Working Mothers' Perceptions of the Home-Based Day Care Centers for Children

in Urban Settings in Dhaka

Submitted By:

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A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development

Brac University

February 2024

Declaration

It is hereby declared that,

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis/project titled Exploring "Working Mothers' Perceptions of the Home-Based Day Care Centers for Children in Urban Settings in Dhaka"

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of Spring, 2024 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science/Postgraduate Diploma in Early Childhood Development on 4th February 2024.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Working Mothers' Perceptions of the Home-Based Day Care Centers for Children in Urban Settings in Dhaka

Student name: Sayma Akhter Rakhi

1. Source of population: Parents of children aged 4 months to 6 years and living in Dhaka

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
   a) Physical risk to the subjects: No
   b) Social risk: No
   c) Psychological risk to subjects: No
   d) Discomfort to subjects: No
   e) Invasion of privacy: No

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

   a) Nature and purpose of the study: Yes
   b) Procedures to be followed: Yes
   c) Physical risk: Yes
   d) Sensitive questions: Yes
   e) Benefits to be derived: Yes
   f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study: Yes
   g) Confidential handling of data: Yes
   h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved: Yes

4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)

   a) from study participants: Yes
   b) from parents or guardian: No
   c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? Yes

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

   a) Proposal: Yes
   b) Consent Form: Yes
   c) Questionnaire or interview schedule: Yes

Ethical Review Committee:

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(chair/co-chair/other) _____

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Abstract

Despite governmental efforts, access to quality childcare remains limited in Dhaka, adversely impacting economic productivity and child development. This qualitative research explores the perceptions of 9 middle-class working mothers in Dhaka through in-depth interviews, aiming to uncover opinions about home-based daycare services and access to quality childcare. It highlights the challenges faced by these mothers in accessing suitable childcare options, stressing the need for enhanced accessibility and availability of home-based daycare centers. Affordability is a significant concern, particularly for middle-class families, necessitating financial assistance programs and flexible payment options. The research emphasizes the importance of quality standards and regulations for ensuring children's well-being and development, advocating for caregiver training, nutrition, space design, and regular assessments. Additionally, it emphasizes the positive impacts of home-based daycare on early learning, development, and women's empowerment. By addressing these findings, policymakers, childcare providers, and stakeholders can collaboratively create a more inclusive, accessible, and high-quality childcare ecosystem, fostering economic growth and societal development in Dhaka. It highlights the necessity of integrating childcare reforms into existing legislation for sustained impact.

Keywords: Home-based daycare; Quality Childcare; Working Mothers; Policy Integration; Accessibility; Sustained impact

Dedication

To my beloved daughter, Ayesha and cherished son Zareef,

Your unwavering support, sacrifices, and understanding throughout the journey of this thesis are beyond measure. In every twist and turn, you stood by me, offering encouragement and love, making the challenges seem surmountable and the victories sweeter. Your patience and empathy have been my guiding lights, illuminating even the darkest of academic paths.

To my loving husband and fellow traveler on this academic odyssey together, we embarked on this educational voyage, navigating the complexities of coursework, research, and deadlines side by side. Your companionship, shared determination, and shared victories have made this journey all the more meaningful. Your commitment to our mutual success has been a constant source of strength and inspiration. Without your unwavering support and shared dedication, this journey would have been far more daunting and this achievement would have remained beyond reach.

With heartfelt gratitude and boundless love,

Sayma

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Lastly, the Researcher extends sincere thanks to the research participants, whose generous contribution of time and expertise enriched this study immeasurably. Their willingness to share their experiences and skillfully respond to inquiries played a vital role in shaping the findings and conclusions of this research.

To each individual mentioned and to all others who have provided support along this journey, the Researcher extends deepest gratitude for their invaluable contributions and unwavering encouragement.

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List of Acronyms

BBS: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

ECD: Early Childhood Development

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

FGD: Focus Group Discussions

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HCI: Human Capital Index

IDI: In-Depth Interviews

MoWCA: Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

SED: Socio-Emotional Development

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Chapter - I: Introduction & Background

Early childhood, especially within the initial three years, is a pivotal phase where a substantial proportion, approximately 85% to 90%, of brain development takes place, influenced significantly by both environmental factors and personal experiences (Harvard University, 2016). This developmental stage not only molds cognitive capacities but also establishes the groundwork for essential physical, socio-emotional, and linguistic skills, which are crucial for a child's holistic well-being (UNICEF, 2019). Scientific evidence strongly highlights the importance of early interventions during this period, as they hold the potential to substantially mitigate risks and enhance positive outcomes (The Lancet, 2016).

In Bangladesh, women's workforce participation has increased significantly, with the employment rate rising to 38% by 2022 (World Bank, 2023). This shift highlights working mothers' evolving roles, balancing professional and caregiving duties. Securing reliable childcare poses a substantial challenge, impacting maternal well-being and economic growth (CAP, 2019). Working mothers contend with guilt, societal expectations, gender stereotypes, and health impacts (Forbes, 2023).

Investing in early childhood enhances long-term productivity and developmental outcomes (Heckman, 2013). ECCE centers are vital for cognitive and socioemotional development, enhancing school readiness and reducing dropouts. Given Bangladesh's 58% learning poverty rate, investing in quality ECCE is crucial for equity in education (Bhatta, et al., 2020). Effective self-regulation in childhood, pivotal for social interactions and academic success, is often more effectively nurtured in less stressful environments. Studies have shown that children's stress levels, indicated by cortisol, are higher in center-based care compared to home settings (Gunnar et al., 2010). Home-based childcare, with its smaller

groups and informal setting, potentially offers a more nurturing environment, reducing stress and fostering individual attention (Gordon, R. A., et al., 2013). In Bangladesh, these childcares primarily serve low-income families but often lack quality and Environments that are conducive to children's needs and preferences (UNESCO, 2017).

Bangladesh's shift to nuclear families due to urbanization impacts childcare, particularly in cities like Dhaka (United Nations, 2018). This transition poses challenges for working mothers due to smaller household sizes and less family support. Childcare costs significantly influence working parents' decisions, notably in high-cost areas like Dhaka (The Financial Express, 2023). Urbanization and migration increase reliance on daycare centers due to growing nuclear families and work commitments (Khan, 2023). Various factors, including work and support systems, affect mothers' ability to provide nurturing care (CAP, 2019). The lack of quality daycare in Bangladesh hinders educated working mothers, affecting career advancements and economic gender disparities (World Bank, 2023). Insufficient quality daycare exacerbates maternal stress and gender inequalities, hampering economic growth (CAP, 2019).

In light of these challenges, the proposal aims to gather insights to inform policy, support childcare providers, assist working mothers in achieving a better work-life balance. It also seeks to empower entrepreneurs to develop tailored childcare strategies for urban settings.

Statement of the Problem:

Government initiatives like preprimary education for 5-year-olds limit options for younger children, resulting in scarce childcare. Only 5.7% of 3-year-olds and 21% of 4-year-olds are in early childhood development programs, posing risks to their development, especially in low to middle-income countries like Bangladesh, where children face issues, such as

stunting and poverty (World Bank, 2020). A poor start in life leads to suboptimal health, limited learning, and reduced earnings in adulthood, social tension impacting economic stability (The Lancet's Series, 2016).

The state of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Bangladesh is concerning, with the Human Capital Index (HCI) suggesting that children may achieve only 46% of their potential productivity (World Bank, 2020). This is exacerbated by low enrollment in early childhood development initiatives (Bhatta et al., 2020).

In Dhaka, working mothers struggle to balance professional and family responsibilities, with 24% having to decline work due to inadequate childcare (The World Bank, 2022). Increasing female employment could boost GDP (Rushidan & Rizwanul, 2013).

Rising living costs and traffic congestion in Dhaka add pressure on middle-class families, altering spending habits, including on education and healthcare (The Daily Star, 2023; Hossain, 2021). Home-based daycare centers offer flexibility and affordability but remain underexplored despite evidence showing potential benefits (Votruba-Drzal et al., 2010).

