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How Job Attractiveness Is Shaped by Employer-Provided Childcare Arrangements*

Abstract

In tight labour markets, where employers compete not only on wages but also on amenities such as job family friendliness, employer-provided childcare arrangements serve as a powerful tool to attract and retain working parents. Yet little causal evidence exists on how employees evaluate such benefits. Therefore, this study uses a scenario experiment among working parents of young children to examine how job attractiveness is shaped by variations in employer-provided childcare arrangements – in terms of location, opening hours, and price – along with the possibility of teleworking. Our results show that all forms of employer-provided childcare increase job attractiveness, with childcare facilities operating on schedules explicitly aligned with employees' working hours having the strongest effects. Working parents are willing to forego a 20% wage increase in a new job to obtain this latter amenity. They expect such amenity to improve their job satisfaction, performance, stress management, and work–family balance. Our results imply that the policy offers mutual gains for both employees and employers.

JEL classification

C91, J13, J16, J24, J81

Keywords

childcare, telework, job attractiveness, willingness to pay, factorial survey experiment

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1. Introduction

Combining work and parenthood poses major challenges for employees (Allen & French, 2023; Kulik, 2019; Nautet & Piton, 2021). Many working parents experience work–family conflicts as they struggle to meet the demands of both roles (Kulik, 2019). A key reason is that many jobs reward long working hours and constant availability to employers (Deschacht et al., 2025), which makes them difficult to reconcile with caregiving responsibilities. Taken together, these challenges make it crucial to find ways to better support employees in balancing work and family responsibilities.

In this respect, childcare is essential for working parents with young children because reliable care enables them to devote uninterrupted time to their jobs (Balasooriya & Pallegedara, 2021; Goffin et al., 2023; Simintzi et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2020). However, recent evidence from many countries in Europe highlights a childcare gap in the interval between the end of parental leave and the start of full-time early childhood education and care (Serapioni, 2025). During this period, many working parents struggle to find affordable, high-quality childcare at the locations and times they need (Breunig et al., 2011; Goffin et al., 2023; Hein & Cassirer, 2010; Lewis & West, 2016).

These problems create scope for employers to support their employees by offering childcare arrangements. Such arrangements have become a powerful tool to attract and retain employees in a tight labour market (Amaram, 2019; Connelly et al., 2004; Modestino et al., 2021) and, as such, an asset in the ongoing ‘war for talent’ (Dowd, 2021). Evidence consistently shows that employer-provided childcare arrangements are highly valued by employees (Braddock et al., 2023; Connelly et al., 2004; Kossek & Nichol, 1992). In tangible terms, employees are willing to trade off part of their wage for access to such arrangements (Balasooriya & Pallegedara, 2021; Connelly et al., 2004; Latura, 2020). Furthermore, employer-provided childcare arrangements can be a decisive attribute in job choice: A substantial share of job applicants indicate that the presence of such arrangements influences their decision to accept or reject a job offer (Thompson & Aspinwall, 2009).

While studies offer valuable insights into employees’ valuation of employer-provided childcare arrangements, important gaps remain. First, while there is a growing body of research on employer-provided work–family arrangements, including childcare, the

evidence base is largely correlational, limiting causal (Chang et al., 2025). Accordingly, scholars have highlighted the need for experimental designs that allow the causal impact of such arrangements on individuals' evaluations or choices to be identified (Chang et al., 2025; Gerber & Green, 2012).

Second, most research on the attractiveness of employer-provided childcare arrangements treats childcare as one uniform provision (e.g. Balasooriya & Pallegedara, 2021; Connelly et al., 2004; Kossek & Nichol, 1992; Ratnasingam et al., 2012), implicitly assuming that employees value all forms of childcare equally. In reality, parents' childcare preferences and choices differ with respect to childcare location (e.g. near home versus near work), opening hours (e.g. standard opening hours versus flexible or extended opening hours), and price (e.g. subsidised versus unsubsidised) (Latura, 2020; Sandstrom & Chaudry, 2012). Researchers who ignore such heterogeneity run the risk of overlooking which specific features make childcare arrangements attractive and effective for employees.

Third, research examines childcare arrangements as a stand-alone measure (e.g. Balasooriya & Pallegedara, 2021; Braddock et al., 2023; Connelly et al., 2004; Kossek & Nichol, 1992; Latura, 2020; Morrissey & Warner, 2011; Ratnasingam et al., 2012) in isolation from telework arrangements (e.g. He et al., 2021; Mas & Pallais, 2017; Moens et al., 2024; Schmoll & Süß, 2019). However, scholars emphasise that employer-provided work–family arrangements should be considered jointly rather than as stand-alone measures (Chang et al., 2025), with Heggeness and Suri (2021) explicitly highlighting the need to analyse childcare and telework together. This joint perspective is particularly relevant given the spatial constraints of many childcare arrangements (Blumenberg et al., 2024; McLean et al., 2017). That is, employer-organised childcare facilities are typically located on-site or near the central workplace (Hein & Cassirer, 2010), but with the rise of telework, the relevance of workplace-proximate childcare has become less clear (Almeida et al., 2024). For employees who work from home, childcare located near the employer's central workplace may be less effective, as it requires commuting solely for drop-off and pick-up or prevents employees from making use of telework (Blumenberg et al., 2024).

Fourth, frameworks in the work–family literature have long emphasised mothers' primary role in caregiving responsibilities (Blau & Kahn, 2017; El Haj et al., 2024; El Haj et al., 2025). Yet recent evidence points to a substantial increase in fathers' involvement in

household and childcare tasks over the past decades (Offer & Kaplan, 2021). Assumptions about gendered preferences for family-supportive benefits may thus no longer hold. This raises the question of whether employer-provided childcare arrangements are still valued differently by mothers and fathers.

To address these gaps, we set up a state-of-the-art scenario experiment in which a randomly drawn sample of working parents with young children are presented with job offers that vary in the specifications of employer-provided childcare arrangements, among other attributes. Through this approach, we aim to answer the following research questions. First, we examine the extent to which employees are attracted to different employer-provided childcare arrangements in job offers. More concretely, we assess how these arrangements affect job attractiveness, both as directly rated by employees and as inferred from their willingness to forego a wage (RQ1a); whether these effects interact with the possibility of teleworking (RQ1b); and whether they differ between mothers and fathers (RQ1c). Second, we investigate why employees are attracted to these employer-provided childcare arrangements (RQ2). For this, we rely on a theoretical framework that captures the consequences of employer-provided work–family arrangements for job attractiveness. Specifically, we examine how childcare arrangements shape employees’ expectations regarding autonomy, work–family balance, relationship quality, professional development, financial conditions, job satisfaction, performance, commitment, stress management, and career prospects.

By addressing these research questions, this study sheds light on which employer-provided childcare arrangements are most attractive to working parents and under which conditions they are likely to support work–family balance. These insights are relevant for employers seeking to attract and retain talent and for policymakers aiming to encourage organisational practices that facilitate reconciliation of work and family responsibilities among working parents.

2. Theoretical framework

Prior to detailing the experiment, we outline a theoretical framework, depicted in Figure 1,

to capture the consequences for job attractiveness of employer-provided work–family arrangements, including both childcare and telework arrangements. This framework forms the basis from which we address RQ2.

< Figure 1 about here >

Although employer-provided work–family arrangements differ in form, scholars recognise that such arrangements – telework, childcare, or others – share a common theoretical logic: They all constitute resources that help employees manage the interface between work and family roles more effectively (Chang et al., 2025). Accordingly, in our framework, employer-provided work–family arrangements influence individuals’ evaluation of a job by shaping the job characteristics they associate with it and the outcomes they expect from it.

