improvements, and regulatory initiatives.
Keywords: child, care, strategies, working women, challenges, Lahore, Pakistan, family support

1. Introduction

Traditional gender norms have been questioned and society dynamics have changed as a result of the rise of women in professional professions. The importance of excellent child care strategies increases as more women pursue careers and positions of leadership. For women, juggling the demands of a work with parenthood creates a special set of difficulties that call for creative child care solutions. This introduction gives a general overview of the child care options used by professional women and looks at the variables influencing their decisions, including the significance of governmental initiatives, the function of supportive workplace settings, and the impact of technology. Various solutions, including both official and informal arrangements, are available for professional women who need to take care of children. Daycare centers, preschools, nannies, and au pairs are some of the professional child care choices that are available in facilities or individual homes. These arrangements provide professional skills, socialization chances, and organized surroundings. Contrarily, informal child care solutions rely on the assistance of friends, family members, and neighbors. These arrangements frequently provide a more adaptable and comfortable environment, although they might not be as well equipped with resources and professional training as official solutions. The methods of child care that working women choose are influenced by a number of factors. Cost is an important factor because high-quality child care can be very expensive. . Accessibility and availability are other essential factors since they make it simpler to coordinate work and child care obligations and offer suitable hours and proximity to workplaces. Professional women consider a number of important aspects when choosing a child care option, including the care provided and the provider's reputation. Finding a balance between cost-effectiveness, practicality, and the assurance of high-quality care is the difficult task. Workplaces that are supportive are essential for professional women who want to successfully integrate child care. Businesses that priorities work-life balance and implement measures like flexible work schedules, telecommuting, job sharing, and longer parental leave can lessen some of the difficulties working parents encounter. An encouraging workplace fosters a culture where staff members may successfully balance their personal and professional life while also acknowledging the value of family obligations. These procedures promote productivity and boost employee retention while also improving the well-being of the workforce.

To assist working women in their efforts to care for their children, comprehensive policy actions are urgently needed. To enable women to pursue careers without jeopardizing the welfare of their children, affordable, accessible, and high-quality child care facilities must be given priority. A strong child care infrastructure that provides resources, incentives, and subsidies to working parents must be developed through cooperation between governments, employers, and communities. In order to foster gender equality, work-life balance, and the integration of childcare obligations, policymakers should take into account the particular demands of professional women. To sum up, establishing work-life balance and gender equality depends on the child care practices used by professional women. Considerations including cost, accessibility, quality, and proximity must be made while implementing successful child care arrangements. Successful child care integration is made possible by supportive workplace cultures that are supported by flexible policies and an understanding of the importance of work-life balance. Innovative answers to disconnect between work commitments and family participation are provided by technological improvements. To build an environment that meets the child care requirements of working women, nevertheless, broad policy actions are necessary. Understanding and resolving these tactics would enable society to support women in pursuing their jobs while ensuring the welfare and growth of their kids.

Over the last fifty years, there has been a sharp rise in the proportion of working-age women, and with it, in the number of children who are routinely cared for by someone other than their mothers. Younger and younger children are enrolling in crèche. The development of cognition and language has been conceptually and experimentally associated with interactions between children and their care person. Traditionally, process characteristics of adult-child interactions that embody effective caregiving whether from a parent or another person have been used to gauge the quality of care. These characteristics include positive affect, regular verbal and social interaction, sensitivity and response to the child's needs and signals, and cognitive stimulation (e.g., Friedman & Cocking, 1986; Hart & Risley, 1995).

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2. Literature Review

As more moms of young children began working outside the home in the latter decades of the 20th century, families began to rely more and more on child care. These modifications underline the ongoing requirement for studies examining the consequences of child care. (Fabes, R. A., Hanish, L. D., & Martin, C. L, 2003)

Since child care allows parents to work and has the potential to affect children's development, society has a stake in the child-rearing decisions made by families. In response to each of these issues, unique funding sources and tactics have developed during the past century. Expanding child care facilities for single mothers who had to work was part of the settlement house movement, which got its start in the late 1800s. (Fuller, B., Kagan, S. L., Caspary, G. L., & Gauthier, C. A, 2002)

Major developments in childrearing practices for young children have occurred in the United States over the past 25 years. This development is partly a result of the changing position of women in society and the rise in maternal work. 34% of women with children under the age of six worked in 1975. The matching percentage was 61% in 1999. In the United States today, the majority of moms who return to work after having a child do so before the child turns one. . (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network, 2003)