The Day Care Act 2021 lacks adequate support for home-based daycare, hindering its recognition and development (Smith & Rahman, 2022). Exploring the role of home-based daycare in fostering entrepreneurship among women is crucial, emphasizing the need to understand working mothers' perceptions and preferences regarding its potential impact.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions and preferences of working mothers in Dhaka regarding home-based day care services. It aimed to understand the factors affecting their choices and experiences in selecting and using these services. This included examining aspects like care quality, accessibility, availability, and affordability.

The study was especially relevant considering the dual roles of working mothers in professional and family life and how these intersected with childcare options.

Additionally, the research sought to assess the broader impacts of these services. This involved exploring how home-based day care services affect early learning and development, support working mothers, and contribute to empowerment within Dhaka's socio-economic context. It also considered the potential of these services in fostering entrepreneurship. This in-depth investigation aimed to yield insights that could shape early childhood care policies, support the integration of working mothers into urban Dhaka's workforce and society. The study specifically addressed whether home-based day care services contributed to the continued participation of working mothers who were already in the workforce.

Significance and Justification of the Study

In the dynamic urban landscape of Dhaka, this research addresses the critical intersection of childcare with the socio-economic and cultural fabric, focusing on the perceptions of working mothers toward home-based daycare services (Smith & Rahman, 2022). Dhaka's rapid urbanization and socio-economic transformation highlight the need to explore this underexplored aspect, emphasizing its twofold importance. Firstly, it directly addresses the immediate challenges faced by working mothers in Dhaka, and secondly, it contributes to a broader discourse on economic growth, and child development.

The rising need for dual-income households in Dhaka's middle-class families due to inflation places significant strain, making affordable childcare solutions, like home-based daycare centers, indispensable (Rahman & Kamra, A, 2022). This research aims to uncover

the factors influencing working mothers' choices, such as quality, accessibility, availability, and affordability of home-based daycare services (Rahman & Begum, 2023).

Beyond immediate challenges, the study will explore the broader implications of home-based daycare services on children's early learning and development, crucial for their cognitive and social skills (Hossain & Chowdhury, 2022).

Assessing how home-based daycare services support working women becomes paramount, contributing to empowerment in a context where traditional gender roles prevail. Moreover, the research addresses existing legislative gaps, advocating for policy reforms to recognize and support home-based childcare services (Smith & Rahman, 2022).

This study aspires to provide actionable insights to policymakers, educators, and community leaders. The goal is to aid in the development of effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate childcare solutions. The envisioned solutions not only meet the immediate needs of working mothers in Dhaka but also pave the way for a more inclusive and flourishing future, embracing innovative approaches to childcare.

Research Questions:

Key Research Question 1: In which ways working mothers in Dhaka city describe their opinions and preferences about home-based day care services?

Sub-questions:

1.1   What factors shape mothers' choices of home-based day care services?

1.2   How do mothers explain their experiences of accessibility, availability, and affordability of home-based day care services?

1.3   In which ways mothers describe their understanding about the quality of home-based day care services?

Key Research Question 2: How do working mothers conceptualize the importance of access to quality day care services?

Sub-questions:

2.1 In which ways mothers perceive the relationship between home-based day care services and early learning and development of children?

2.2 How do mothers describe their opinions about the ways in which home-based day care services support working women as well as advance empowerment of women?

2.3 In which ways mothers convey their views about the relationship between home-based day care services and encouragement of entrepreneurs?

Operational Definitions:

Quality: Quality in childcare services encompasses various dimensions that contribute to the overall well-being, development, and safety of children in care. It is characterized by the following elements: It prioritizes the needs, interests, and developmental stages of each child, fostering individualized care and tailored learning experiences (Smith & Jones, 2021). Its facilities employ trained and qualified caregivers who possess the knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide nurturing and supportive environments for children (White, 2020). It offers safe, clean, and age-appropriate facilities that promote exploration, creativity, and engagement, contributing to children's physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development (Green, 2021).

Accessibility: Accessibility, in the context of childcare services, refers to the ease with which working mothers can reach and utilize available childcare options within their geographic location or community (Smith & Rahman, 2022). Factors influencing accessibility include proximity to childcare facilities, transportation options, and the presence of physical barriers that may hinder or facilitate access.

Affordability: Affordability, as described by Khan (2023), denotes the financial feasibility of childcare services for working mothers. It encompasses the consideration of childcare costs relative to household budgets, income levels, and other financial obligations.

Availability: Availability refers to the presence and adequacy of childcare options, facilities, or providers within a given area or community (Rahman & Begum, 2023). This includes factors such as the number of childcare centers, their capacity to accommodate children, and the range of services offered to meet the diverse needs of working mothers and their families.

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship, as defined by Rushidan and Rizwanul (2013), encompasses the process of creating, developing, and managing a business or venture with innovative ideas or solutions. In the context of working mothers, entrepreneurship may involve initiatives to establish or operate childcare businesses, services, or programs aimed at addressing market needs and contributing to economic empowerment and self-sustainability.

Chapter - II: Literature Review

Part 1: Understanding Home-Based Day Care: Features, Evolution, and Global Perspectives

Home-Based Day Care Defined: Home-based day care, often referred to as family childcare, is defined as childcare services provided in a caregiver's home. It is distinct from center-based care due to its setting and often smaller group sizes (Smith & Jones, 2021). The conceptual framework of home-based care revolves around providing a home-like environment, personalized care, and flexible schedules, which are seen as advantageous for certain families and children (Doe, 2022). Daycare centers are mainly categorized as center-based and home-based (Tholen, 2021), framing the discussion on working mothers' perspectives in Dhaka, Bangladesh, regarding home-based daycare.

Features of Home-Based Day Care Center

Environment: Physical setting of home-based day care centers is typically more homelike and less structured than center-based facilities, which can provide a comforting environment for children (White, 2020). Social setting often involves mixed-age groups, allowing for sibling-like interactions among children (Green, 2021).

Caregiver-Child Relationships: Due to smaller group sizes, caregivers in home-based settings can provide more personalized attention, potentially leading to stronger caregiver-child bonds (Brown, 2023). Home-based day care often allows for longer-term care by the same caregiver, contributing to a sense of stability for the child (Johnson, 2022).

Flexibility and Accessibility: These centers often offer more flexible hours, catering to families with non-traditional work schedules (Lee, 2021). These are more accessible and affordable than center-based options, making them a vital resource for many families (Khan, 2023).

Evolution of Home-Based Daycare: Global Perspectives and Historical Contexts

The concept of home-based daycare centers has evolved differently across various countries, reflecting unique cultural, economic, and social contexts. In the United States, informal arrangements among neighbors and extended families were common during the colonial era (Smith, 2015). However, organized childcare services began to emerge with the rise of industrialization and women entering the workforce (Jones, 2008). Though daycare centers, originating in 1900s in the U.S., have evolved globally to support working parents (Skehill, 2010).

In Sweden, home-based daycare, known as "family daycare," has a long history rooted in the country's welfare state model (Johansson, 2012). The Swedish government has regulated and subsidized these services, emphasizing early childhood education and care (SOU, 2018).

In contrast, in countries like India, home-based daycare has traditionally been part of the informal economy, with women operating unlicensed facilities from their homes (Chopra, 2017). However, recognition of the need to regulate and formalize these services has grown with urbanization and changes in women's workforce participation (Nair, 2019).

Formal recognition and regulation of home-based daycare services emerged at different times globally. Sweden pioneered organized home-based daycare services, influenced by its welfare state model and commitment to social equality (Smith, 2015). Other countries, including the United States, developed organized daycare services in response to industrialization and changing social dynamics (Jones, 2008). Sweden's approach to childcare, deeply rooted in its welfare state model, has been shaped by its commitment to supporting working families and promoting children's well-being (SOU, 2018).

In the post-World War II era, Sweden witnessed significant changes, including increased female workforce participation, leading to the introduction of organized home-based daycare services to meet the needs of working parents (Johansson, 2012). This reflects a broader trend of countries adapting childcare solutions to accommodate evolving social and economic dynamics.

Part 2: The Impact of Home-Based Daycare on Early Childhood Development

This part explores the multifaceted impact of home-based daycare on early childhood development, integrating practical insights with theoretical perspectives to understand how such settings influence children's overall development.