Given the central role of childcare in this study, we first illustrate this general logic using the literature on employer-provided childcare arrangements. Across the literature, these arrangements have consistently been shown to have positive effects on employees’ autonomy (e.g. Braddock et al., 2023), work–family conflict (e.g. Morrissey & Warner, 2011), and relationship quality (e.g. Morrissey & Warner, 2011). These perceived job characteristics can, in turn, be linked to a range of positive perceived outcomes, including on job satisfaction (e.g. Rothausen et al., 1998; Seyler et al., 1995), performance (e.g. Braddock et al., 2023), turnover intention (e.g. Braddock et al., 2023; Hipp et al., 2017; Morrissey & Warner, 2011; Rothausen et al., 1998), role stress (e.g. Hipp et al., 2017; Morrissey & Warner, 2011; Seyler et al., 1995), and career prospects (e.g. Braddock et al., 2023).

These consequences closely align with the effects of employer-provided telework arrangements laid out in Gajendran and Harrison’s (2007) widely cited model rationalising the consequences of telework for employee outcomes. In short, their meta-analytic framework shows that working away from the central workplace typically increases employees’ perception of autonomy and reduces their work–family conflict, which in turn improves various individual outcomes such as those mentioned above. Potential drawbacks of teleworking mainly concern deteriorations in relationship quality at very high telework intensity due to fewer face-to-face interactions.

More broadly, employee perceptions of job characteristics and outcomes are also central themes in the wider literature on employer-provided work–family arrangements

(Allen, 2001; Aryee et al., 2013; Brough et al., 2005; Chang et al., 2025; Thompson & Prottas, 2006; Wanger, 2024; Wayne et al., 2006).

Overall, the evidence from the childcare literature highlights a pattern in the link between employees' perceptions of job characteristics and outcomes that closely aligns with the patterns in the effects of telework and other work–family arrangements, reinforcing the notion that the effects of the different arrangements operate through a common mechanism. We therefore adopt the structure of Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) telework framework as the backbone of our more general framework while extending it to reflect the wider spectrum of employer-provided work–family arrangements.

Although Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) model offers a strong foundation, to extend it beyond telework, we must make several conceptual clarifications and additions. We therefore introduce four adaptations. First, we frame all constructs of the original model in a neutral direction to avoid the negative intent behind the arrangements. For instance, instead of focusing on work–family conflict or role stress, we focus on work–family balance and stress management, following research such as Moens et al. (2024) that adopts a similar framing to emphasise the beneficial aspects of organisational practices.

Second, we extend the original framework by disaggregating work–family balance into two dimensions. While work–family balance is treated as a single construct in Gajendran and Harrison (2007), scholars argue that work–family balance inherently operates along two margins: Work demands can interfere with family life, and family life can interfere with work demands (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Sohal et al., 2025). Our framework therefore distinguishes between the balancing of work with family and of family with work to capture the full interplay between the two dimensions, as established by Netemeyer et al. (1996).

Third, we add professional development as a construct in our framework, as work–family arrangements create flexibility for professional development that would be harder to attain under more rigid work conditions (Wang et al., 2024). Recent evidence suggests, for instance, that access to reliable childcare can help parents avoid career interruptions and engage more fully in professional activities (Zhang et al., 2020).

Fourth and last, work–family arrangements can affect employees' finances. Some arrangements offer direct financial benefits, such as employer subsidies for childcare (Hipp et al., 2017; Morrissey & Warner, 2011). Others generate indirect savings – for instance, by

reducing the costs of finding childcare or work-related expenses such as fuel and workwear (Bunting, 2017). Such direct and indirect benefits may, in turn, improve employees' financial well-being and reduce financial stress, which can have positive spillovers to other work-related outcomes (Kim & Garman, 2004). This reasoning motivates our inclusion of financial conditions as the final construct in our framework.

Individuals' perceptions of these job characteristics and outcomes together form the basis on which they evaluate a job's attractiveness. In other words, job attractiveness represents an anticipatory summary evaluation that individuals make after considering the potential consequences of employer-provided work–family arrangements.

3. Methods

To address our research questions, we set up a scenario-based vignette experiment, a method widely used to examine decision-making processes (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Specifically, we applied the factorial survey method, with employees judging hypothetical job offers (vignettes) for jobs bundling specific characteristics (vignette factors) that varied across predefined categories (vignette levels) (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). The experimental setup within a survey offers several advantages. First, this method offers high internal validity in that it allows us to infer the causal impact of the vignette factors through experimental manipulation and randomisation (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Second, it can capture multidimensional decision processes in a realistic yet manageable way (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Participants can weigh several job characteristics as they would in real life, while the experimental design ensures that each factor's independent contribution can still be identified.

3.1. Vignette design

Each participant evaluated six vignettes describing hypothetical job offers. Each vignette

varied four experimental factors presented in a tabular format (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014).¹ This format – with key job features summarised in a structured, schematic way – mirrors how job offers are typically presented in practice, enhancing clarity and comparability across job offers. The four factors characterising the job offers are described below and summarised in Table 1.

< Table 1 about here >

The two key factors we employed to address RQ1a were employer-organised childcare facility and employer-subsidised childcare cost. The first factor, employer-organised childcare facility, captured whether the employer offered a childcare facility and specified whether it was located near the employee's home or near the central workplace and whether its opening hours were standard or aligned (Blumenberg et al., 2024; Goffin et al., 2023; McLean et al., 2017). Standard opening hours were defined as 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, excluding public holidays, whereas aligned opening hours meant that the childcare facility's opening hours matched the employee's work schedule.

The second factor, employer-subsidised childcare cost, indicated whether the employer would contribute financially to childcare expenses. In the scenario with a subsidy, the employer covered 25% of the daily childcare fee. We set this percentage to align with a recent policy proposal in Flanders, the region of our empirical analysis, to which we return in the next subsection (Struys, 2023). In the scenario with no subsidy, childcare costs were to be fully borne by the employee.

To examine RQ1b, we included as a third factor the option to telework, varying the permissible telework share between 0% and 80% in increments of 20%. A 0% telework share meant that the job had to be performed entirely at the central workplace. Each increment of 20% corresponded to approximately one additional telework day per week for a full-time employee. We capped the telework factor at 80% because higher shares might be unrealistic for participants in occupations with only limited telework ability. This cut-off is consistent

¹ Building on the approach of Moens et al. (2024), we limited the number of vignette factors to four. Although Auspurg and Hinz (2014) generally recommend including five to nine factors, they also note that fewer factors may be justified. A possible drawback of this design choice is that participants might more easily detect the experimental manipulations, which could introduce biases such as social desirability in their responses (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). While this risk is particularly salient in studies on sensitive topics such as hiring discrimination, we consider it less critical in our study context.

with research on the attractiveness of telework in job offers (Moens et al., 2024).

The fourth and final factor was net wage relative to current wage, which was particularly relevant for RQ1a as it allowed us to assess job attractiveness in terms of participants' willingness to forego a wage (Latura, 2020; Moens et al., 2024). This factor was expressed as a percentage relative to the participant's current net wage, with five levels (20% less, 10% less, equal, 10% more, 20% more). Participants were also informed that all other financial and fringe benefits in the job offer were identical to those in their current job and that any costs associated with commuting or teleworking would be comparable to those corresponding to their current situation.

Combining the levels of the four factors yielded a vignette universe of 250 unique job offers (i.e. $5 \times 2 \times 5 \times 5$). Rather than using the full vignette universe, we employed an experimental design strategy to select an efficient subset of vignettes. For this, we followed Kuhfeld's (2010) algorithm, as described by Auspurg and Hinz (2014), to construct a D-efficient design. This approach combines those vignette levels that maximise statistical power while also aiming for a balanced representation of cell sizes across categories (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Using this algorithm, we sampled 120 vignettes, which resulted in a D-efficiency with resolution V of 93.3%, exceeding the minimal level of 90% (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). These 120 vignettes were subsequently blocked into 20 decks of six vignettes (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014). Finally, each participant was randomly assigned a deck, which ensured design efficiency and internal validity (Auspurg & Hinz, 2014).

3.2. Procedure

Data were collected through the online platform Qualtrics between 25 June 2024 and 31 July 2024 from a probability sample recruited by the research agency Bilendi. The study targeted working individuals residing in Flanders, the northern part of Belgium. In Flanders, there are only about 45.7 licensed childcare places per 100 children aged 0–3 (Growing Up, 2024). This limited availability implies that childcare is a salient constraint for parents of young children, making this population a relevant one from which to draw our sample.