The expansion of a child's physical, cognitive, psychological, and socio-emotional abilities results in a rise in competence, autonomy, and independence. Poor social, cognitive, and health consequences, such as economic dependency, aggression, crime, substance abuse, and the start of non-communicable diseases in adulthood, are all risks that are increased by adverse early exposures and experiences. Beyond early childhood, early impairments compound and get harder and harder to fix. (B Daelmans, 2015)

According to him, in urban Guatemala, 293 moms were accused of working for pay and making child care arrangements while the anthropometric status of their offspring was assessed. Maternal employment was thought to be advantageous for children during the eight to thirty-five month period of life when growth frequently slows down. Compared to formal workers and non-workers, informal workers typically have more undernourished children, are poorer, and have less education. Maternal employment had no effects on children's anthropometric growth patterns when poverty and mothers' education were taken into account. (Engle, P. L, 1991).

Conceptually and experimentally, interactions between children and careers are related to cognitive and linguistic development. The procedural characteristics of adult-child contact that characterize good caregiving, whether given by a parent or someone else, have traditionally been used to measure the quality of care. These qualities include good affect, regular verbal and social engagement, sensitivity and response to the child's needs and signals, and cognitive stimulation. (Davis, M. F., Marshall, W. N., & Price, E, 2002)

In 1990 less than 10% of American's infants were cared for in centers, but their numbers are now significantly rising. Infant care provided in centers is frequently of poor to barely adequate quality; it can range from very high to very low grade. The quality of child care has been investigated using both structural and process metrics. Class size and adult-to-child ratios are examples of structural indicators of quality that are thought to have an indirect impact on the child. Process indicators of quality indicate the direct impact of teacher behavior on the child, such as the caregiver's sensitivity and response to children's interests and needs, and the provision of developmentally appropriate activities. (Burchinal, M. R., Roberts, J. E., Nabors, L. A., & Bryant, D. M, 1996)

Children's experiences with other people shape their minds and personalities, according to studies on child development. Therefore, whether the care giver is a parent, grandmother, or a teacher at a child care facility, caregiving is essential to growth. This article examines the state of newborn and toddler care using information from recent nationwide studies of families. (Phillips, D., & Adams, G, 2001).

The lack of available child care for low-income parents has been matched by a rise in the need for easily accessible, reasonably priced, and adaptable childcare that supports low-income women's employment while also meeting the needs of their kids. A wide range of child care structures, including family day care homes, relatives, and related care arrangements, have become a common background for young Childs development at the start of twenty-first century. (Votruba-Drzal, E., Coley, R. L., & Chase-Lansdale, P. L, 2004)

The study has found two possible influences on children's development: their interactions with other kids in child care settings, and their connections and experiences with their careers. In the current investigation, both options were looked at. According to the social learning theory, kids who have more good interactions with their peers their own age or close by are likely to be more sociable, engaged, fun, and affectively positive around them. (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2001).

Children are under non-parental care for a sizable portion of their time, both inside and outside the family. Because of this, it's critical to comprehend how provider-child connections that support social and emotional health are doing right now. (Spurlock, K. L, 2014)

Various arrangements for grandparent child care are possible. Grandparents who are in custody of a child may act as surrogate parents in certain cases. When the parents are unable to care for their children, many grandparents step in to help, and the majority of the time they do so without receiving any compensation. A parent's choice for this kind of care can also be seen in the use of grandparental care. Grandparents are often the childcare provider of choice for some parents since they are seen as the most reliable and capable of giving their children a secure and nurturing atmosphere. Due to its convenience, other parents choose for grandparental child care. The only feasible or inexpensive choice might be to use grandparent-provided childcare. (Jappens, M., & Van Bavel, J, 2012)

Child care, especially center-based child care, puts kids in touch with peers their own age, giving them more frequent exposure to kids than they would generally get at home or in the neighborhood. Children play in same-sex social groups a lot, which shows that boys and girls develop relatively different peer cultures. According to him, sex segregation stunts children's growth by narrowing their interests and life experiences and restricting the kinds of behaviors and pursuits they are allowed to partake in. (Fabes, R. A., Hanish, L. D., & Martin, C. L, 2003)