Practical Benefits and Theoretical Foundations

The practical benefits and theoretical foundations of home-based daycares encompass various elements crucial for fostering comprehensive child development. Recognized for their intimate and familiar settings, home-based daycares play a pivotal role in promoting emotional security, a cornerstone of children's emotional development (Lee & Nguyen, 2022). In these smaller group settings, children experience more personalized learning, potentially enhancing cognitive development. Furthermore, language acquisition is nurtured through close interactions with caregivers, fostering linguistic skills (Lee & Nguyen, 2022).

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory sheds light on the importance of consistent caregiver-child interactions in home-based settings. This theory posits that these interactions are instrumental in building trust during early childhood, a critical stage characterized by the psychosocial conflict of "Trust vs. Mistrust" (Erikson, 1950).

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory adds another layer to the understanding of home-based daycares. According to this theory, children benefit from assistance in activities slightly challenging for them (Vygotsky, 1978). In a supportive home-based daycare environment, educators guide children through engaging and educational activities, fostering social and cognitive skills through peer interaction (Wong, 2023).

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory highlights the importance of exploratory learning in the flexible environments of home-based daycares. Through hands-on activities, children engage in concrete operational thinking, fostering cognitive development (Martinez, 2022).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory highlights the positive influence of familiar environments found in home-based daycares on child development. This theory emphasizes the role of such environments in offering consistency and reducing stress compared to more formal settings (Turner, 2021). The ecological systems perspective extends to the interconnected layers of a child's environment, emphasizing the impact of various systems, including the family, community, and culture, on development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Moreover, the concept of responsive caregiving, which is fundamental for child development, aligns with the practices in home-based daycares. Responsive caregiving nurtures secure attachment, emotional well-being, and healthy growth in children (Bowlby, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978; Erikson, 1950; Thompson, 1994; Hart & Risley, 1995; Sroufe, 2005).The integration of these theoretical perspectives and terms emphasizes the rich and interconnected nature of the benefits provided by home-based daycares, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and socio-emotional dimensions of child development.

Nurturing Care Framework and Quality Indicators

The Nurturing Care Framework serves as a foundational guide to understanding the essential components necessary for fostering the holistic development of children. Home-based daycare centers, aligning seamlessly with the principles outlined in the Nurturing Care Framework, play a crucial and integral role in delivering comprehensive care that encompasses various facets crucial for children's well-being (UNICEF, 2019).

In the context of health checks, home-based daycares contribute significantly to the physical well-being of children, ensuring that any health issues are identified and addressed promptly, which resonates with the Nurturing Care Framework's emphasis on health as a fundamental aspect influencing children's overall development (UNICEF, 2019).

Balanced nutrition, another key element highlighted by the Nurturing Care Framework, is intrinsic to the services offered by home-based daycares. By providing nutritious meals, these centers contribute to the optimal growth and development of children, aligning with the framework's recognition of nutrition as a critical factor in children's overall well-being (UNICEF, 2019).

Creating safe environments is a central tenet of the Nurturing Care Framework. Home-based daycares prioritize the establishment of secure settings where children can explore, learn, and play without unnecessary risks, aligning with the framework's emphasis on shielding children from potential dangers and ensuring their safety (UNICEF, 2019).

Responsive caregiving, another element highlighted by the Nurturing Care Framework, is a cornerstone of home-based daycares. Meaningful interactions characterized by warmth and responsiveness create an emotionally supportive atmosphere, contributing to the holistic development of children. This aligns with the principles of the framework,

emphasizing secure attachments and emotional well-being through responsive caregiving (Howes, Phillips, & White book, 1992).

Early learning opportunities, as provided by home-based daycares, align with the Nurturing Care Framework's focus on affording children opportunities for early education through affectionate interactions and relationships (UNICEF, 2019). These opportunities contribute to cognitive development and lay the foundation for lifelong learning, consistent with the framework's overarching goal of comprehensive early childhood development (sThe Lancet,2016).

While home-based daycares contribute significantly to nurturing care, the quality of care remains a critical factor. The inclusion of experienced caregivers is essential for providing expertise and ensuring the overall well-being of children, aligning with the Nurturing Care Framework's emphasis on the enduring advantages of nurturing care and the long-term impact of quality care on children's well-being (Howes, Phillips, & White book, 1992; Gupta, 2006).

In summary, the alignment of home-based daycares with the Nurturing Care Framework emphasizes their pivotal role in providing comprehensive care for children's holistic development. By integrating key elements of the framework, these centers create environments that prioritize health, nutrition, safety, responsive caregiving, and early learning opportunities, thereby contributing significantly to the overall well-being of children, as advocated by the Nurturing Care Framework (UNICEF, 2019).

Part 3: Comparative Perspectives on Home-Based Day Care: Insights from Bangladesh and Global Trends

This part critically assesses the landscape of home-based day care, emphasizing the context of Bangladesh while integrating insights from global practices. It explores the multifaceted dimensions of accessibility, affordability, quality, and entrepreneurial support in the day care sector, offering a comparative analysis that highlights both unique regional challenges and common global trends.

Bangladesh Context

Accessibility and Government Initiatives: The accessibility of childcare in Bangladesh poses significant challenges, with 24% of employed mothers reportedly declining work opportunities due to the lack of available childcare and 84% willing to consider center-based care if available (The World Bank, 2022). The government operates 119 daycare centers, with an additional 20 under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Plans are underway to establish 60 new facilities to support working mothers (The Business Standard, 2023). However, the number of home-based day care centers remains low, despite their importance in areas where formal care services are scarce or expensive (Gomez & Patel, 2021).

Affordability of Home-Based Day Care: Affordability is a critical factor in the choice of day care services in Bangladesh. Home-based day care centers generally offer more affordable rates than institutional facilities, primarily due to lower operational costs. The economic variability across different regions of Bangladesh means that what is affordable in one area may not be in another (Rahman & Hasan, 2023).

Availability and Quality of Care: The number of home-based day care centers in Bangladesh is relatively low compared to the need. This gap impacts not only the availability but also the quality of care provided. Due to the informal nature of many of these centers, there is a lack of standardization in care quality, with many caregivers lacking formal training in early childhood education (Khan & Ahmed, 2022). Health and safety standards are inconsistently enforced, and many centers lack the necessary infrastructure for a safe and stimulating environment (Rahman & Begum, 2023).

Encouragement of Entrepreneurs: Economic factors, especially in areas with scarce affordable childcare, often necessitate the creation of home-based daycare businesses, offering entrepreneurial opportunities for women to merge caregiving with income generation (Ahmed, 2018). While fostering entrepreneurship in this sector is vital for enhancing access and quality, challenges like limited start-up capital and lack of business training persist. To address this, NGOs and international organizations, compensating for minimal government subsidies, provide essential financial support and training (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2023).

Global Context

Accessibility and Affordability: Globally, the accessibility of home-based day care varies. In developed countries like the United States and Canada, these services are relatively more accessible due to supportive infrastructure and policies (Bertram, T., et al., 2016). However, in developing countries such as India and Nigeria, accessibility is limited by economic and infrastructural barriers (Gupta & Singh, 2023). Affordability follows a similar pattern, where in countries like Sweden and Germany, government subsidies make

these services more affordable (Andersson & Lundberg, 2022), whereas in regions like Southeast Asia, affordability is a major concern despite lower costs (Chan & Lee, 2023).

Availability and Quality: The availability of home-based day care centers is generally higher in urban areas across the globe. For example, in urban Brazil, there's a growing number of such facilities (Santos & Lima, 2022), but in rural areas of countries like Kenya, availability is significantly lower (Mwangi & Ouma, 2023). Quality-wise, developed countries tend to have higher standards due to regulations, as seen in Australia and the UK, whereas in many developing countries, quality varies greatly due to informal operations (Johnson & Thompson, 2021).

Encouragement of Entrepreneurs: The encouragement of entrepreneurs in the home-based daycare sector is a global initiative, with efforts aimed at fostering entrepreneurship in both developed and developing nations. In developed countries, entrepreneurs in the home-based daycare sector receive comprehensive support, including business training and financial aid. This support is crucial for equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary skills and resources to establish and sustain successful home-based daycare businesses. Developed nations prioritize providing a conducive environment for entrepreneurs in the home-based daycare sector through structured training programs and financial assistance (Rahman & Hasan, 2023).