To ensure that participants could meaningfully evaluate the job offers, we applied several screening criteria. Participants had to be (i) currently employed, (ii) have at least one

child aged six or younger (or be expecting a child, if the participant was childless),² and (iii) in a job that was at least 10% teleworkable. The parenthood criterion was chosen because parents with young children typically still rely on childcare, which should have made it easy for the participants to imagine their childcare needs. We set the upper age limit at six years, as this age marks the transition to formal schooling in many European countries (Serapioni, 2025). In Flanders, compulsory education starts part-time at age five and full-time at age six, although children may enter formal schooling from age 2.5 onwards (Education in Flanders, n.d.). Participants whose children were already in school were instructed to imagine that their youngest child had not yet started school and still required childcare; as the transition to childcare from parental leave typically occurs only a few years earlier than the transition to school, we expected that these parents would still be able to recall and realistically evaluate their childcare needs during the period of our interest. The teleworkability criterion was included to ensure that participants could realistically imagine similar jobs involving varying degrees of telework (Moens et al., 2024). Participants were explicitly told that, in some offers, the telework percentage might exceed what was possible in their current job and that, if so, the reduced need for physical presence was made possible by new technologies (Moens et al., 2024).

The online survey consisted of three parts: (i) an introduction, (ii) the experimental evaluation, and (iii) a post-experimental questionnaire. In the first stage, participants received information about the study's purpose, gave informed consent, and were assured of anonymity and data confidentiality. They then completed screening questions to confirm that they met the inclusion criteria and received detailed instructions.

Participants were instructed to imagine that they were considering a new job similar in all ways to their current one except in the aspects explicitly varied in the hypothetical job offers. This approach has also been used by Mas and Pallais (2017), Moens et al. (2024), and Sterkens et al. (2024). Although the use of hypothetical job offers might raise concerns about external validity, prior evidence suggests that such experiments yield results closely aligned with real-world behaviour. For instance, in a closely related factorial survey experiment, Drasch (2019) asked labour market re-entrants about their willingness to

² Only 13 of the 120 participants were childless but expecting a child (i.e. pregnant). For ease of presentation, we use the terms 'mothers' and 'fathers' throughout to refer to both parents and parents-to-be.

forego a wage when compensated by positive non-monetary job characteristics; a follow-up study showed that their stated behavioural intentions indeed strongly correlated with their observed labour market behaviour (Drasch, 2019). These findings give us confidence that our experimental findings can reflect real-life preferences.

During the second stage, the experiment itself, participants had to evaluate six job offers. For each vignette, they were asked to assess the attractiveness of the job (Drasch, 2019; Moens et al., 2024). Job attractiveness was measured with the item ‘How attractive do you find this job?’, rated on a scale from 0 (not at all attractive) to 10 (very attractive). This measure is needed to answer RQ1a, RQ1b, and RQ1c. In addition, participants were asked three follow-up questions about how the offer compared to their current job in terms of childcare facility, childcare cost, and possibility of teleworking. For each dimension, participants indicated the extent to which the job offer represented a deterioration or improvement relative to their current situation on a scale from 0 (very large deterioration) to 10 (very large improvement). These items captured participants’ subjective impressions of the job attributes; we use them in robustness checks by replacing the experimentally assigned vignette attributes with participants’ perceptions in alternative model specifications. Finally, to address RQ2, we asked participants to rate twelve perceptions derived from our theoretical framework presented in Section 2.³ The exact statements are provided in Appendix Table A1.

In the third and final stage of the experiment, participants completed a post-experimental survey capturing information on a range of personal and job characteristics. They first reported nine personal characteristics: (i) gender (man, woman), (ii) age (open question), (iii) children (open question), (iv) relationship status (no partner, full-time employed partner, part-time employed partner, self-employed partner, non-employed partner), (v) educational degree (secondary education, lower tertiary education, higher tertiary education), (vi) personal monthly net income (less than €2,000; €2,000–€2,499; €2,500 or more; prefer not to say), (vii) formal childcare (childcare near home, childcare near workplace, none), (viii) formal childcare use (open question), and (ix) informal childcare use (open question). Gender was included to allow us to analyse heterogeneity between

³As the perceptions were measured rather than experimentally varied, they are not suitable for causal inference (Gerber & Green, 2012). Accordingly, we do not perform a mediation analysis.

mothers and fathers, as formulated in RQ1c. In addition, participants provided information on eight job-related characteristics: (i) employment status (full-time, part-time), (ii) temporal flexibility (fixed start and end times, flexible start and end times, time-independent work), (iii) employment schedule (fixed days excluding weekend work, fixed days including weekend work, shift work excluding weekend work, shift work including weekend work), (iv) job tenure (open question), (v) commuting time (open question), (vi) percentage of telework use (open question), (vii) employer-organised childcare facility (yes, no), and (viii) employer-subsidised childcare cost (yes, no).

3.3. Data description

In total, 120 participants completed the experiment fully and correctly (i.e. passed the attention check), which resulted in 720 job offers being evaluated. Participants had an average age of 34.2 years, and 70.0% identified as women.⁴ The majority held at least a tertiary education degree (77.5%) and were in full-time employment (72.5%). Most participants were in a relationship (85.0%) and had on average 1.4 children. About half made use of formal childcare near their home, typically around 3.4 times per week, complemented by approximately 1.9 days per week of informal childcare. In addition, 13.3% of participants indicated that their employer organised childcare, and 13.3% reported that their employer offered childcare subsidies. These two groups partially overlap: Among participants who received any form of childcare support, 14.3% received both types of support. Additional personal and current job characteristics reported by participants are presented in Appendix Table A2.

⁴ As mentioned in Subsection 3.2, our sample also included childless participants who were expecting a child. Specifically, childless participants were asked whether they were currently expecting a child (i.e. pregnant). Thirteen participants answered affirmatively, including one man and twelve women. This suggests that some participants may have interpreted the question as referring to being pregnant themselves, rather than expecting a child as a couple, which could explain the overrepresentation of women in our dataset. To ensure that this overrepresentation of women does not bias our overall estimates, we estimate additional models including interaction terms with gender, which also serve our analyses for RQ1c.

4. Results

4.1. To what extent are employees attracted to different employer-provided childcare arrangements?

This subsection first reports whether employer-provided childcare arrangements increase the attractiveness of job offers (RQ1a), whether this effect depends on the possibility of teleworking (RQ1b), and whether it differs between mothers and fathers (RQ1c). Next, we report on three robustness checks of our findings.

The linear regression results are presented in Table 2, with job attractiveness as the dependent variable (see Subsection 3.2), the job offer characteristics as the independent variables (see Subsection 3.1), and other personal and current job characteristics as control variables (see Subsection 3.2). The table includes three models addressing RQ1a, RQ1b, and RQ1c, respectively. Standard errors are adjusted for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. We also conduct F-tests (results not reported in the table but discussed below) to assess whether the differences in job attractiveness across childcare arrangements are statistically significant.

< Table 2 about here >

In our analyses, the two variables on employer-provided childcare arrangements – employer-organised childcare facility and employer-subsidised childcare cost – are included as categorical variables in the analyses. The two remaining variables – possibility of teleworking and net wage relative to current wage – are modelled as higher-order polynomial terms. Specifically, using Stata’s contrast command, we compare the extent to which increasingly complex polynomial specifications (e.g. linear, quadratic, cubic) explain the variance in the outcome variable. The results show strong linear components for both telework and wage (both $p < 0.001$), alongside significant non-linearities: a quadratic effect for telework ($p = 0.007$) and both quadratic ($p = 0.019$) and cubic ($p < 0.001$) effects for wage. Accordingly, we model the possibility of teleworking including a quadratic term and net wage relative to current wage including quadratic and cubic terms. To improve readability, we rescale the coefficients and standard errors of the quadratic and cubic terms by a factor of 1,000, as these terms are based on squared and cubed transformations of the

telework (0 to 80) and wage (–20 to 20) scales, which mechanically yield very small coefficient magnitudes. Before turning to answering our research questions, we briefly note the pattern of these non-linear effects.

