

A Review of the Effects of Childcare Policies

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Abstract: This study investigates the practical effects of the childcare policy "Guidance on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Children under 3 Years Old" in enhancing employment equity for women of childbearing age. Through a review of 15 core studies, the research analyzes policy implementation across regions and industries, focusing on financial support, industry adaptability, and legal enforcement. Findings reveal that while the policy helps reduce career interruption risks for women, its impact is uneven—stronger in financially developed regions and high-income sectors, and weaker where funding or corporate support is lacking. Moreover, hidden discrimination and weak legal enforcement hinder real progress. To improve outcomes, the study suggests increasing fiscal investment, broadening policy coverage, strengthening legal mechanisms, and encouraging enterprise participation to foster a truly equitable employment environment.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Questions

In recent years, with the progress of society and the rise of gender equality awareness, the issue of women's employment equity has received increasing attention. Despite the government's successive introduction of relevant policies such as the Employment Promotion Law, the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, and the three-child Policy to reduce gender discrimination and safeguard women's employment rights. However, women of childbearing age, as a specific group, still face hidden discrimination in the workplace. This is mainly reflected in the fact that companies tend to choose non-childbearing women or men when recruiting to avoid the risk of labor disruption due to childbirth. In addition, the traditional family division of labor model still reinforces women's primary responsibility in raising children, causing women at this stage not only to face blocked career development, but also to experience lower salaries and even be forced to leave their jobs due to parenting issues (Zhu, 2024). This workplace discrimination and the imbalance of reproductive responsibilities reinforce each other, creating a vicious cycle that further tilts corporate recruitment preferences towards non-childbearing women or men, hindering

women's career development and the realization of employment equity (Li and Liu, 2023).

1.2 Study Policy and Status

To address this issue, the Chinese government introduced the targeted childcare policy "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Infants under 3 Years Old" in 2019. The policy aims to reduce the likelihood of women of childbearing age being interrupted in their jobs due to childcare by expanding the supply of childcare institutions, providing financial subsidies, and encouraging social capital to participate in childcare construction (Li et al., 2024). Theoretically, this policy should be able to promote fair employment for women, but in practice, its effect has been limited by several factors, including local fiscal capacity, industry adaptability and legal enforcement, etc. (Guo & Dong, 2021). Specifically, at the financial level, the government's investment in childcare institutions varies greatly depending on the level of development in different regions. For example, in first-tier cities with stronger financial support, such as Guangzhou, the government is able to provide better childcare facilities, which have improved employment equity for women. However, in new first-tier cities such as Xian, due to an insufficient supply of childcare institutions, the actual implementation effect of the policy is limited, and women still face greater

challenges in employment (Guo & Dong, 2021). Meanwhile, at the industry level, there are also significant differences in the adaptability of different industries to the childcare policy. For instance, companies in high-income sectors such as technology and finance are more capable of providing childcare benefits to their employees, while labor-intensive sectors such as manufacturing and retail may offer less support due to cost considerations (Zhu, 2024). This suggests that the implementation of childcare policies depends not only on government financial input but also on industrial structure. These factors, to a large extent, determine whether the childcare policy can truly promote fair employment for women. In addition, insufficient enforcement of the law further limits the effectiveness of the policy. Although the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women explicitly prohibits gender discrimination in employment and guarantees equal employment rights for women of childbearing age, in reality, due to the overly principle-based and inoperable provisions of the law, enterprises can still circumvent relevant legal responsibilities by means of implicit assessment, adjusting job requirements, etc. (Dai, 2022). Therefore, the introduction of policies alone is not sufficient to ensure fair employment for women, and the specific implementation methods of the policies and their actual effects still need further discussion and evaluation.