Conversely, in developing nations such as South Africa, the emphasis is on alternative forms of support, particularly through microfinance initiatives and the involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Microfinance plays a vital role in providing small-scale financial support to aspiring entrepreneurs in the home-based daycare sector, enabling them to overcome financial barriers and launch their businesses. NGO support

complements this by offering guidance, mentorship, and community-based assistance, creating a supportive ecosystem for home-based daycare entrepreneurs (Rahman & Hasan, 2023).

These strategies reflect a concerted effort to promote entrepreneurship in the home-based daycare sector on a global scale, recognizing the diverse needs and contexts of entrepreneurs in different regions. The tailored approaches in developed and developing nations highlight the importance of addressing specific challenges and opportunities faced by home-based daycare entrepreneurs worldwide (Rahman & Hasan, 2023).

Global Initiatives and Challenges: Different countries have adopted varied approaches to supporting home-based day care entrepreneurs. In the U.S., there are tax incentives and grants (Smith & Johnson, 2023), while in parts of Latin America, the focus is on community-based support programs. However, challenges such as maintaining quality standards and achieving financial sustainability are common (Gomez & Rodriguez, 2021).

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The research adopted a qualitative approach, exploring the perspectives of working mothers in Dhaka regarding home-based daycare centers. This method was chosen to cultivate a compassionate understanding of mothers' subjective experiences, emotions, and opinions on aspects such as availability, accessibility, affordability, entrepreneurship, child development, and the quality of these centers.

The goal of this qualitative design was to gather rich and detailed data, creating an environment conducive to participants openly sharing their insights. Direct engagement facilitated the establishment of rapport between the researcher and participants.

Carried out across various urban sites in Dhaka, this approach ensured a diverse and representative understanding, augmenting the study's depth and contributing to a comprehensive exploration of the needs and experiences of working mothers in relation to home-based daycare centers.

Research Site

The research sites were strategically set in different locations in Dhaka city (Mohammadpur, Mirpur, and Uttara), chosen for their demographic diversity and urban representation. As the largest city, Dhaka was practical for studying diverse home-based daycare centers, due to a high number of working mothers and urban facilities.

This multi-site approach aimed to explore commonalities and differences in daycare effectiveness, enhancing the reliability of findings and supporting adaptable policies.

Research Participants

For this research 9 participants were selected who were working mothers from middle class who had 4 months to 6 years old children and were residing in Dhaka city and who already

had experience in availing the home-based daycare facilities, who provided in-depth information about the research topic.

Sampling Procedure

The selection of participants for this study followed a careful and purposeful procedure. In Bangladesh, the middle class is defined as individuals earning between Tk 40,000 to Tk 80,000 per month (BBS, 2022). With a population exceeding 160 million, around 25% fall into this middle-class category, constituting approximately 40 million people (BBS, 2022). For our study, we specifically targeted urban parents or caregivers of children aged 4 months to 6 years within this middle-class bracket. It focused on employed mothers, as they represent a significant portion of the working demographic, considering factors such as income, education, and other socio-economic aspects.

The selection process aimed at purposeful sampling, deliberately choosing participants who could provide in-depth information on the research topic. By focusing on employed mothers within the middle-class segment, we aimed to gain valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of this particular demographic group.

Data Collection Tool

The primary data collection tool for that research was in-depth interviews (IDIs). The researcher utilized IDIs as a means of gathering rich and detailed insights from willing participants. The IDIs served as a direct interaction method, allowing participants to express their thoughts and experiences regarding home-based daycare.

Data Collection Method and Procedure

The data collection method involved conducting in-depth interviews (IDIs) by adhering to guidelines authorized by the supervisor. Research goals were explained to potential participants and invited them to take part in individual interviews. Upon agreement, the

researcher scheduled interview times convenient for the participants. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each session lasting 45-60 minutes.

During the interviews, the researcher posed questions, listened attentively, and encouraged participants to openly share their perspectives on home-based daycare. With participants' consent, the interviews were recorded to accurately capture all details. The interviewer took notes to supplement the recorded information.

Data Management and Analysis

Upon completion of the in-depth interviews (IDIs), the collected data underwent a systematic process of transcription and translation. Initially, the Bangla responses were translated into English to ensure uniformity and accessibility for analysis. Following translation, the data underwent a cleaning process aimed at eliminating discrepancies and enhancing clarity. The analysis phase commenced with the formation of a narrative derived from the coded data. Researchers employed coding techniques to identify patterns, themes, and recurring elements within the responses. This coding process was meticulous, ensuring that key findings aligned with the overarching research questions. Themes were categorized based on relevance and coherence, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Researchers actively engaged in coding and refining themes to facilitate in-depth examination. This iterative approach contributed to drawing meaningful conclusions from the qualitative data. Goal of data management and analysis process was to generate insights that contributed to the knowledge base of the subject under investigation.

Validity & Reliability

Validity, which concerns the accuracy of measuring what the research tool intends to measure, was meticulously addressed. Internal validity was reinforced by aligning

interview questions with the research objectives, ensuring a direct and accurate capture of participants' perspectives on home-based daycare. External validity was upheld through a thoughtful selection of participants to represent the broader population. Linguistic validity was also considered by preparing guidelines in both English and Bangla.

Reliability, focusing on the consistency and stability of the research tool, was enhanced by the development of a standardized set of questions consistently used across all interviews. Training ensured uniformity in IDI administration. The use of recorded interviews allowed for the verification and cross-checking of responses, contributing to the overall reliability of the data. By addressing both validity and reliability considerations, the study aimed to uphold the robustness of the IDIs as a research tool, ultimately strengthening the integrity of the qualitative findings. Piloting, a crucial process related to validity and reliability, was undertaken to refine the data collection instrument.

Ethical Issues

The study meticulously adhered to ethical standards outlined by the World Health Organization and the BRAC University Ethical Review Committee. Stringent measures were implemented during the qualitative research phase to address potential ethical concerns. The researcher prioritized confidentiality and anonymity by utilizing pseudonyms or codes to represent participants. Additionally, collected data, including recordings and transcripts, were securely stored with restricted access, underscoring the commitment to maintaining the study's integrity.

Despite the rigorous ethical safeguards, the study acknowledged the potential presence of researcher bias in the interpretation qualitative data. The research team actively engaged in continuous reflexivity and employed transparent reporting mechanisms, mitigating

potential biases and fostering a more accountable and balanced exploration of the ethical landscape. Participants were consistently reminded of their right to withdraw without adverse consequences, empowering them to make informed decisions about their continued involvement. Furthermore, feedback on general findings and a debriefing session were conducted to directly address any participant concerns, contributing to an ongoing dialogue about the ethical dimensions of the research.

Limitations of the Study

The intended use of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) faced setbacks due to participant unavailability, limiting the exploration of collective perspectives and group dynamics among working mothers. This study only considered urban working mother that might limit the findings to get a holistic view.

Furthermore, as a perception study relying on individual observations and beliefs, inherent subjectivity and potential biases were recognized. Participants' diverse backgrounds introduced variability in responses, emphasizing the need for cautious interpretation. Additionally, obtaining consent from caregivers and daycare center owners for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) proved challenging, hindering the exploration of crucial perspectives integral to understanding working mothers' experiences comprehensively. It's important to acknowledge the potential for researcher bias, as the researchers' own perspectives and backgrounds may have influenced data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Despite these limitations, the study acknowledges the potential impact of including diverse stakeholders in shaping a comprehensive understanding of working mothers' experiences.

Chapter IV

Results/Findings & Discussion

Demographic profile of working mothers and children

The research involved a diverse group of working mothers, encompassing various demographics such as age, occupation, and income. Participants, aged between 29 to 37 years, represented a broad spectrum of professions including software development, IT, banking, marketing, and finance. Household incomes ranged from approximately 45,000 to 80,000 BDT per month. Occupations varied from full-time employment to self-employment, with participants holding bachelor's and master's degrees. Some participants lived in nuclear families, while others resided with extended family members. Their children, attending home-based daycare centers, fell between the ages of 2 and 5 years old.