First, for the teleworking variable, the estimates from Model 1 indicate a curvilinear relationship. The coefficient in Model 1 is positive ($\beta = 0.048, p < 0.001$), while the quadratic term is negative ($\beta = -0.324, p = 0.007$). Concretely, job attractiveness rises as more telework is offered, albeit with diminishing returns and eventually a downturn at the highest levels. In practical terms, employees value the flexibility of working remotely, but most do not necessarily demand jobs with very high levels of telework. This finding aligns with recent studies suggesting that excessive telework can have drawbacks, such as isolation or career concerns, which makes moderate telework arrangements optimal from the perspective of the employee (Huo et al., 2024; Moens et al., 2025; Park et al., 2023).

Second, for net wage relative to current wage, we see a similar but slightly different effect in Model 1. Not surprisingly, higher wages make a job more attractive: The linear term is positive ($\beta = 0.162, p < 0.001$). However, the negative coefficients on the quadratic ($\beta = -1.108, p = 0.019$) and cubic ($\beta = -0.144, p < 0.001$) terms imply that the job attractiveness gains from each additional percentage point (pp) of the wage increase diminish at higher levels and that wage cuts have an especially steep negative impact. In other words, while a 10% raise might boost job attractiveness somewhat, an equivalent 10% cut lowers job attractiveness by a larger magnitude. This pattern aligns with the theory of loss aversion in wages (Ahrens et al., 2014; Kahneman et al., 1991).

With respect to RQ1a, Model 1 shows that employer-organised childcare facilities significantly increase job attractiveness. For offers with access to any of the four types of facilities (near home, near work, with standard opening hours, or with aligned opening hours), we observe positive coefficients relative to those for jobs offers with no employer-organised childcare. The most attractive form of this amenity is childcare near work with aligned opening hours ($\beta = 1.614, p < 0.001$), which raises job attractiveness by about 16.1 pp on a 0–10 scale over the attractiveness of a job with no childcare. The next most attractive forms of this job amenity are childcare near home with aligned opening hours ($\beta = 1.457, p < 0.001$), near work with standard opening hours ($\beta = 1.291, p < 0.001$), and near home with standard opening hours ($\beta = 0.955, p < 0.001$).

These results indicate that childcare facilities with aligned opening hours are valued more than childcare facilities with standard opening hours. An F-test confirms that, overall, childcare arrangements with aligned hours are significantly more attractive than those offering standard hours ($p = 0.039$). In contrast, the location of the childcare facility (near home versus near work) does not significantly affect job attractiveness when we compare childcare facilities with the same opening hours: The difference between childcare near home and childcare near work, both with standard opening hours, is not statistically significant ($p = 0.222$), nor is there a difference between facilities near work and near home with aligned opening hours ($p = 0.516$).

These patterns suggest that what employees value most is having childcare that accommodates their work schedule; whether the facility is closer to home or work, at least within the typical commuting distances participants already face, is a secondary concern. This finding aligns with Latura's (2020) observation that women prefer employer-provided on-site childcare facilities with extended opening hours over regular opening hours.

A complementary perspective for our interpretation of job attractiveness is participants' willingness to forego some share of their wage – a measure also used by other scholars (e.g. Latura, 2020; Moens et al., 2024). Figure 2 visualises the predictions from Model 1 by plotting point estimates which represent mean job attractiveness predictions (i.e. marginal effects) from linear regressions across different levels of net wage relative to current wage. The predictions are estimated separately for each employer-provided childcare arrangement.

< Figure 2 about here >

Panels I.a and I.b of Figure 2 illustrate these predictions for childcare facilities with standard opening hours located near home and near work, respectively. A job offer with a 20% wage increase is valued similarly to a job offer that provides childcare combined with only a 4.5% wage increase when the childcare is located near home and a 2.5% wage increase when the childcare is located near work. In other words, parents are willing to give up between 15.5 and 17.5 pp of the wage increase for this childcare amenity, depending on whether the childcare is located near home or near work. When the job offer includes no wage increase, parents are only willing to accept a small wage decrease in exchange for this form of childcare. Panels II.a and II.b of Figure 2 illustrate participants' willingness to forego

wage for childcare facilities with aligned opening hours located near home and near work, respectively. Here, a job offer with a 20% wage increase is valued similarly to a job offer that provides childcare combined with only a 1.0% wage increase when the childcare is located near home and a 0.0% wage increase when the childcare is located near work. In other words, parents are willing to give up between 19.0 and 20.0 pp of the wage increase for this childcare amenity, depending on whether the childcare is located near home or near work. This latter result implies that a job offer with a 20% wage increase is as attractive as a job offer featuring this kind of childcare near work with no wage increase at all.

Turning to the employer-subsidised childcare cost factor, we find that it also boosts job attractiveness. In Model 1, job offers in which the employer covers 25% of childcare costs are rated as more attractive ($\beta = 0.622$, $p < 0.001$) than job offers without this benefit. This effect indicates that, independent of childcare access through the employer, direct financial assistance with childcare is also valuable job feature.

The magnitude of this effect is roughly one-third that of the effect of the most valued type of childcare facility (i.e. one near work with aligned opening hours). It is not surprising that the effect size is somewhat smaller than that of childcare provision itself. A subsidy addresses affordability, but many parents already receive some public childcare subsidies (Growing Up, 2024). In other words, while the cost relief is appreciated, it may not fully solve the more pressing issues of availability and timing mismatches (Growing Up, 2024).

In terms of willingness to forego wages, parents again show they are willing to forego wage for this benefit (see Panel III of Figure 2). Concretely, a job offer with a 20% wage increase is valued similarly to one that provides the subsidy together with a 7.0% wage increase in a new job, implying that parents are willing to forego 13.0 pp of a wage increase for this benefit.

Next, we examine RQ1b, which concerns whether the effect of childcare depends on the possibility of teleworking. Model 2 in Table 2 includes interactions between the degree of teleworking specified in the job offer and each employer-provided childcare arrangement. All the interaction coefficients are small in magnitude, and none are statistically significant. In other words, we find no evidence that the positive effect of employer-provided childcare arrangements (both facility and cost) is either amplified or diminished by the extent of telework offered (and vice versa). Thus, the effects of telework and employer-provided

childcare arrangements appear to be simply additive rather than synergistic.

Two mechanisms help explain this additive pattern. First, as shown in Model 1, the spatial location of childcare (near home versus near work) is not a decisive factor for job attractiveness, which suggests that parents' childcare needs persist regardless of where they work. A parent working from home might prefer childcare closer to home, but if none is offered, they would still value childcare near work (and vice versa). Second, the possibility of teleworking does not imply that employees will necessarily make extensive use of it. Even when a job allows a high share of telework, employees may still choose to spend part of their workweek at the central workplace (Mas & Pallais, 2017), which means that childcare located near the workplace can remain relevant.

Regarding RQ1c, we introduce interactions between the participant's gender and the employer-provided childcare arrangements in Model 3 of Table 2. The results show roughly equal increases in job attractiveness for both mothers and fathers when either employer-organised childcare facilities or employer-subsidised childcare costs are present in a job offer.

This finding contrasts with the expectation that mothers would value childcare benefits more strongly given their traditionally greater share in caregiving responsibilities (Blau & Kahn, 2017; Offer & Kaplan, 2021). Notably, earlier work by Thompson and Aspinwall (2009) finds stronger responses among women in terms of willingness to accept a job offer when childcare is provided, but their sample consists of students, only 6% of them actually parents. In contrast, our sample consists solely of working parents, who have likely already developed strategies to balance work and family responsibilities. For this population, both mothers and fathers see employer-provided childcare as equally beneficial, possibly because such arrangements alleviate family-related strains at the household level instead of benefiting just one parent. This interpretation aligns with the recent evidence from Curull-Sentís et al. (2025) that working fathers also substantially value family-supportive measures.