1.3 Research Objectives and Significance

Based on the context mentioned above, this study aims to explore how the childcare policy "Guidance on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Children under 3 Years Old" affects employment equity for women, and focuses on the following three core questions: First, how is the implementation of this childcare policy in different regions? Second, does this policy really promote employment equity for women? Third, what are the main challenges in the implementation of the policy, and how can the policy be optimized to improve its effectiveness. The practical significance of this study lies in the fact that as the country actively promotes the childcare policy, an in-depth analysis of its actual implementation and impact on women's employment will not only help to optimize policy implementation and improve policy targeting, but also provide data support for the government to reduce deviations in policy implementation. At the same time, it fills a gap in academic research on regional differences and industry adaptability of childcare policies. This study,

by analyzing literature reviews and searching CSSCI core journals, government reports and policy documents, examines the current situation of childcare policy implementation, and conducts comparative studies of implementation effects in different regions. The structure of this article is as follows: The second part reviews the relevant literature and analyzes the theoretical background of the childcare policy and its role in women's employment equity. The third part summarizes the existing research results and explores the differences in policy implementation in different regions and industries. The fourth part analyzes the challenges of policy implementation, including financial support, social perception and legal enforcement, etc. The fifth part puts forward suggestions for optimization and summarizes the research conclusions.

2 RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESSES

2.1 Research Methods and Data Sources

The core objective of this study is to assess the practical effect of the Guidance on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Children under 3 years of Age in promoting employment equity for women of childbearing age, and to analyze the implementation of this policy in different regions, industry adaptability, legal regulation, and the impact of financial support on it. To ensure the accuracy of the study, this paper analyzes existing research literature, systematically reviews domestic and foreign empirical studies on the implementation of childcare policies, the evaluation of policy effects, and the impact of childcare on women's employment, and combines data screening to find research results that can directly support the implementation and effect evaluation of the policy, rather than discussing the issue of employment equity for women of childbearing age in a general way. To ensure that the retrieved literature is highly relevant to the research objective, this paper conducts literature search based on the CSSCI core journal database, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), and Wanfang data, and uses keywords such as: implementation of childcare policies; Care policy for infants under 3 years old; Employment impact for women of childbearing age; Regional differences in childcare policies; Policy financial support/corporate childcare responsibility; Perform Boolean search optimization

for family responsibility sharing, etc., narrowing the search range to screen out high-quality and highly relevant studies. A total of more than 180 related papers were retrieved in the initial search, including 65 studies on the implementation of childcare policies, 50 policy effect evaluations, 40 analyses of financial input and legal enforcement, and 25 corporate childcare responsibilities. To ensure the timeliness of the data, the screening scope was limited to literature published in 2018 and later. Empirical studies including policy implementation effect evaluation, regional financial input comparison, enterprise participation in childcare and legal supervision analysis were given priority, and literature that did not involve policy implementation or only remained at the theoretical discussion level was excluded. Ultimately, 15 core studies were selected to ensure that all literature can directly support the policy analysis.

2.2 Literature Screening Criteria

Literature screening criteria are strictly centered around policy orientation, empirical data, and regional adaptability. First, the research should directly address the implementation of the Guidance on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Children under 3 years Old or include data on the direct impact of childcare policies on women's employment, rather than merely discussing employment equity for women of childbearing age in general. Secondly, priority should be given to studies that contain quantified data on policy implementation, such as the impact of government financial input on policy effectiveness, the attitude of enterprises towards support for childcare, the rate of women returning to employment, the rate of job loss, etc., to ensure the objectivity of policy evaluation. In addition, studies comparing the effectiveness of policy implementation in different regions are included in the key screening scope to ensure that the regional adaptability of the policy can be analyzed, rather than based only on data at the national level. The time frame was limited to 2018 and beyond to ensure the timeliness of the data. In terms of research methods, priority will be given to studies that use quantitative or qualitative methods such as data statistics, policy implementation assessment, questionnaires, and case studies to support the analysis of policy effects. The final 15 core studies were selected, including 5 on policy implementation, 5 on policy effect evaluation, 4 on legal and financial support, and 1 on corporate responsibility and industrial adaptability, to ensure a multi-angle

analysis of the actual impact of the childcare policy.

3 REVIEW OF DOMESTIC STUDIES AND RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Overview of Literature Application and Summary of Review Topics

The application of the literature is closely centered around policy implementation, financial support, legal regulation, and industry adaptability. In terms of policy implementation, Li Congrong et al. (2024) studied the spatial evolution and fiscal impact of childcare resources in Xian provided empirical data on the local implementation of policies, while Guo Lin and Dong Yulian (2021) used an international comparative approach to analyze the implementation models of childcare policies in China and other countries. Revealing the advantages and limitations of Chinese policies in terms of financial support, social acceptance, etc. In addition, the research by Zhang Haoran and Li Yugang (2024) systematically assesses the development trends of childcare services for infants and toddlers aged 0-3, summarizes the deficiencies in policy implementation, and provides background support for policy implementation. In addition, Hong Xiumin, Song Qiuju and Zhu Wenting (2025), from the perspective of policy tools, explored the significant impact of talent team building in childcare services on policy implementation, providing supply-side support for the sustainable development of childcare policies.