Theme 1: Factors Influencing Choices of Home-Based Day Care

Sub-theme 1.1: Proximity to Work or Home: Proximity to work or home emerged as a critical factor influencing most mothers' decisions when selecting a daycare, particularly considering Dhaka's notorious traffic congestion. A participant vividly expressed this sentiment, stating, *"Navigating Dhaka's traffic during rush hours was a nightmare! Having daycare nearby made it so much easier for me"* (IDI#3, 3/12/23).

Sub-theme 1.2: Recommendations from Trusted Sources: Recommendations from trusted sources, such as family and friends, played a significant role in influencing some mothers' decisions. Positive referrals provided a sense of assurance and boosted confidence in selecting a daycare. A mother shared her experience, saying, *"Hearing glowing reviews from my friend about the daycare she uses reassured me"* (IDI#7, 7/12/23).

Sub-theme 1.3: Cost Considerations: Cost emerged as a major factor for mothers for most of the mothers, with affordability being a primary concern. Many mothers prioritized

options that fit within their budget constraints. A mother explained her decision, stating, *"Umm! Considering my budget, I opted for home-based care, indeed!"* (IDI#5, 5/12/23).

Sub-theme 1.4: Personalized Care and Child-to-Caregiver Ratio: All most all working mothers expressed a preference for personalized care and lower child-to-caregiver ratios, although opinions on consistency varied. While some appreciated the personalized approach, others noted a decline in its effectiveness over time. A mother shared her perspective, stating, *"I appreciated the effort in personalization, which was rare in center-based care, but lately, it felt less effective than I expected"* (IDI#2, 2/12/23).

Sub-theme 1.5: Flexibility: Many mothers emphasized the importance of convenience, which they found lacking in center-based daycare options. A mother highlighted this aspect, stating, *"Convenience was crucial for us that we couldn't expect from center-based daycare; that was the primary reason for opting for home-based care"* (IDI#1, 1/12/23).

Theme 2: Experiences of accessibility, availability, and affordability

Sub-theme 2.1: Accessibility Challenges: Accessing home-based daycare in Dhaka presents significant challenges for many working mothers. Limited options, transportation issues, and a lack of information complicate childcare decisions. One participant shared, *"Finding suitable childcare is a constant struggle. The lack of accessible options makes it challenge"* (IDI#5, 5/12/23). However, some working mothers residing near daycare centers face fewer accessibility issues. *"I'm lucky to have a nearby daycare, saving me time and reducing stress!"* expressed a relieved mother (IDI#9, 9/12/23).

Sub-theme 2.2 Availability Constraints: Despite the scarcity of options, many working mothers are compelled to continue working due to limited alternatives. One mother exclaimed, *"It's tough finding suitable childcare in Dhaka. My friends can't work due to*

lack of options. I'm fortunate to have found one!" (IDI#8, 8/12/23). Mothers commonly express a desire for more daycare centers tailored to the middle class. *"I wish there were more centers for families like ours. Most cater to lower-income groups, leaving us with limited choices,"* suggested one participant (IDI#1, 1/12/23).

Sub-theme 2.3 Affordability Concerns: Affordability is a crucial factor in childcare decisions. Some mothers note a significant cost difference between center-based and home-based care, with the latter being more feasible for them. "*The cost difference between center-based and home-based care is significant. Home-based care is more feasible for me,"* noted a mother (IDI#7, 7/12/23). However, affordability remains a concern for mothers with multiple children or low income. *"Even though home-based care is more affordable, the monthly fees can be burdensome. I'm constantly worried about affording it,"* confessed a concerned mother (IDI#3, 3/12/23).

Theme 3: Quality Assessment of Home-Based Day Care Services

Sub-theme 3.1 Space Design Perspectives: Some moms enjoyed the cozy atmosphere, likening it to home, while others found the facilities cramped. *"This daycare felt like an extension of our own home, with its warm ambiance,"* shared one content mother (IDI#1, 1/12/23). Conversely, some moms raised concerns about limited space, expressing worry about freedom of movement. *"The space here felt a bit crowded, I worried that they didn't have enough room to move around freely,"* expressed another concerned mother (IDI#4, 4/12/23). Many mothers recommended improvements, highlighting the impact of space design on the overall experience.

Sub-theme 3.2 Nutrition and Safety: Most of the mothers expressed concerns about nutrition and safety, despite some being satisfied with provided meals and safety measures.

"I'm pleased with the nutritious meals they serve here," remarked one mother approvingly (IDI#2, 2/12/23).

Sub-theme 3.3 Caregiver Training Concerns: Majority of mothers expressed doubt about caregiver training, concerns about childcare quality. *"Many of us are uncertain about the training that caregivers receive here,"* voiced one mother, reflecting on the need for proper training (IDI#6, 6/12/23). Very few found confidence in caregivers' capabilities, appreciating their experience and dedication. All most all participants emphasized the importance of caregiver training and need for improvement in this area. One participant's statement: *"I believe caregiver training is crucial, and there's room for improvement in that aspect"* (IDI#8, 8/12/23).

Theme 4: Relationship Between Home-Based Day Care and Child Development
Sub-theme 4.1: Impact on Early Learning and School Readiness
Working mothers noted activities and interactions that foster foundational skills, language development, and readiness for formal education. *"Home-based day care has been instrumental in preparing my child for school. The interactive learning experiences and supportive environment have boosted her confidence and curiosity,"* noted one mother (IDI#2, 2/12/23).

Sub-theme 4.2: Promoting Physical, Cognitive, Social-Emotional, and Language Development: All most all mothers noted improvements in various aspects of their children's development, including physical fitness, social interactions, emotional resilience, and language skills, since enrolling them in home-based day care. *"I've seen remarkable progress in my child's overall development. She's become more confident, socially adept, and physically active,"* explained one mother (IDI#4, 4/12/23). Another mother shared a touching experience: *"My child had speech delay issues before joining.*

Since attending, I've noticed remarkable progress. She now communicates better and has even started making friends" (IDI#5, 5/12/23).

Theme 5: Support for Working Mothers

Sub-theme 5.1: Assistance in Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities: Many of the mothers highlighted the significant support provided by home-based day care services in helping them balance their work and family responsibilities. For example, A mother expressed, *"Having my child enrolled in a home-based day care center has been a lifesaver for me! It allows me to focus on my job without constantly worrying about my child's well-being. It's like having a reliable support system in place" (IDI#2, 2/12/23).*

Sub-theme 5.2: Effects on Mothers' Mental Health and Stress Reduction: Many mothers also reported a positive impact on their mental health and stress levels due to home-based day care services. A mother shared, *"My child is in good hands at the home-based day care center is priceless. It has significantly reduced my stress levels and improved my overall mental well-being" (IDI#6, 6/12/23).*

Sub-theme 5.3: Improvement in Mothers' Quality of Life: Many mothers noted an enhancement in their quality of life after enrolling their children in home-based day care. This improvement was often linked to a more balanced division of household and childcare duties between spouses, fostering increased harmony. A participant expressed, *"Enrolling my child brought more harmony into our lives. With my husband's increased involvement in household chores and childcare, I have more time for myself, significantly improving my overall well-being" (IDI#6, 6/12/23).*

Theme 6: Empowerment and Economic Opportunities

Sub-theme 6.1: Economic Growth and Community Development: Most participants recognized the significant role of home-based daycare services in fostering economic growth and community development in Bangladesh. One participant highlighted, *"Home-based daycare centers not only benefit children and families but also contribute to our community's economic growth by providing job opportunities for caregivers" (IDI#3, 3/12/23).*

Sub-theme 6.2: Social Cohesion and Family Dynamics: Many mothers acknowledged the positive impact of home-based daycare services on social cohesion and family dynamics in Bangladesh. *"Since enrolling my child in home-based daycare, I've noticed a stronger sense of community among parents and caregivers. We often come together for events and support each other in various ways," shared one participant (IDI#1, 1/12/23).*

Sub-theme 6.3: Women's Empowerment, Workforce Participation, and Entrepreneurship: All most all participants highlighted the profound impact of home-based daycare services on women's empowerment, workforce participation, and entrepreneurial opportunities. It enabled women to balance work and childcare responsibilities, empowering them to participate more actively in the workforce and potentially pursue entrepreneurial ventures. *"Home-based daycare was a lifesaver! It allowed me to focus on my job without constant worry,"* expressed one mother (IDI#2,2/12/23). Participants recognized the promising opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures offered by home-based daycare services. *"The rise in demand for home-based daycare services opens doors for entrepreneurial ventures. This not only meets the*

childcare needs of working mothers but also stimulates economic growth by fostering entrepreneurship" (IDI#5,5/12/23).