To verify the robustness of our results, we perform two additional analyses. First, we replicate the models by replacing the experimentally manipulated vignette factors with participants' perception of the improvement relative to their current situation in terms of childcare facility, childcare cost, and the possibility of teleworking. Our aim is to see whether participants' subjective impressions of the job attributes yield the same conclusions as the

assigned job offer attributes. These results are presented in Appendix Table A3. Second, we estimate ordered logistic regressions, the results of which are available upon request. Both findings mirror the findings of our benchmark analyses.

4.2. Why are employees attracted to employer-provided childcare arrangements?

We now turn to RQ2, which addresses why employer-provided childcare arrangements make a job more attractive. In other words, we provide insights into the reasons behind the results reported in Subsection 4.1. Table 3 presents the estimation results of linear regressions in line with those of the former subsection but with the twelve job perception outcomes discussed in Subsection 3.2 as the outcome variables.

< Table 3 about here >

Overall, access to an employer-organised childcare facility is associated with broad improvements across perceptions. Compared to an offer with no employer-organised childcare, offers featuring access to any of the four types of childcare facilities significantly positively affect every perception, except the relationship perceptions. Participants' perceptions of their relationship with their supervisor are unaffected by childcare near work with standard opening hours ($\beta = 0.321, p = 0.152$), while their perceptions of their relationship with colleagues are unaffected by either childcare near work with standard opening hours ($\beta = 0.313, p = 0.148$) or childcare near home with standard opening hours ($\beta = 0.291, p = 0.187$).

The strongest perceived improvements arise when participants are offered childcare near work with aligned opening hours: Compared to an offer with no childcare, an offer with this most valued form of childcare improves participants' job satisfaction ($\beta = 1.673, p < 0.001$), performance ($\beta = 1.308, p < 0.001$), commitment ($\beta = 1.074, p < 0.001$), stress management ($\beta = 1.657, p < 0.001$), career prospects ($\beta = 0.910, p < 0.001$), autonomy ($\beta = 1.264, p < 0.001$), work-to-family balance ($\beta = 1.518, p < 0.001$), family-to-work balance ($\beta = 1.442, p < 0.001$), the relationship with one's supervisor ($\beta = 0.868, p < 0.001$), the relationship with one's colleagues ($\beta = 0.628, p = 0.007$), professional development ($\beta = 1.116, p < 0.001$), and financial conditions ($\beta = 1.394, p < 0.001$). In other words, participants

see this childcare benefit as improving every one of the work aspects included in our extension of Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) framework.

We find very similar results for childcare near home with aligned opening hours. In fact, F-tests show no significant differences from childcare near work with aligned opening hours, except on job satisfaction ($p = 0.019$). For this variable, both forms of childcare have positive effects, but the improvement is slightly higher when the childcare is near work ($\beta = 1.673, p < 0.001$) than when it is near home ($\beta = 1.167, p < 0.001$).

However, F-tests confirm that childcare arrangements with aligned opening hours are perceived as more beneficial on most dimensions than those with standard opening hours. Specifically, aligned opening hours are associated with more favourable perceptions of performance ($p = 0.003$), commitment ($p = 0.002$), stress management ($p < 0.001$), autonomy ($p = 0.002$), work-to-family balance ($p < 0.001$), family-to-work balance ($p < 0.001$), the relationship with one's supervisor ($p = 0.021$), professional development ($p = 0.030$), and financial conditions ($p = 0.004$).

Taken together, these perception findings explain why childcare with aligned opening hours, regardless of location, emerges as the most attractive arrangement in Subsection 4.1. Across nearly all the dimensions included in our framework, aligned opening hours are associated with more favourable expectations, which underscores the importance of temporal fit over locational fit for working parents.

Turning to the employer-subsidised childcare cost factor, we find that compared to job offers without this benefit, job offers where the employer covers 25% of childcare costs significantly improve employees' perception of their financial condition ($\beta = 0.845, p < 0.001$). In fact, this effect on participants' perceptions of their financial conditions is the largest among all the perception outcomes, which makes sense since the subsidy directly increases disposable income. The subsidy also has positive effects on almost all the other perceptions: It improves perceptions of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.507, p = 0.001$), performance ($\beta = 0.318, p = 0.023$), commitment ($\beta = 0.460, p = 0.004$), stress management ($\beta = 0.516, p < 0.001$), career prospects ($\beta = 0.341, p = 0.024$), work-to-family balance ($\beta = 0.415, p = 0.006$), family-to-work balance ($\beta = 0.444, p = 0.004$), the relationship with one's supervisor ($\beta = 0.459, p = 0.003$), the relationship with one's colleagues ($\beta = 0.398, p = 0.009$), and professional development ($\beta = 0.414, p = 0.003$).

This positive effect on a wide range of perceptions likely stems from the monetary relief the subsidy provides. By increasing employees' disposable income, the subsidy directly reduces financial strain and spills over to other work-related outcomes, as indicated by Kim and Garman (2004).

5. Conclusion

Childcare is key to enabling parents with young children to fully participate in the labour market. Yet many parents continue to face barriers due to the limited availability, high costs, and inflexible opening hours of childcare facilities. Employers can help address these challenges by offering childcare support as part of their employment packages, thereby turning a widespread problem into a competitive advantage. To date, however, evidence on how employees evaluate such support remains fragmented. Prior research relies largely on correlational designs that limit causal inference. Moreover, childcare is typically treated as a uniform provision, although parents may value specific features – such as location, opening hours, and price – very differently. Prior research also tends to examine childcare in isolation of other work–family arrangements, even though its attractiveness may depend on the availability of options such as telework. Finally, little is known about whether employer-provided childcare arrangements are still valued differently by mothers and fathers given fathers' increasing involvement in childcare over recent decades. Therefore, we addressed these limitations by providing causal evidence from a scenario experiment among working parents with young children in Flanders. Specifically, drawing on a theoretical framework that captures the consequences of employer-provided work–family arrangements for job attractiveness, we examined how distinct features of employer-provided childcare arrangements shape job attractiveness, whether the effects depend on the possibility of teleworking, whether they differ between mothers and fathers, and why employees are attracted to these arrangements.

We found that any form of employer-organised childcare facility made a job more attractive than a job with no childcare facility on offer at all. However, temporal fit (i.e. the alignment between facility opening hours and employees' work schedules) emerged as the

most decisive feature. Parents valued this alignment more strongly than the facility's location. Consistent with this, we found that parents were willing to forego an entire 20% wage increase in a new job in exchange for access to a childcare facility with aligned opening hours located near work. Employer-subsidised childcare costs also improved job attractiveness, albeit to a lesser extent than an actual childcare facility. Moreover, we found no synergistic effects between childcare and telework arrangements; their benefits were additive. Finally, employer-provided childcare arrangements increased job attractiveness to a similar extent among working mothers and fathers.

Beyond job attractiveness, our analyses showed that employer-provided childcare arrangements positively shaped a wide range of job perceptions: Childcare near work with aligned opening hours was associated with more favourable perceptions of job satisfaction, performance, commitment, stress management, career prospects, autonomy, work-to-family balance, family-to-work balance, relationships with one's supervisor and colleagues, professional development, and financial conditions. Employer-subsidised childcare costs primarily enhanced financial conditions but also generated gains across all other outcomes except autonomy. Taken together, these findings suggest that employer-provided childcare arrangements not only make jobs more attractive *ex ante* but might also improve employees' functioning once they are hired.

In essence, such arrangements create mutual benefits for both employees and employers (Simintzi et al., 2025). Employees expect to experience superior work-family balance and stress management, and they anticipate being more committed and productive at work. Employers, in turn, benefit from a potentially stabler workforce. In addition, such arrangements may help alleviate parenthood-related discrimination in the labour market (El Haj et al., 2024; El Haj et al., 2026). By reducing the likelihood that caregiving responsibilities disrupt work, whether at home or in the office, they may ameliorate biases in employers' perceptions of parents' productivity (Bedi et al., 2022; El Haj et al., 2026; Hein & Cassirer, 2010; Moens et al., 2023). Future research could examine more directly whether such arrangements indeed help diminish biases and discriminatory practices.