He claimed in this paper that the low status of child care workers was represented in their low pay, inadequate benefits, unequal access to opportunities, and high turnover. Anyone can enter the child care industry because it is a pretty simple one. But poor and

minority women frequently stay in the entry-level, lowest paying child care positions due to unequal access to training, education, and other opportunities for professional growth. (Whitebook, M. 1999)

Because child care allows parents to work and because it has the potential to affect children's development, society has a stake in the decisions families make about child care. In response to each of these issues, distinct methodologies and research streams have developed throughout the past century. (Fuller, B., Kagan, S. L., Caspary, G. L., & Gauthier, C. A, 2002)

Like plants depend on water, child care quality depends on child care regulation. Inadequate amounts almost always result in issues, but excessive amounts can also cause issues (W. Gormley, 1999).

3. Theoretical Construct
3.1. Role Theory
This theoretical framework contends that people play a variety of social roles, and that these roles influence how they behave and make decisions. When it comes to professional or working women, their responsibilities as moms and workers overlap. Through the lens of role theory, it is possible to investigate how these roles interact and affect their child-care techniques.

3.2. Work-Family Conflict
The possible conflict between obligations to one's family and one's job is the main emphasis of this design. Professional or working women frequently struggle to strike a balance between their obligations to their jobs and their obligations to their children's care. Investigating the tactics these women used to deal with the conflict can shed light on how they handle playing two roles at once.

3.3. Social Support Theory
This idea emphasizes the value of social networks and support networks in people's lives. Women who are working or in professional positions may rely on a variety of social supports, such as extended family, friends, or formal child care providers, to help them manage their child care demands. With the use of this theoretical framework, one can investigate how social support networks influence child care policies.

3.4. Rational Choice Theory
According to this view, people decide what to do by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of many possibilities. When choosing child care options, professional or working women may use rational decision-making processes, taking into account elements like cost, convenience, quality, and the welfare of their children. Rational choice theory analysis of these women's decisions on child care can shed light on their thought processes.

3.5. Feminist Theory
This theoretical framework focuses on gender roles, power relationships, and the experiences of women in society. It is possible to explore the gendered expectations, societal conventions, and structural constraints that professional or working women encounter while attempting to balance their career and family obligations by looking at child care solutions from a feminist lens.

3.6. Intersectionality
This concept acknowledges that people have a variety of social identities that interact and influence their experiences. Race, ethnicity, social class, and educational background all interact with gender roles in the case of professional or working women and have an impact on how they approach child care. The specific difficulties and coping mechanisms faced by women from various origins and experiences might be shown with the use of an intersectional perspective.

These theoretical ideas offer frameworks for comprehending professional or working women's child care techniques and throw light on the numerous dynamics and elements that affect their experiences and decision-making.

4. Methodology
The child care practices of working women are investigated in this study using a Grounded Theory of qualitative research approach. To learn more deeply about the participants' experiences, viewpoints, and decision-making processes, the qualitative technique was selected. The study approach acknowledges the drawbacks of qualitative research, such as the possibility of subjectivity and the difficulty of generalizing. For governments, employers, and child care providers looking to better support working parents, the qualitative method offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the child care options used by professional women. According to Druckman (2005), the advantages of a qualitative research technique over a quantitative research method are that it can provide a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. According to Creswell (1998), qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.

5. Data Collection Method
In-depth Interviews with participants are conducted. A semi-structured and open-ended questions are used for conducting data. We conducted interviews with our study subjects based on their availability and timetable. We quickly established rapport with the participants. They appeared to be delighted to be a part of the study. All interviews are done in Urdu and English language accordance of their convenience with a proper consent or within the eye of ethical consideration. Each interview lasted between 10 to 15 minutes. Although the interview style was open-ended and unstructured, we created an interview guide outlining several topics to cover. We utilized this technique to keep the interview flow going. By using this technique we were not only analyzed by verbal voices or expressions but also focused on their emotional preferences and facial expressions to get the in depth of the respondent's problem.