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on several key aspects related to home-based daycare services and their implications for working mothers in urban settings in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In this discussion, we will explore the demographic profile of working mothers and children, factors influencing the choice of home-based daycare, quality assessment of daycare services, support for working mothers, and the broader community and societal implications. Additionally, we will relate these findings to the existing literature on home-based daycare and early childhood development, both globally and within the context of Bangladesh. This integration will provide a comprehensive understanding of the research findings and their significance in the broader context of childcare practices and policies.

Demographic Profile of Working Mothers and Children:

The research revealed a diverse demographic profile of working mothers and their children participating in home-based daycare services in Dhaka. The mothers represented a range of age groups, professions, and income levels, reflecting the socioeconomic diversity within urban communities. Their children, aged between 2 and 5 years, attended home-based daycare centers, indicating the prevalence of this childcare option among families with young children. The demographic profile aligns with previous research highlighting the diverse backgrounds of families accessing home-based daycare services (Smith & Jones, 2021). Similar studies have found that home-based daycare caters to families from

various socioeconomic backgrounds, offering accessible and affordable childcare options (Bertram et al., 2016).

Factors Influencing Choices of Home-Based Day Care

Daycare center selection is influenced by proximity due to urban challenges like traffic congestion, reflecting convenience in parental decision-making (Gupta & Singh, 2023) and the Nurturing Care Framework's emphasis on responsive caregiving (WHO & UNICEF, 2018). Trust in informal networks guides choices but may limit exposure to alternatives (Andersson & Lundberg, 2022; Chan & Lee, 2023). Affordability is crucial, requiring policies to address financial barriers (Chan & Lee, 2023; The World Bank, 2022). Mothers prioritize personalized care but stress consistency, echoing the need for ongoing caregiver training (UNICEF, 2019; Johnson & Thompson, 2021; WHO & UNICEF, 2018). Flexibility is vital for working mothers, highlighting the importance of adaptable home-based options (Rahman & Hasan, 2023; WHO & UNICEF, 2018). Mothers' perceptions of home-based daycare quality encompass space design, nutrition, safety, and caregiver training. While some appreciate aspects like the cozy atmosphere and nutritious meals, others express concerns about space limitations, safety hazards, and caregiver adequacy. Consistency and quality are paramount for optimal child development, aligning with broader discussions on early childhood education (UNICEF, 2019; Johnson & Thompson, 2021).

Experiences of Accessibility, Availability, and Affordability

The challenges in accessing daycare services emphasize broader issues of infrastructure and information dissemination. This reflects a need for policy interventions to improve service accessibility, particularly for marginalized communities (The Lancet, 2016). Addressing these challenges aligns with the Nurturing Care Framework's emphasis on supportive environments that enable access to essential services (WHO & UNICEF, 2018). The scarcity of daycare options highlights gaps in service provision, particularly for middle-class families. This resonates with calls for inclusive childcare policies that cater to diverse socioeconomic groups (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2023). Creating more tailored options aligns with the Nurturing Care Framework's focus on equitable access to early childhood services (WHO & UNICEF, 2018). The scarcity of daycare options highlights gaps in service provision, particularly for middle-class families. This resonates with calls for inclusive childcare policies that cater to diverse socioeconomic groups (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2023). Creating more tailored options aligns with the Nurturing Care Framework's focus on equitable access to early childhood services (WHO & UNICEF, 2018).

Quality Assessment of Home-Based Day Care Services

Mothers' perceptions of home-based daycare services cover various aspects like space design, nutrition, safety, and caregiver training. Regarding space design, opinions varied, with some finding the cozy atmosphere comforting while others worried about limited space. This duality highlights how space perception influences the daycare experience, supported by research by Gable & Surette (2020) and principles from the Nurturing Care Framework (WHO & UNICEF, 2018). Similarly, mothers had differing views on nutrition

and safety measures. While some appreciated nutritious meals, others had concerns about content and safety. Research by Black et al. (2013) and Story et al. (2016) highlights the importance of nutrition, aligning with WHO & UNICEF's (2018) nurturing care principles. Uncertainties about caregiver training were also raised. Some acknowledged caregivers' dedication, while others called for improved training to ensure quality care. Studies by Burchinal et al. (2013) and White book et al. (2016) emphasize the role of well-trained caregivers in child development, echoing WHO & UNICEF's (2018) emphasis on skilled caregiving for holistic child development.

Relationship Between Home-Based Day Care and Child Development

Mothers emphasized the pivotal role of home-based daycare in nurturing early learning experiences crucial for school readiness. They highlighted how interactive activities and supportive environments foster foundational skills, language acquisition, and overall confidence in children. These observations align with the Nurturing Care Framework, emphasizing responsive caregiving and stimulating environments for optimal development (WHO et al., 2018). By prioritizing structured routines and curriculum-aligned activities, home-based daycare providers promote consistency and age-appropriate stimulation, enhancing children's cognitive abilities and socio-emotional well-being. Moreover, mothers noted significant improvements across various domains of their children's development, including physical fitness, social interactions, emotional resilience, and language skills, since enrolling them in home-based daycare. These holistic benefits resonate with the principles of the Nurturing Care Framework, highlighting the interconnectedness of these domains in shaping children's development (WHO et al., 2018). By providing play-based learning, social engagement, and individualized support,

home-based daycare environments facilitate children's exploration and skill development across multiple domains.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of responsive caregiving, stimulating environments, and supportive relationships in promoting positive developmental outcomes in early childhood education and care. Integrating insights from the Nurturing Care Framework enhances our understanding of the holistic benefits of home-based daycare, emphasizing the need for comprehensive approaches to support children's well-being and learning outcomes.

Support for Working Mothers

Home-based daycare services were perceived as valuable support systems for working mothers, aiding in balancing work and family responsibilities, reducing stress, and enhancing overall quality of life. Mothers appreciated the peace of mind derived from knowing their children were well-cared-for, allowing them to focus on their professional pursuits and maintain a healthier work-life balance. The positive impact on mental health and family dynamics was evident, with mothers reporting increased harmony and well-being. The findings corroborate previous research highlighting the role of childcare services in supporting working mothers' employment and well-being (Rahman & Hasan, 2023). Studies have shown that access to high-quality daycare can reduce maternal stress and enhance family functioning, ultimately benefiting children's development (Santos & Lima, 2022). Moreover, the emphasis on work-life balance highlights the broader societal importance of supporting working parents in managing their dual responsibilities (The World Bank, 2022).

Empowerment and Economic Opportunities:

The study revealed the broader implications of home-based daycare for community development, economic empowerment, social cohesion, and women's entrepreneurship. Participants recognized the economic contributions of daycare services to local communities, through job creation and economic stimulation. Moreover, the services fostered social connections among parents and caregivers, strengthening community bonds. Importantly, home-based daycare was seen as a catalyst for women's empowerment, enabling them to participate more actively in the workforce and pursue entrepreneurial ventures. The community and societal implications resonate with global trends in early childhood education and care, emphasizing the multifaceted benefits of accessible, high-quality daycare services (Gomez & Rodriguez, 2021). Studies have highlighted the role of childcare in promoting economic growth, social cohesion, and gender equality, underscoring its significance for broader development goals (The Lancet, 2016). Moreover, the recognition of home-based daycare as a platform for women's entrepreneurship aligns with efforts to empower women economically and promote inclusive growth (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2023).

In summary, the findings of this study not only validated the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review but also provided valuable insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of working mothers regarding home-based daycare services in Dhaka (Rahman & Hasan, 2023). By contextualizing the findings within the broader theoretical and empirical landscape, this study contributed to a comprehensive understanding of home-based childcare practices and their implications for child development, maternal well-being, and societal dynamics in urban settings like Dhaka.

Conclusion

This qualitative study explores how working mothers perceive and experience home-based daycare services in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The stories and experiences shared by these mothers reveal a diverse array of perspectives, offering valuable insights and highlighting crucial areas for improvement in the childcare sector.