In terms of financial support and legal enforcement, Wang Kexin (2025) studied the implementation of labor laws for women in the context of the three-child policy to analyze the role of law in promoting parenting policies, while Zhu Siyi (2024) further explored the challenges of ensuring fair employment for women during the period of population policy reform. The problem of insufficient enforcement of the childcare policy was highlighted. Meanwhile, Dai Ruijun (2022) supplemented the legal supervision analysis of this study by analyzing the feasibility and limitations of the policy at the legal level through public interest litigation cases for women's rights. Meanwhile, Gervin et al. 's (2022) study on public investment in children's development and childcare services provides an international comparative reference for understanding how financial support affects the actual effectiveness of childcare policies.

In terms of policy effect evaluation, Qin Xufang and Ning Yangyang (2022) explored the matching of policy supply and demand based on the demand preferences and willingness to pay for childcare institutions among parents in East China and Northeast China, while Zheng Lingping (2025) studied the construction of a social security system for women under the three-child policy and further analyzed the impact of financial subsidies on policy implementation effects. Meanwhile, Fisk et al.'s (2025) study on Early Head Start also pointed out the positive impact of high-quality, early care services on the increase in women's labor participation rate.

In terms of corporate childcare responsibility and industry adaptability, Zhang Jigang et al. (2022) combined childcare policies with rural revitalization, analyzed the special difficulties in policy implementation in the central and western regions, and suggested that policy adaptability needs to be adjusted in tandem with local economic conditions. Johnson and Perez (2023) put forward optimization suggestions from the perspective of parental participation, emphasizing the need to introduce more feedback mechanisms for service recipients in the process of policy formulation and implementation to enhance policy responsiveness and accuracy.

Based on this, in combination with the policy document "Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Development of Childcare Services for Infants under 3 Years Old", we will focus on analyzing the implementation of the policy, financial support and legal supervision, explore the implementation effect of the policy in different regions, and compare the differences in policy implementation between economically developed and underdeveloped regions. At the same time, assess the responsibility of enterprises in the policy and the adaptability of the policy in different industries. Take the implementation of childcare policies in Xian and a comparative study of international childcare policies as examples to analyze the heterogeneity of policies at the regional level (Li et al., 2024; Guo and Dong, 2021). At the same time, in light of the current problems such as insufficient financial support, weak enforcement of the law, and different industry acceptance, further explore the direction of policy optimization. Zhu Siyi (2024) points out that the effectiveness of policies largely depends on fiscal input and corporate participation, while the research by Li Chang 'and Liu Zhenxiu (2023) reveals the problem of implicit employment discrimination in the process of policy implementation. Together, these studies constitute a comprehensive foundation for evaluating the policy's impact and conducting a

systematic analysis of the role and real challenges of childcare policies in women's employment equity.

3.2 Background of Childcare Policy and Women's Employment Dilemma

Existing research indicates that the impact of childcare policies on women's employment equity is not single. To a certain extent, it reduces the risk of women of childbearing age leaving the workplace due to childbirth. However, it is also restricted by factors such as insufficient legal enforcement, unbalanced regional development, and differences in industry adaptability. Chu Haiqing (2023) found through interviews that in the context of the three-child policy, although the state has introduced employment protection policies, enterprises still tend to choose men or non-childbearing women when recruiting, mainly out of concern that childbirth will lead to labor loss. This conclusion echoes the research of Ji Yingchun and Zheng Zhenzhen (2018), who analyzed how the unbalanced distribution of reproductive responsibilities affects women's career development from a gender perspective. While policies provide theoretical support, they point out that traditional gender divisions of labor still exist, putting women at a disadvantage in terms of salary, promotion, and job stability. This also links to Nancy's (2007) theory of gender justice, highlighting the tension between social expectations and the implementation of policies. In other words, even though protection is provided at the legal level, the traditional expectations of women's parenting responsibilities in reality are still weakening the positive effects of policies on women's employment equity, and the actual situation remains pessimistic.