6. Data Analysis
Thematic analysis is the method used for this research study's data analysis strategy. The systematic method of finding, examining, and interpreting patterns and themes in qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. Transcripts of interviews made up the data. All interviews are recorded and then verbatim transcriptions are made (Patton, 1990). The researcher organized the transcripts according to the sequence in which the interview questions are posed after going over each statement in the interviews and assigning

it a code number. The same questions are asked to each participant in the same order. The researcher has the choice of adding further codes or compressing codes as necessary to give the data more validity (Patton, 1990). The idea of themes and patterns is applied to the analysis of the data. The lone coder is the researcher. After taking interview from 7 respondents, because of the same responses I gained a saturation point. The data analysis determined 4 primary themes. These themes were;

- Child care and its services
- Family support
- Challenges as a professional women
- Strategies to access child care

6.1. Theme 1: Child Care and its Services

Child care is the professional care and supervision of children in a controlled and safe setting while they grow cognitively, emotionally, and physically. It includes a range of services like nursery, preschool, and after-school activities.

Participant 1 said that:

"Child care is a complete development of a children physically, provide proper food, mental growth, and social interaction all these factors make a child care. She avail the services of child care and send her son to child care center near her home because she lived in a nuclear family system and her mother in-law and her own mother both are died."

Participant 2 said that:

"Providing all important nutrients to children is a child care. She did not avail any type of services because her children are grown up and able to eat themselves but her point of view about take care center is not satisfied. Infect these services are available near her house. Another reason is that she teaching in school where her Childs are admitted."

Participant 3 said that:

"Provide complete nutrients and food to children, take care of their health and provide complete education to the children. She did not avail any type of external child care services because her husband is very supportive and take care of their children after her very efficiently. She is also not satisfied about the services of take care center. Infect these services are available near her house. Another reason is that she teaching in school where her Childs are admitted."

Participant 4 said that:

"Child care is a look after of a children covering all the social and health aspects. She seriously criticized to the take care centers because she considered that children is influenced with other children habits hand behavior that's why she ignore such services. Her mother and mother in-law both are very supportive. During job sometime her mother take care of her children and sometimes her mother in-law take care of her children. Instead it she hired a little girl maid to take care of her child, can play with her and eat food also."

Participant 5 said that:

"Child care is a cognitive development of children, emotional well-being and safe surround environment when mother is able to provide all these things then it is called child care. She lived in nuclear family system but her mother is very supportive. During her job she send her daughters to her mother's home with this satisfaction that she also grown up with that environment. She extremely criticized the take care centers and said that instead of send your children's to any day care centers a women no need to do a job."

Participant 6 said that:

"Child care is to provide complete all nutrients to children and fulfill their all needs is a child care. She said that her in-laws and her mother both are supportive. She said when she is in husbands home her mother in-law and sister in-law take care of her daughter after her and when she is in her mother's home then her sisters and her mother take care of her daughter during her job. She is also not satisfied with the external child care services and she not need it because her families are very supportive."

Participant 7 said that:

"She lived in nuclear family system, her mother in-law is died. She have to send her daughter to her mother who are very supportive. In her work place a day care center is available but she did not avail this because she is not satisfied with the quality and environment of the center."

6.2. Theme 2: Family Support

Family support is the emotional, practical, and instrumental help that family members give to a person. It includes a range of aid, including moral support, counsel, and financial support, help with domestic chores, and caring obligations.

Participant 1 said that:

"She lived in a nuclear family system that's why she had no family support accept her husband. He also help her in her household chores. She had one son."

Participant 2 said that:

"She lived in nuclear family system. Her father in-law lived with her. Her husband is very supportive. He also help her in her household chore when he not busy in his job. She had one son and one daughter."

Participant 3 said that:

"She lived in joint family system. She has 4 daughters but still they all are helpful. Her husband is much more supportive and also helping in her household chores when he is not busy in his job and trained in sleeping her daughters."

Participant 4 said that:

"Her families are very supportive. She had one daughter. After her they all take care of her child."

Participant 5 said that:

"She lived in nuclear family system. During her job she send her daughters to her mother's home with this satisfaction that she also grown up with that environment. Her husband is also very supportive."

Participant 6 said that:

"Her mother in-law and sister-in-law manage work when she is going to her work place. Her in laws take care of her children very carefully. Her husband lived in Dubai, she received a verbal support from him."

Participant 7 said that:

"She lived in nuclear family system. She has one daughter. She send her daughter to her mother's home during her professional activity."

6.3. Theme 3: Challenges as a Professional Women

The term "challenges" refers to the difficulties, obstructions, or issues that people or groups deal with on a daily basis.