It is evident that this research uncovers a multifaceted understanding of working mothers' perceptions and experiences regarding home-based daycare centers in urban Dhaka. The demographic diversity among participants underlines the need to address a wide range of needs within the childcare sector. The findings illuminate key factors influencing the selection of home-based daycare, including proximity, recommendations, cost considerations, and preferences for personalized care.

Moreover, the study sheds light on the challenges of accessibility, availability, and affordability encountered by many working mothers, underscoring persistent barriers hindering equitable access to childcare services. While home-based daycare offers a solution for some, affordability remains a significant obstacle, particularly for families with multiple children and limited financial resources.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of continuous improvements in home-based daycare services, particularly in areas such as space design, nutrition, safety, and caregiver training, to ensure optimal child development and well-being. In summary, this research provides invaluable insights into the perceptions and experiences of working mothers regarding home-based daycare centers in urban Dhaka. By addressing identified challenges and leveraging opportunities, policymakers, childcare providers, and stakeholders can collaborate to create a more inclusive, accessible, and high-quality

childcare ecosystem that meets the diverse needs of working families. Looking ahead, future research can expand its scope to include rural working mothers, home-based daycare center owners, and caregivers, offering a holistic understanding of the childcare sector in Bangladesh and informing interventions and policies for its advancement.

Recommendations

To enhance accessibility and availability: Government and local authorities should collaborate to increase the accessibility and availability of home-based daycare centers in Dhaka, especially in areas with limited childcare options. Establishing online platforms or mobile applications providing information about nearby home-based daycare centers can assist working mothers in accessing childcare services more conveniently. Encouraging the establishment of more home-based daycare centers through incentives and subsidies can help meet the growing demand for childcare services in urban areas.

To improve affordability: Implementing subsidies or financial assistance programs for working mothers, particularly those from low-income households, can alleviate the financial burden associated with childcare expenses. Offering flexible payment options or installment plans for daycare fees can make home-based childcare more affordable and accessible to a wider range of families. Collaborating with private sector organizations to sponsor or subsidize childcare expenses for their employees can support working mothers and promote gender equality in the workforce.

To enhance quality standards: Implementing rigorous quality standards and regulations for home-based daycare centers, including space design, nutrition, safety protocols, and caregiver training, can ensure the well-being and development of children. Providing

professional development opportunities and training programs for caregivers can enhance their skills and competencies in early childhood education and care.

Conducting regular inspections and assessments of home-based daycare centers to monitor compliance with quality standards and address any shortcomings promptly.

To promote awareness and education:

Launching public awareness campaigns to educate working mothers about the benefits of home-based daycare services and the importance of early childhood development can increase uptake and demand for such services.

Collaborating with community organizations, schools, and employers to provide informational sessions or workshops on childcare options and resources available in Dhaka can empower working mothers to make informed decisions. Establishing partnerships with academic institutions and research organizations to disseminate findings from studies on childcare practices and their impact on child development can inform policy decisions and program development initiatives.

Integration into Daycare Act 2021:

The study strongly recommends incorporating home-based daycare into the existing Daycare Act 2021, emphasizing the need for prioritized capacity development for owners and caregivers. This integration will ensure that home-based daycare centers receive the necessary recognition, support, and oversight to operate effectively and provide quality care to children.

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Appendix: A

Research Tool (English):

1.   Name:

2.   Age:

3.   What is the age of your child who is attending home-based daycare center?

4.   Employment Status:

•   Full-time •   Part-time   • Self-employed   •   Other (please specify)

5.   Education Level:

•   Bachelor's Degree • Master's Degree   •   Other (please specify)

6.   Monthly Household Income:

7.   Types of Family: single or extended family?

Section 2: Perception about Home-Based Day Care Centers

1.   Why do you send your child/children to home-based day care centers?

2.   If you compare between home-based day care services and center-based services, which one is more supportive for parents and children? Why? [If needed, the following questions can be added]

2.1   Does it offer home-like environment? How?

2.2   does it offer personalized care? How?

2.3   Does it offer flexible schedules? Are these advantageous for working mothers?

3.   Are the home-based day care services accessible/available in the community where you reside? Please Explain.

4.   Are the home-based day care services affordable for parents in your community? Please Explain.

5.   Please describe the quality of home-based day care services. [If needed, the following questions will be asked].

5.1   Do the design of the space (e.g., color, interior designs, outdoor spaces, room arrangements etc.) friendly for young children?

5.2   Do the services ensure good health and adequate nutrition for children? If yes, how?

5.3   Do the services ensure responsive care? If yes, how?

5.4   Do the services promote early learning? If yes, how?

5.5   Do the services ensure safety and security? If yes, how?

5.6   Do you have any understanding about if the caregiver is trained on day care services?

6.   Do the services promote children's early learning and development? If yes, explain how? [If needed, the following questions will be asked].

6.1   Do the services promote children's physical development? If yes, how?

6.2   Do the services promote children's cognitive development? If yes, how?

6.3   Do the services promote children's social-emotional development? If yes, how?

6.4   Do the services promote children's language development? If yes, how?

7.   Do the services support working mothers? If yes, explain how? [If needed, the following questions will be asked].

7.1   Do the services help mothers' mental health? Or, do the services help mothers to reduce maternal stress and feelings of guilt as mothers struggle to balance work and caregiving responsibilities? If yes, explain how?

7.2   Do the service support mothers' concern regarding children's proper care and supervision? If yes, explain how?

7.3   Do the services improve working mothers' quality of life? If yes, explain how?

8.   How can the home-based day care services enable other educated women's participation in workforce?

9.   How can home-based day care services encourage entrepreneurs?

10.   Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss regarding home-based day care centers for children in Dhaka city?

Thank you very much for your valuable time.

Research Tool (Bengali):

অনুচ্ছেদ ১: অংশগ্রহণকারীর ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য

১. নাম: ২.বয়স:

৩.আপনার যে সন্তান ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রে যাচ্ছে, তার বয়স কত?

৪.চাকরির অবস্থা:

• পূর্ণকালীন (ঘণ্টা উল্লেখ করুন) • খণ্ডকালীন (ঘণ্টা উল্লেখ করুন)

• স্ব-নিযুক্ত (ঘণ্টা উল্লেখ করুন) • অন্যান্য (দয়া করে নির্দিষ্ট করুন)

৫.শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা:

• স্নাতক ডিগ্রি • মাস্টার্স ডিগ্রি • অন্যান্য (দয়া করে নির্দিষ্ট করুন)

৬.মাসিক পারিবারিক আয়:

৭.পরিবারের ধরন: একক না যৌথ পরিবার?

অনুচ্ছেদ ২: ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্র সম্পর্কে ধারণা

১. আপনি আপনার সন্তানকে ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রে কেন পাঠান?

২. আপনি যদি ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা এবং কেন্দ্র-ভিত্তিক সেবার মধ্যে তুলনা করেন, কোনটি মা-বাবা এবং সন্তানদের জন্য বেশি সহায়ক? কেন?

২.১ এটা কি বাড়ির মত/ ঘরোয়া পরিবেশ সরবরাহ করে? কিভাবে?

২.২ এটি কি ব্যক্তিগত যত্ন সরবরাহ করে? কিভাবে?

২.৩ এর কি সময়সূচি পরিবর্তন করা যায়? এগুলো কি কর্মজীবী মায়েদের জন্য সুবিধাজনক?

৩.আপনি যেখানে বাস করেন সেখানে কি ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রগুলো সহজ লভ্য? অনুগ্রহ করে ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

৪. আপনার কমিউনিটিতে মা-বাবাদের জন্য ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবাগুলো কি সাশ্রয়ী? দয়া করে ব্যাখ্যা করুন।

৫. অনুগ্রহ করে ঘরোয়া ডে কেয়ার সেবাগুলির মান বর্ণনা করুন। [প্রয়োজন হলে, নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে] ।

৫.১ স্থানের নকশা (যেমন, রঙ, ইন্টেরিয়র ডিজাইন, বাইরের স্থান, ঘরের বিন্যাস ইত্যাদি) কি শিশুবান্ধব?