3.3 Regional Differences and the Impact of Financial Input on Policy Effects

In terms of the actual implementation of the childcare policy, the study generally found that the implementation effect of the childcare policy varies greatly among different regions. Li Congrong et al. (2024) studied the situation of childcare resources in Xian found that the effectiveness of the childcare policy largely depends on the financial capacity and infrastructure of local governments. In economically developed regions, due to greater financial support and relatively complete childcare institutions, the implementation effect of the policy is better. But in less developed regions, due to limited funds and

resources, the implementation of the policy is more difficult, and the situation of women's employment equity has not improved significantly. The comparison between Guangzhou and Xian further confirms that under the promotion of the "Guangzhou Women's Development Plan (2021-2030)", Guangzhou has established a complete community and enterprise childcare model, and the government provides financial subsidies and enterprise incentives in place, which has led to an improvement in women's employment equity. But in Xian, due to limited financial support, the number of childcare institutions is insufficient, and their accessibility is poor, resulting in women's career development still being affected by the responsibility of raising children. This comparison shows that the fairness of childcare policies is not entirely determined by the policies themselves but is more influenced by local economic conditions. This local difference is consistent with the conclusion of Guo Lin and Dong Yulian (2021) through international comparisons, which found that some European countries have adopted a model of government subsidies plus corporate cooperation, allowing women in less developed areas to enjoy relatively equal childcare services, while China's childcare system still mainly relies on government financial input. This has led to a significant disparity in policy effectiveness across regions. In addition, Hong et al. (2025) pointed out from the perspective of policy tools that the construction of the talent pool for childcare services is also an important factor in determining the effectiveness of policy implementation, especially in resource-limited regions such as the central and western regions, where the shortage of talent further amplifies the problem of insufficient financial input.

3.4 Industry Adaptability Differences and the Mobility of Women in Employment

In addition to regional differences, there are also obvious imbalances in the adaptability of childcare policies across different industries. Zhu Siyi (2024) found that companies in high-income sectors such as technology and finance often have the ability to provide childcare benefits for their employees, such as childcare subsidies or in-house childcare, which makes it easier for women in these sectors to return to the workplace after raising children. However, in labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing and retail, companies generally do not offer such support to their employees because of the higher costs, and female employees often face a greater risk of career

disruption after giving birth. This is in line with the findings of Li Changan and Liu Zhenxiu (2023) and further analyzed that although companies do not openly discriminate against women of childbearing age on the surface, they will indirectly screen out non-women of childbearing age by raising assessment standards, adjusting job requirements, etc., making the issue of female employment equity more prominent in certain industries. In addition, Guo Lin and Dong Yulian (2021) also pointed out that the current childcare policy mainly targets infants under 3 years old, but there is a serious lack of support for children over 3 years old. This means that even if women can continue to work in childcare institutions until their children are 3 years old, they will still face the problem of increased parenting burden when their children enter the preschool stage. This further limit their career development space. In other words, the limited coverage of the policy has led to women still having to constantly compromise between work and family at different career stages.

3.5 Inadequate Enforcement of Laws and Implicit Employment Discrimination

Finally, from the perspective of law enforcement, Zhu Siyi (2024) analyzed the actual implementation of the Employment Promotion Law and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and found that although the policy explicitly prohibits gender discrimination and stipulates that employers must not affect recruitment due to marital or reproductive status, there are still many ways for enterprises to circumvent these provisions. For instance, during the recruitment process, companies do not directly inquire about the marriage and childbearing plans of job seekers, but they may indirectly screen out non-childbearing women through complex assessment procedures, additional assessment requirements, etc. At the same time, Li Changan and Liu Zhenxiu (2023) also pointed out that due to the broad criteria for judging employment discrimination in current laws, local governments and judicial institutions lack uniform standards when handling related disputes, and many cases have "different judgments for the same case", which weakens the legal protection of fair employment for women. In addition, Dai Ruijun (2022) further revealed the problem of high cost and low success rate of women's rights protection through case studies of public interest litigation for women's rights. It also argues that the poor enforceability of current legal provisions leads to many enterprises still being able to circumvent legal responsibilities

through "implicit standards", making it difficult to completely eradicate discrimination against women in the workplace. This indicates that although the law provides a framework for employment equity, there are still loopholes in its actual implementation, and enterprises still have considerable room for maneuver, which affects the actual implementation of the childcare policy. Meanwhile, Johnson and Perez (2023) stress that the lack of feedback mechanisms from direct stakeholders, such as parents and employees, in the policy-making process is also an important reason that cannot be ignored for the disconnection between policy implementation and actual needs.