Participant 1 said that:

"She face challenge as a linguistic problem and emotional disturbance in her son."

Participant 2 said that:

"She face problem of time management because she had no maid for her household chore, she had to do her all works own her own She said she works life a machine whole day."

Participant 3 said that:

"She face problems of time management and sometimes also suffer from stress and tension."

Participant 4 said that:

"She face challenges according to her daughter mood changes because she is one and a half years old."

Participant 5 said that:

"She face challenge of neglect as she feels guilty because she did not give proper time to her daughters."

Participant 6 said that:

"She face some challenges as she had to send her daughter to her mother's home. Her daughter remain disturbed after her."

Participant 7 said that:

"She face a problem of transformation as her husband lived in Dubai."

6.4. Theme 4: Strategies to access child care

The methods and steps parents or care giver take to find adequate and dependable child care for their children are referred to as strategies to get child care.

Participant 1 said that:

"She used the strategy of proper time management to cope with their challenges."

Participant 2 said that:

"She used the strategy of proper time management and as her husband is supportive in household chores."

Participant 3 said that:

"She also used the strategy of proper time management, her husband is also very supportive."

Participant 4 said that:

"She hired a little girl as a maid to take care of her daughter."

Participant 5 said that:

"She mold her daughter's mood so that she not feel sad and stay happy."

Participant 7 said that:

"She take the help of her brother in-law to resolve the problem of transformation."

7. Discussions

The research or study offers insightful information on the value of child care, its effect on kids' development, and the changing societal and cultural environment that surrounds child care options. It draws attention to the growing reliance on child care brought on by mothers' employment, the historical growth of child care services, and the necessity of looking at the impacts of child care arrangements. First, child care and related services which include the provision of nutrition, social interaction, and physical and mental development were examined. While some participants used child care facilities, unsatisfied participants favored hired help or family support. Family support, which includes emotional, practical, and instrumental support from family members, was the second theme. Depending on their spouses or other family members, some women relied on them for assistance with home duties and child care, but the extent of support varied. Language obstacles, emotional problems, guilt over negligence, and the effects of being away from family owing to work duties were among the difficulties experienced by professional women. Time management techniques, using marital support, hiring help, and treating children's mood swings were some methods for getting access to child care. Overall, the research showed that women in teaching professions faced fewer difficulties and felt less stress, especially in joint family systems with supporting spouses. Numerous participants voiced worries about the caliber of outside child care providers and preferred family-based or close-by supervision.

7.1. Recommendations and Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

According to the results, it is advised to raise the standard of child care facilities, encourage family-friendly workplace policies, build professional women's support networks, give tools for time management and work-life balance, and carry out additional study in the area. These suggestions are meant to increase the quantity and caliber of child care options, assist working women in juggling work and parenthood, and foster a conducive climate for successful work-family integration. Theories should also consider how gender norms and societal expectations affect women's choices for careers and child care. Theories can help us understand professional women's challenges more deeply and guide the development of interventions that support work-life balance and gender equity by examining how institutional practices and cultural beliefs affect women's decision-making processes.

Implications for Research includes,

Longitudinal Studies: To investigate the long-term effects of various child care techniques on children's development, future research may use longitudinal designs. This would assist determine the most efficient methods and offer insightful information on the long-term effects of child care experiences.

Comparative Analysis: Cross-cultural research can enhance our comprehension of how societal expectations and cultural norms affect child care practices. Comparative studies would shed light on the contextual variables that influence child care decisions and pinpoint culturally considerate procedures that aid working parents.

8. Conclusion

A variety of sociocultural, economic, and organizational issues impact the complicated and multidimensional path that professional women take in trying to balance their work and child care duties. The results show how these women use a wide range of child care alternatives, including hired help, professional child care centers, and family networks. Family support has been identified as a key element in enabling the successful juggling of work and child care obligations. The women's struggles were significantly lessened by the emotional and practical support that their husbands, extended relatives, and cares gave them. Language obstacles, emotional problems, guilt over negligence, and the effects of being apart from family members owing to job duties are just a few of the difficulties experienced by working women. While the assistance of spouses and other family members aids in the sharing of child care responsibilities, effective time management enables women to devote enough time to both work and family obligations. The growth and success of society at large ultimately depend on the promotion of work-life balance and the empowerment of women in the workforce.

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