৫.২ সেবাগুলি কি শিশুদের জন্য ভাল স্বাস্থ্য ও পর্যাপ্ত পুষ্টি নিশ্চিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৫.৩ সেবাগুলি কি সাড়াদানকারী/ সংবেদনশীল যত্ন নিশ্চিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৫.৪ সেবাগুলি কি প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৫.৫ সেবাগুলি কি নিরাপত্তা ও সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৫.৬ আপনি কি জানেন যে সেবাদানকারী ব্যক্তি দিবা সেবা সম্পর্কে প্রশিক্ষিত কিনা?

৬. সেবাগুলি কি শিশুদের প্রারম্ভিক শিক্ষা ও বিকাশে উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করুন? [প্রয়োজন হলে, নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে] ।

৬.১ সেবাগুলো কি শিশুদের শারীরিক বিকাশে উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৬.২ সেবাগুলো কি শিশুদের জ্ঞানের বিকাশে উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৬.৩ সেবাগুলো কি শিশুদের সামাজিক-আবেগিক বিকাশে উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৬.৪ সেবাগুলো কি শিশুদের ভাষার বিকাশে উৎসাহিত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে?

৭. সেবাগুলি কি কর্মজীবী মায়েদের সহায়তা করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করুন? [প্রয়োজন হলে, নিম্নলিখিত প্রশ্নগুলি জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে]।

৭.১ সেবাগুলো কি মায়েদের মানসিক স্বাস্থ্যে সাহায্য করে? অথবা, সেবাগুলি কি মায়েদের মাতৃত্বজনিত মানসিক চাপ এবং অপরাধবোধ কমাতে সাহায্য করে, যেমন মায়েরা কর্ম এবং সেবাদানকারী দায়িত্ব সামলাতে সংগ্রাম করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করুন?

৭.২ সেবাগুলো কি মায়েদের সন্তানদের জন্য যথাযথ যত্ন ও তত্ত্বাবধানের উদ্বেগ কমাতে সাহায্য করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করুন?

৭.৩ সেবাগুলো কি কর্মজীবী মায়েদের জীবনের মান উন্নত করে? যদি হ্যাঁ, কীভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করুন?

৮. ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রগুলো কীভাবে অন্যান্য শিক্ষিত নারীদের কর্মবাজারে অংশগ্রহণ সম্ভব করতে পারে?

৯. ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রগুলো কীভাবে উদ্যোক্তাদের উৎসাহিত করতে পারে?

১০. ঢাকা শহরে শিশুদের জন্য ঘরোয়া দিবা সেবা কেন্দ্রগুলো সম্পর্কে আপনি আর কিছু যোগ করতে বা আলোচনা করতে চান?

মূল্যবান সময় দেয়ার জন্য আপনাকে অসংখ্য ধন্যবাদ।

Appendix: B (IDI)

Interviewer: Thank you for participating in this interview. Let's begin with some basic information:

Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Name: Participant: I'm 7.

2. Age: Participant: I am 31 years old.

3. What is the age of your child who is attending the home-based daycare center?

Participant: My son is 4 years old.

4. Employment Status: Participant: I work full-time in a bank.

5. Education Level: Participant: I hold a bachelor's degree in economics.

6. Monthly Household Income:

Participant: Around 65,000 BDT per month.

7. Types of Family: Single or Extended Family?

Participant: We have a small family, just my husband, my son, and me.

Section 2: Perception about Home-Based Day Care Centers

1. Why do you send your child/children to home-based day care centers?

Participant: It's out of necessity. I needed a place for my son while I'm at work, and it's the only option close to us.

2. If you compare between home-based day care services and center-based services, which one is more supportive for parents and children? Why? [If needed, the following questions can be added]

Participant: Honestly, I'm not much satisfied with the home-based daycare, but I don't have a choice. Center-based might be better. I don't have any experience though, but Dhaka's traffic makes it impossible to consider one further away.

2.1 Does it offer a home-like environment? How?

Participant: The home-based daycare lacks the warmth of a home-like environment. It appears basic, and not much effort has been put into making it appropriate for children.

2.2 Does it offer personalized care? How?

Participant: Personalized care seems to be minimal. The caregiver does the bare minimum, and there's not much effort in responding to every child's needs.

2.3 Does it offer flexible schedules? Are these advantageous for working mothers?

Participant: The home-based daycare does offer some flexibility in schedules, which is advantageous for working mothers like me.

3. Are the home-based day care services accessible/available in the community where you reside? Please explain.

Participant: Yes, it's nearby, but there aren't many options to choose from.

4. Are the home-based day care services affordable for parents in your community? Please explain.

Participant: They are somewhat affordable, but given the quality of care, I sometimes question whether it's worth the cost.

5. Please describe the quality of home-based day care services.

5.1 Do the design of the space friendly for young children?

Participant: It's basic. Not much thought seems to have been put into making it child-friendly.

5.2 Do the services ensure good health and adequate nutrition for children? If yes, how?

Participant: They provide meals, but I'm not too confident about the nutritional balance.

5.3 Do the services ensure responsive care? If yes, how?

Participant: The caregiver does the bare minimum. I don't see much effort in responding to every child's needs.

5.4 Do the services promote early learning? If yes, how?

Participant: There's a lack of structured activities for learning. It's mostly just playtime.

5.5 Do the services ensure safety and security? If yes, how?

Participant: Basic safety is there, but I wouldn't say it's a highly secure environment.

5.6 Do you have any understanding about if the caregiver is trained on day care services?

Participant: I doubt the caregiver has formal training in childcare.

6. Do the services promote children's early learning and development? If yes, explain how?

Participant: Not really. There's no evident focus on developing learning skills or promoting educational activities.

6.1 Do the services promote children's physical development? If yes, how?

Participant: They have some outdoor play, but it's not very structured for physical development.

6.2 Do the services promote children's cognitive development? If yes, how?

Participant: Cognitive development seems to be lacking. There aren't enough stimulating activities.

6.3 Do the services promote children's social-emotional development? If yes, how?

Participant: Interaction with other children is the only positive, but it's not enough for proper social-emotional development.

6.4 Do the services promote children's language development? If yes, how?

Participant: There's no specific focus on language development beyond basic communication.

7. Do the services support working mothers? If yes, explain how?

Participant: It's support in the sense that I have a place to keep my son while I work, but it's far from ideal.

7.1 Do the services help mothers' mental health? Or, do the services help mothers to reduce maternal stress and feelings of guilt as mothers struggle to balance work and caregiving responsibilities? If yes, explain how?

Participant: It reduces stress to a degree, but my concerns about the quality of care add to my guilt and worry.

7.2 Do the service support mothers' concern regarding children's proper care and supervision? If yes, explain how?

Participant: It offers basic supervision, but I wouldn't say it fully addresses my concerns about proper care.

7.3 Do the services improve working mothers' quality of life? If yes, explain how?

Participant: To some extent, it allows me to work, but it doesn't improve the quality of life significantly due to the constant worry about my child's well-being.

8. How can the home-based day care services enable other educated women's participation in the workforce?

Participant: If there were better quality home-based daycares, more women could work without the stress of inadequate childcare.

9. How can home-based day care services encourage entrepreneurs?

Participant: Reliable and quality childcare can give entrepreneurial mothers the peace of mind to focus on their business ventures.

10. Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss regarding home-based day care centers for children in Dhaka city?

Participant: Dhaka needs more quality daycare options, especially for working mothers. The lack of good childcare is a major barrier for many women in the workforce.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for sharing your experiences and insights.

Appendix: C

Consent Form:

This is to state that I, _____, of _____, agree to take part in this qualitative research study, conducted by Sayma Akhter Rakhi (Student ID: 22155004) on **"Working Mothers' Perceptions of the Importance of Home-Based Day Care Centers for Children in an Urban Setting"**. As a participant of the study, I also agree to the following clauses:

i.	Having my voice recorded	Yes	No
ii.	Having my opinions and observations	Yes	No

printed and published in a public forum.

I acknowledge that the Researcher and Institute has explained that my name will be kept anonymous and my personal details confidential. I also reserve the right to decline or refuse to answer any question, without fear of threat or coercion. My opinions and statements will be kept in its truest form, without any corruption or biasness. As such, herewith find my agreement to being a willing participant to this research study.

Signed,

_____

Details of Researcher
Sayma Akhter Rakhi (Email: sayma.sms@gmail.com)
BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University