For employers, our findings provide clear guidance. Employers seeking to attract and retain talent – particularly in tight labour markets – should strongly consider implementing or expanding work-family arrangements such as childcare support. Our results suggest that

doing so can significantly increase the competitiveness of their job offers and allow some flexibility in salary negotiations. However, the form of childcare provision should be thoughtfully aligned with employees' needs. An on-site childcare facility with standard 9-to-5 opening hours may not suffice for many workers. Instead, employers can strive for flexible, aligned-hours childcare solutions that accommodate early and late shifts.

For smaller organisations or those unable to establish their own childcare facility, there are more accessible measures to consider. For instance, employers can outsource childcare, reserve or rent places in existing facilities, provide financial contributions or vouchers, or assist employees in finding suitable childcare options through referral networks (Friedman, 2001; Growing Up, 2025; Hein & Cassirer, 2010; Seyler et al., 1995). The feasibility of offering such benefits depends on organisational resources, job structure, and the broader compensation package (Thompson & Aspinwall, 2009), which means that measures can be tailored to firm size and budget.

In summary, the provision of work–family arrangements should not be understood as a special concession to parents alone. While we show that they are crucial for employees currently balancing work and care, we believe that they can also create a more supportive and flexible environment that benefits all employees, including those who may become parents in the future.

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Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Ex-ante ethical approval of survey research with informed consent is not required by the faculty of the research institution where the authors work. Consent to use the participants' data for research purposes was obtained prior to the start of the experiment.

Data and code availability

Data and code will be made available on request.

Declaration of competing interest

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Morien El Haj: Conceptualisation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Data curation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualisation, Project administration. **Eline Moens:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – review & editing. **Elsy Verhofstadt:** Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. **Luc Van Ootegem:** Writing – review & editing. **Stijn Baert:** Conceptualisation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Figures

Figure 1. Theoretical framework of the consequences of employer-provided work–family arrangements for job attractiveness

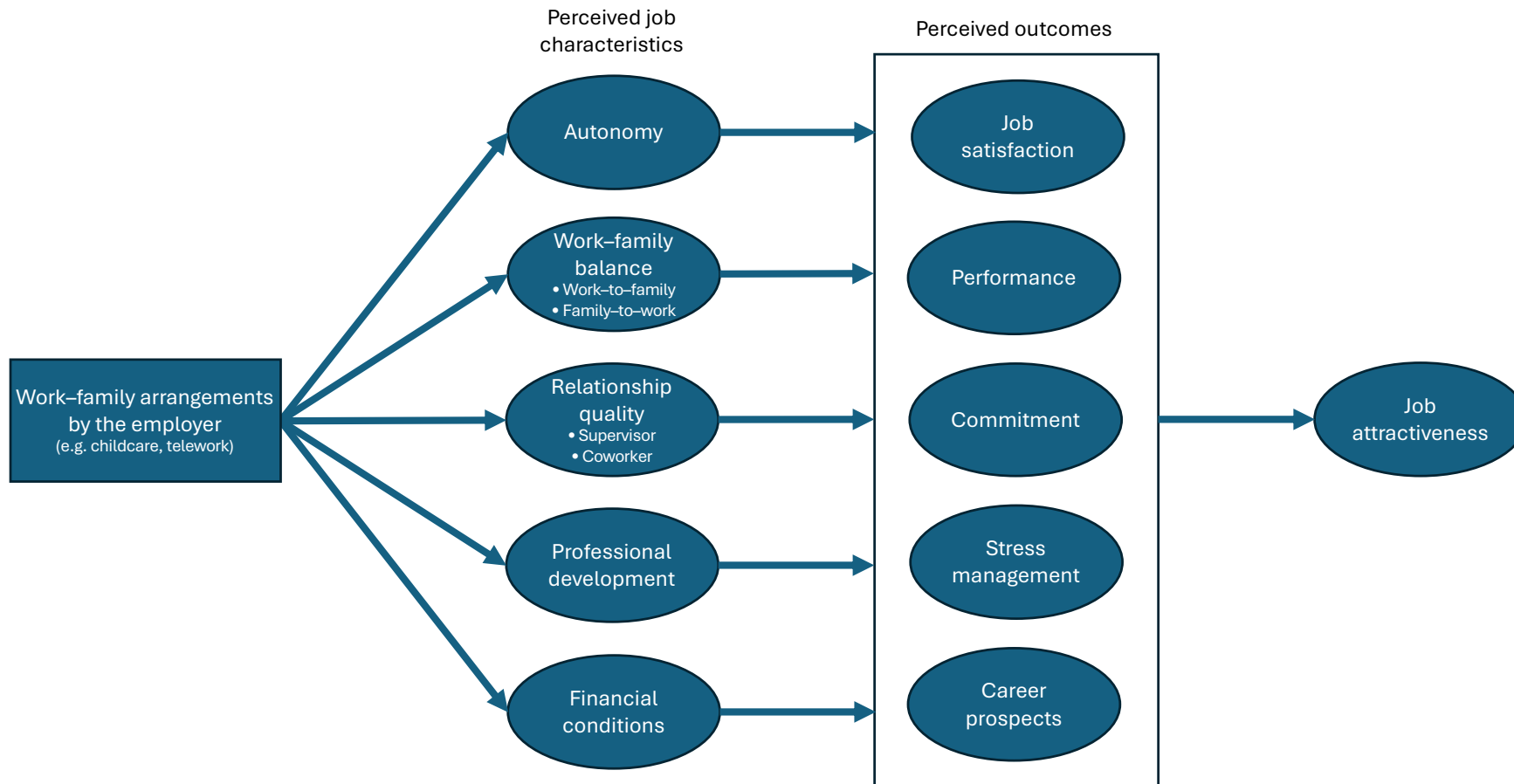
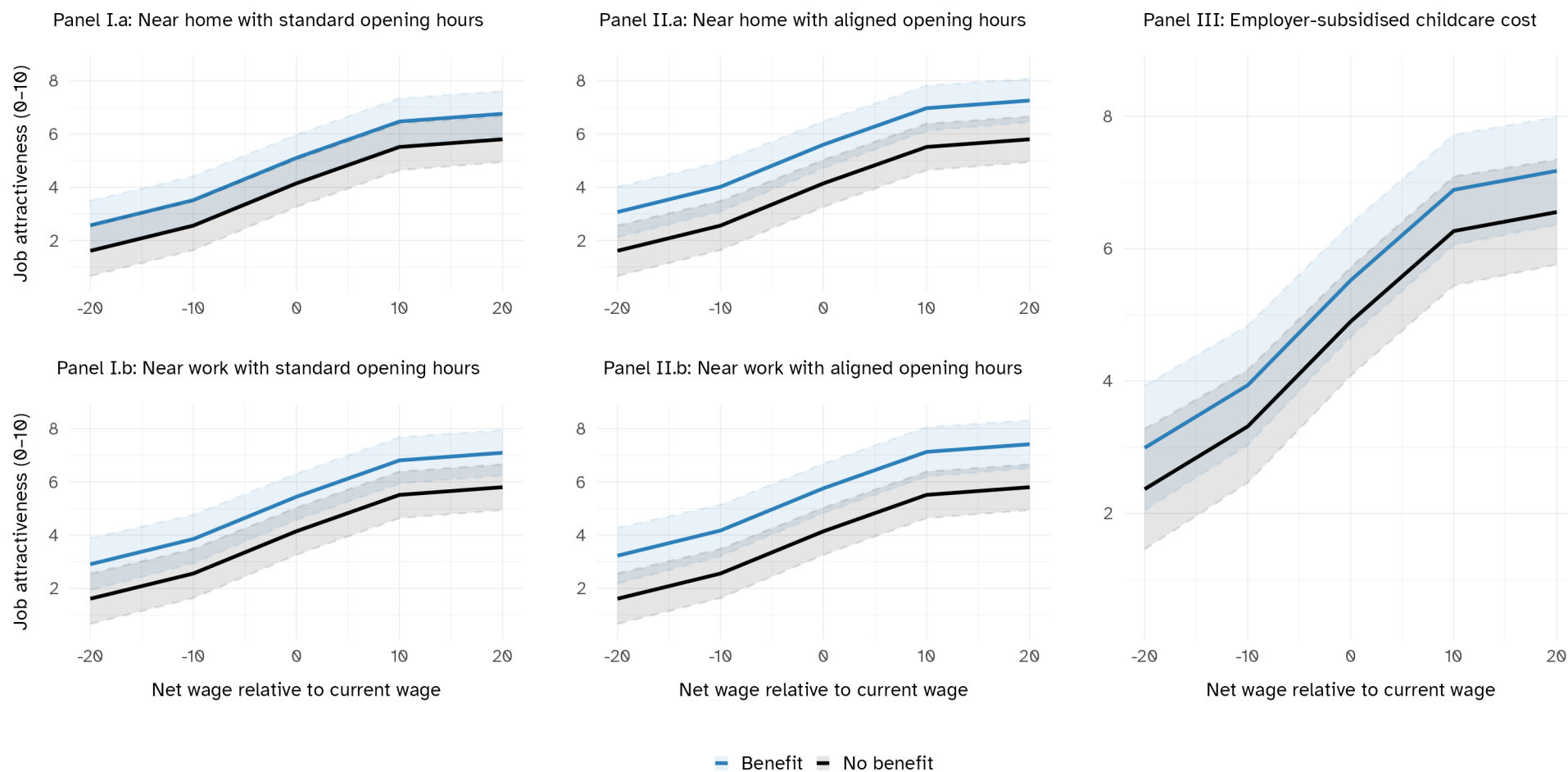