3.6 A Re-Understanding of the Gap Between Institutional Design and Reality

In conclusion, this review reveals that the childcare policy has indeed improved gender equity in employment to some extent, but its effect is still constrained by multiple factors. A comparison between Guangzhou (a first-tier city) and Xian (a new first-tier city) shows that local fiscal capacity plays a key role in policy implementation, and women in developed areas are more likely to enjoy policy dividends, while women in less developed areas still face greater pressure in raising children and employment. Meanwhile, the disparity in policy support for women across different industries has further exacerbated the situation of women of childbearing age in the workplace. More importantly, the lack of enforcement of the law has led to widespread covert employment discrimination, which has weakened the actual effectiveness of childcare policies. Therefore, the focus of future policy optimization should be to push the childcare policy towards less developed regions and reduce the employment equity gap caused by the fiscal gap; Expand the coverage of the childcare policy not only for infants under 3 years old, but also for preschool children's care needs; Strengthen law enforcement and formulate more detailed implementation rules to reduce the space for hidden employment discrimination. At the same time, feedback mechanisms from stakeholders such as parents and enterprises will be introduced to enhance the precision and adaptability of the policy. Only in this way can the childcare policy become a practical, concrete, and effective tool for promoting fair employment for women, rather than just a legal guarantee.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Major Contributions of Existing Research

The existing research provides valuable perspectives on how childcare policies affect employment equity for women, particularly in terms of policy implementation, industry adaptability, and legal protection. The greatest contribution is that they reveal the gap between policy goals and actual implementation, and through regional comparisons and industry analyses, explain why policy-making alone cannot truly address the issue of employment equity. The comparison between Guangzhou and Xian, for example, shows that local fiscal capacity determines the effectiveness of childcare policies. Women in developed regions are more likely to benefit from policy dividends, while in regions with insufficient fiscal resources, policy effectiveness is greatly reduced. In terms of industry adaptability, high-income industries such as technology and finance can provide better childcare support for female employees, while labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing and retail, due to resource constraints, have weak childcare benefits, making it more difficult for women to return to the workplace after giving birth. At the level of law enforcement, existing research reveals that even though laws such as the Employment Promotion Law and the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests explicitly prohibit gender discrimination at the textual level, due to weak enforcement, enterprises still circumvent legal requirements by setting implicit thresholds and other means, thus making women still face unequal challenges in actual job hunting and employment. Overall, these studies collectively depict the structural problem of the mismatch between policy goals and actual effects, highlighting the importance of every link from institutional design to implementation.

4.2 Limitations of Existing Studies

Although existing research provides in-depth insights into how childcare policies work, the limitations of existing research also exist. First, most studies are based on policy texts and case studies or small-scale interview data, lacking the support of larger-scale quantitative data, which makes the existing analyses more of a partial observation. For example, while studies have discussed the implementation of childcare policies in different cities, there is still a lack of nationwide comparative data, especially the

differences between urban and rural areas. Secondly, the existing literature pays insufficient attention to the role of enterprises in the implementation of policies. Most studies have focused more on the government and individual levels, ignoring whether enterprises actively cooperate with the policy, such as whether enterprises are willing to actively provide childcare subsidies. Are government incentives sufficient for companies to cooperate? Such key questions. In fact, the enthusiasm of enterprises, as an important part of the supply of childcare services, directly affects the policy effect, but this has been discussed relatively limited in current research. In addition, although the issue of law enforcement has been widely pointed out, the existing literature often lacks in-depth exploration of how to refine the standards of law enforcement, clarify the basis for judging implicit discrimination, and propose practical and feasible paths for institutional improvement, resulting in improvement suggestions being rather macroscopic and principle-oriented, lacking specific operability.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study focuses on the Guidance on Promoting the Development of childcare services for Children under 3 years old and examines the actual effectiveness and challenges of childcare policies in promoting employment equity for women of childbearing age. Combined with the existing literature, a systematic discussion was conducted from three perspectives: policy implementation, industry adaptability, and legal protection. The study found that although the childcare policy has to some extent reduced the likelihood of women of childbearing age leaving the workforce due to childbirth, its implementation effect is constrained by multiple factors such as local fiscal capacity, industry characteristics and legal enforcement, resulting in a significant gap between policy goals and actual implementation.