Figure 2. Marginal effects on job attractiveness of each employer-provided childcare arrangement



Note. Point estimates represent mean job attractiveness predictions (i.e. marginal effects) from linear regressions (see Table 2, Model 1). Predictions are calculated across a balanced grid of personal and current job characteristics, with continuous variables fixed at their means and every combination of categorical variable levels. Predictions are estimated separately for each employer-provided childcare arrangement. In each panel, the coloured line shows predicted job attractiveness when the childcare benefit described in the panel title is offered; the black line shows predictions when no such benefit is offered. Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals. Panels I.a and I.b illustrate the wage participants would accept with access to employer-organised childcare facilities with standard opening hours located near home and near work, respectively, relative to the wage when no facility is offered. Panels II.a and II.b present the same comparison but for childcare facilities with aligned opening hours. Panel III shows the wage participants would accept with employer childcare subsidies relative to that when no subsidy is offered. Job attractiveness is measured on a 0–10 scale.

Tables

Table 1. Vignette factors and levels

Vignette factors	Vignette levels
Employer-organised childcare facility	{None; employer-organised childcare near home with standard opening hours (7 a.m.–6 p.m. on weekdays, excluding public holidays); employer-organised childcare near home with opening hours aligned to your working hours; employer-organised childcare near work with standard opening hours (7 a.m.–6 p.m. on weekdays, excluding public holidays); employer-organised childcare near work with opening hours aligned to your working hours}
Employer-subsidised childcare cost	{None; employer covers 25% of daily childcare costs}
Possibility of teleworking	{0%; 20%; 40%; 60%; 80%}
Net wage relative to current wage	{20% less; 10% less; equal; 10% more; 20% more}

Table 2. Multivariate regression analyses with job attractiveness as the outcome variable

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None)			
Near home with standard opening hours	0.955*** (0.236)	0.445 (0.490)	0.635 (0.397)
Near home with aligned opening hours	1.457*** (0.262)	2.427*** (0.534)	1.744*** (0.455)
Near work with standard opening hours	1.291*** (0.288)	1.420* (0.600)	0.953 (0.555)
Near work with aligned opening hours	1.614*** (0.284)	2.050** (0.644)	1.822*** (0.462)
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None)	0.622*** (0.150)	0.827* (0.413)	0.219 (0.281)
Possibility of teleworking (c.)	0.048*** (0.010)	0.064* (0.025)	0.050*** (0.010)
Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.324** (0.118)	-0.472 (0.320)	-0.344** (0.117)
Net wage relative to current wage (c.)	0.162*** (0.016)	0.164*** (0.015)	0.166*** (0.016)
Net wage relative to current wage squared * 1000 (c.)	-1.108* (0.467)	-1.089* (0.475)	-1.123* (0.460)
Net wage relative to current wage cubic * 1000 (c.)	-0.144*** (0.037)	-0.150*** (0.037)	-0.155*** (0.039)
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None) × Possibility of teleworking (c.)			
Near home with standard opening hours × Possibility of teleworking		0.028 (0.036)	
Near home with aligned opening hours × Possibility of teleworking		-0.045 (0.033)	
Near work with standard opening hours × Possibility of teleworking		-0.016 (0.035)	
Near work with aligned opening hours × Possibility of teleworking		-0.018 (0.035)	
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None) × Possibility of teleworking (c.)		-0.014 (0.024)	
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None) × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000 (c.)			
Near home with standard opening hours × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000		-0.224 (0.449)	
Near home with aligned opening hours × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000		0.338 (0.405)	
Near work with standard opening hours × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000		0.213 (0.433)	
Near work with aligned opening hours × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000		0.122 (0.435)	
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None) × Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000 (c.)		0.144 (0.292)	
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None) × Woman (ref. = Man)			
Near home with standard opening hours × Woman			0.441 (0.490)
Near home with aligned opening hours × Woman			-0.423 (0.555)
Near work with standard opening hours × Woman			0.482 (0.650)
Near work with aligned opening hours × Woman			-0.312 (0.574)
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None) × Woman (ref. = Man)			0.579 (0.335)
Other personal and current job characteristics included	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference category). The outcome variable ranges from 0 (not at all attractive) to 10 (very attractive). The sample comprises 720 observations. The lists of personal and current job characteristics are described in Subsection 3.2 and presented in Appendix Table A2. The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors presented in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Subsection 4.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. Significances are indicated as *** when $p < .001$, ** when $p < .01$, and * when $p < .05$.

Table 4. Multivariate regression analyses with perceptions as outcome variables

	Job satisfaction	Performance	Commitment	Stress management	Career prospects	Autonomy
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None)						
Near home with standard opening hours	1.077*** (0.246)	0.666** (0.224)	0.494* (0.198)	0.924*** (0.231)	0.645** (0.206)	0.827** (0.235)
Near home with aligned opening hours	1.167*** (0.267)	1.064*** (0.254)	0.806** (0.234)	1.498*** (0.253)	0.780** (0.235)	1.290*** (0.273)
Near work with standard opening hours	1.255*** (0.264)	0.787** (0.245)	0.467* (0.216)	0.943*** (0.244)	0.585* (0.237)	0.746** (0.237)
Near work with aligned opening hours	1.673*** (0.276)	1.308*** (0.265)	1.074*** (0.235)	1.657*** (0.252)	0.910*** (0.243)	1.264*** (0.262)
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None)	0.507** (0.149)	0.318* (0.138)	0.460** (0.158)	0.516*** (0.137)	0.341* (0.149)	0.274 (0.158)
Possibility of teleworking (c.)	0.035*** (0.009)	0.011 (0.008)	-0.006 (0.007)	0.027** (0.008)	0.018* (0.007)	0.039*** (0.011)
Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.197 (0.103)	0.008 (0.101)	0.018 (0.091)	-0.128 (0.094)	-0.093 (0.088)	-0.184 (0.113)
Net wage relative to current wage (c.)	0.107*** (0.015)	0.073*** (0.014)	0.062*** (0.014)	0.075*** (0.015)	0.069*** (0.014)	0.056*** (0.015)
Net wage relative to current wage squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.948* (0.417)	-0.431 (0.396)	-0.177 (0.398)	-0.495 (0.389)	-0.309 (0.332)	-0.217 (0.440)
Net wage relative to current wage cubic * 1000 (c.)	-0.108** (0.039)	-0.064 (0.036)	-0.067 (0.035)	-0.093* (0.038)	-0.072* (0.036)	-0.066 (0.038)
Other personal and current job characteristics included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Work-to-family balance	Family-to-work balance	Relationship with supervisor	Relationship with colleagues	Professional development	Financial conditions
Employer-organised childcare facility (ref. = None)						
Near home with standard opening hours	0.967*** (0.230)	0.771** (0.242)	0.542** (0.192)	0.291 (0.219)	0.633** (0.184)	0.826** (0.296)
Near home with aligned opening hours	1.506*** (0.245)	1.395*** (0.261)	0.685** (0.223)	0.473* (0.233)	0.846*** (0.233)	1.487*** (0.302)
Near work with standard opening hours	1.023*** (0.266)	0.823** (0.259)	0.321 (0.222)	0.313 (0.215)	0.723** (0.233)	1.100*** (0.267)
Near work with aligned opening hours	1.518*** (0.261)	1.442*** (0.272)	0.868*** (0.230)	0.628** (0.230)	1.116*** (0.233)	1.394*** (0.287)
Employer-subsidised childcare cost (ref. = None)	0.415** (0.150)	0.444** (0.150)	0.459** (0.151)	0.398** (0.150)	0.414** (0.136)	0.845*** (0.177)
Possibility of teleworking (c.)	0.032*** (0.009)	0.022* (0.009)	0.007 (0.007)	-0.015* (0.007)	0.003 (0.007)	0.032** (0.011)
Possibility of teleworking squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.142 (0.104)	-0.083 (0.101)	-0.068 (0.084)	0.093 (0.087)	0.041 (0.083)	-0.108 (0.119)
Net wage relative to current wage (c.)	0.064*** (0.015)	0.066*** (0.014)	0.050*** (0.014)	0.053*** (0.014)	0.065*** (0.013)	0.086*** (0.016)
Net wage relative to current wage squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.154 (0.401)	-0.206 (0.422)	-0.274 (0.360)	-0.155 (0.410)	-0.358 (0.334)	-0.417 (0.422)
Net wage relative to current wage cubic * 1000 (c.)	-0.064 (0.039)	-0.084* (0.037)	-0.043 (0.035)	-0.043 (0.034)	-0.057 (0.032)	-0.144** (0.042)
Other personal and current job characteristics included	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable) and ref. (reference category). The outcome variables range from 0 (the worst possible evaluation) to 10 (the best possible evaluation). The results are based on Model 1 from Table 2 but with the outcome variable adjusted to the perceptions. The sample comprises 720 observations. The lists of personal and current job characteristics are described in Subsection 3.2 and presented in Appendix Table A2. The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors presented in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Subsection 4.2. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. Significances are indicated as *** when $p < .001$, ** when $p < .01$, and * when $p < .05$.

Appendix

Table A1. Perceptions and accompanying statement

Expected job perceptions	Statement
Job satisfaction	The degree of general satisfaction with this job.
Performance	The extent to which you can be productive in this job.
Commitment	The feeling of commitment to the organisation.
Stress management	The extent to which you can perform this job without stress.
Career prospects	The chances of being promoted in this job.
Autonomy	The autonomy you have in scheduling the work in this job.
Work-to-family balance	The extent to which this job ensures that work demands do not interfere with your family life.
Family-to-work balance	The extent to which this job ensures that family demands do not interfere with your work.
Relationship with supervisor	The quality of your relationship with your supervisor.
Relationship with colleagues	The quality of your relationship with your colleagues.
Professional development	The extent to which you can develop professionally in this job.
Financial conditions	The extent to which this job allows you to save on work-related costs (e.g. fuel, workwear, childcare).

Note. As explained in Section 2, these job perceptions are based on Gajendran and Harrison's (2007) widely cited model and extended to cover other employer-provided work-family arrangements, including childcare. The participants were asked to give an (expected) evaluation of these statements on a scale from 0 to 10 (where 0 represents the worst possible evaluation and 10 represents the best possible evaluation).

Table A2. Participants' personal and current job characteristics

Variable	Mean	SD
A. Personal characteristics		
Gender		
Woman	0.700	–
Man	0.300	–
Age (c.)	34.167	5.288
Children (c.)	1.433	0.825
Relationship status		
No partner	0.150	–
Full-time employed partner	0.583	–
Part-time employed partner	0.125	–
Self-employed partner	0.075	–
Non-employed partner	0.067	–
Educational degree		
Secondary education	0.225	–
Lower tertiary education	0.433	–
Higher tertiary education	0.342	–
Personal monthly net income		
Less than €2,000	0.100	–
€2,000–€2,499	0.300	–
€2,500 or more	0.467	–
Prefer not to say	0.133	–
Formal childcare		
None	0.442	–
Childcare near home	0.517	–
Childcare near workplace	0.042	–
Formal childcare use (c.)	3.375	1.126
Informal childcare use (c.)	1.910	1.104
B. Current job characteristics		
Employment status		
Full-time	0.725	–
Part-time	0.275	–
Temporal flexibility		
Fixed start and end times	0.375	–
Flexible start and end times	0.492	–
Time-independent work	0.133	–
Employment schedule		
Fixed days excluding weekend work	0.917	–
Fixed days including weekend work	0.025	–
Shift work excluding weekend work	0.008	–
Shift work including weekend work	0.050	–
Job tenure (c.)	6.625	5.117
Commuting time (c.)	61.817	45.014
Percentage of telework use (c.)	33.567	28.618
Employer-organised childcare facility		
Yes	0.133	–
No	0.867	–
Employer-subsidised childcare cost		
Yes	0.133	–
No	0.867	–

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable), ref. (reference category), and SD (standard deviation). No standard deviations are presented for categorical variables. The number of observations (participants) for all variables is 120, except for formal childcare use (64) and informal childcare use (67).

Table A3. Multivariate regression analyses with job attractiveness as the outcome variable, with perceptions of improvements in childcare and telework arrangements instead of experimentally assigned vignette levels

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Improvement in childcare facility (c.)	0.251*** (0.042)	0.325*** (0.078)	0.309*** (0.061)
Improvement in childcare cost (c.)	0.076* (0.036)	-0.130 (0.075)	0.026 (0.065)
Improvement in possibility of teleworking (c.)	0.623*** (0.101)	0.369 (0.198)	0.615*** (0.101)
Improvement in possibility of teleworking squared (c.)	-0.026** (0.010)	-0.008 (0.022)	-0.025* (0.010)
Net wage relative to current wage (c.)	0.122*** (0.015)	0.124*** (0.015)	0.122*** (0.015)
Net wage relative to current wage squared * 1000 (c.)	-0.764 (0.401)	-0.750 (0.398)	-0.777 (0.403)
Net wage relative to current wage cubic * 1000 (c.)	-0.097** (0.034)	-0.101** (0.034)	-0.100** (0.035)
Improvement in childcare × Improvement in possibility of teleworking (c.)		0.000 (0.045)	
Improvement in childcare cost × Improvement in possibility of teleworking (c.)		0.062 (0.040)	
Improvement in childcare × Improvement in possibility of teleworking squared (c.)		-0.002 (0.005)	
Improvement in childcare cost × Improvement in possibility of teleworking squared (c.)		-0.003 (0.004)	
Improvement in childcare × Woman (c.)			-0.077 (0.074)
Improvement in childcare cost × Woman (c.)			0.066 (0.074)
Other personal and current job characteristics included	Yes		Yes

Note. The following abbreviations are used: c. (continuous variable). The outcome variable ranges from 0 (i.e. not at all attractive) to 10 (i.e. very attractive). The sample comprises 720 observations. The lists of personal and current job characteristics are described in Subsection 3.2 and presented in Appendix Table A2. The presented statistics are coefficient estimates with standard errors presented in parentheses for the linear regression analyses discussed in Subsection 4.1. Standard errors are corrected for the clustering of the observations at the participant level. Intercepts are not presented. Significances are indicated as *** when $p < .001$, ** when $p < .01$, and * when $p < .05$.