At the regional level, the fairness of policies not only depends on the policies themselves but is also influenced by local economic conditions. In economically developed regions such as Guangzhou, due to higher financial input and more abundant childcare resources, the policy has achieved better results. However, in new first-tier cities such as Xian, due to insufficient financial support, the number of childcare institutions is limited, which significantly restricts the effectiveness of the policy in promoting fair employment for women. The lack of financial support has directly affected the feasibility of the policy, leaving women in less developed areas at risk

of being marginalized in the workplace due to parenting responsibilities. Meanwhile, at the industry level, there are also significant differences in the adaptability of different sectors to the childcare policy. In high-income industries such as finance and technology, which have stronger economic capabilities, companies are more willing to offer childcare subsidies or internal childcare support, making it easier for women to return to the workplace after giving birth. However, labor-intensive industries such as manufacturing and retail, due to the limited profit margins of enterprises, usually do not offer childcare benefits proactively, which further increases the employment pressure on women in these industries. This imbalance in the industry structure has led to differences in the effectiveness of childcare policies among different occupational groups, and women in some industries still face significant employment discrimination and career development obstacles. At the level of law enforcement, although policies such as the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women and the Employment Promotion Law clearly stipulate that enterprises must not affect women's job hunting and employment due to marriage and childbearing issues, due to the overly principle-oriented provisions and inconsistent enforcement standards, implicit discrimination still prevails in practice. Companies often exclude women of childbearing age in a disguised way by raising recruitment assessment standards or setting up additional screening procedures, while local law enforcement is insufficient, making it difficult for women to effectively protect their rights when they encounter employment discrimination. This further undermines the actual role of childcare policies in ensuring fair employment for women. Therefore, relying solely on policy provisions is not enough to ensure fair employment for women. How to improve the enforcement of the law, strengthen the supervision and implementation of the policy becomes the key to determining whether the childcare policy can really play a role.

Based on the research results, this study suggests that future optimization of childcare policies should be approached from multiple aspects. First, strengthening financial support is the key to narrowing regional disparities and ensuring policy fairness. The government should increase financial input to less developed areas and raise subsidies for childcare institutions to reduce the problem of uneven resource distribution between urban and rural areas. Secondly, the coverage of the policy should be further expanded. The current childcare policy mainly targets

infants and toddlers under three years old but provides less support for children over three years old. In the future, the policy needs to be extended to preschool children to reduce the possibility of women being forced to leave the workplace due to parenting responsibilities. At the same time, it is crucial to promote corporate responsibility. The government can develop more targeted childcare support policies, such as providing childcare subsidies for enterprises in labor-intensive industries, in order to narrow the employment equity gap between industries. In addition, improving the legal oversight mechanism and increasing the cost for businesses to comply with employment equity regulations is an important way to reduce hidden employment discrimination. Strengthening the enforcement of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women and the Law on Employment Promotion, refining the criteria for determining employment discrimination, and imposing stricter penalties on enterprises that violate the regulations will help improve the actual implementation effect of the policy.

In summary, the childcare policy has indeed played a positive role in promoting fair employment for women, but due to constraints such as financial capacity, industry adaptability and law enforcement, the actual effect of the policy is still limited. In the future, only by strengthening financial support, expanding policy coverage, promoting corporate responsibility, and improving the legal enforcement system can we ensure that the childcare policy does not just remain at the level of policy text, but truly becomes an important tool for improving women's employment equity. At the same time, future research could further focus on the role of enterprises in policy implementation and the impact of childcare policies on men's sharing of family responsibilities, thereby providing policymakers with a more comprehensive reference to optimize policy design and promote gender-equal employment.

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