



RESEARCH BRIEF

Employee Ownership and Access to Work–Family Supports

Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth

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Key Question

Do employees with Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) receive more family-supportive benefits?

This brief is summarized from ongoing research by the authors.

Purpose

This research brief explores the potential of Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) to enhance employee access to work-family supports. The findings, based on longitudinal survey data, indicate that employees with ESOPs have higher rates of access to workplace benefits and practices important to workers with families, including paid childcare, family leave, and flexible scheduling.

The analysis compares individuals with an ESOP and individuals without an ESOP, focusing on access to family-friendly workplace supports.

Context

Access to family-supportive workplace benefits such as paid leave, affordable childcare, and flexible work schedules strengthens the economic security of workers and their families. Without such supports, many working parents, and especially mothers, must reduce hours, step out of the workforce, or accept lower-quality jobs to manage caregiving responsibilities. For women, these interruptions compound over time, contributing to lower lifetime earnings and reduced retirement savings, which in turn sustain the persistent gender gap in income and wealth.

Methodology

The analysis uses data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), which follows 8,984 individuals over 23 years. A full description of the methodology and the data is available in the full paper, [The Benefits of Employee Ownership: Can ESOPs Reduce Gender Disparities in Employment](#) [link].

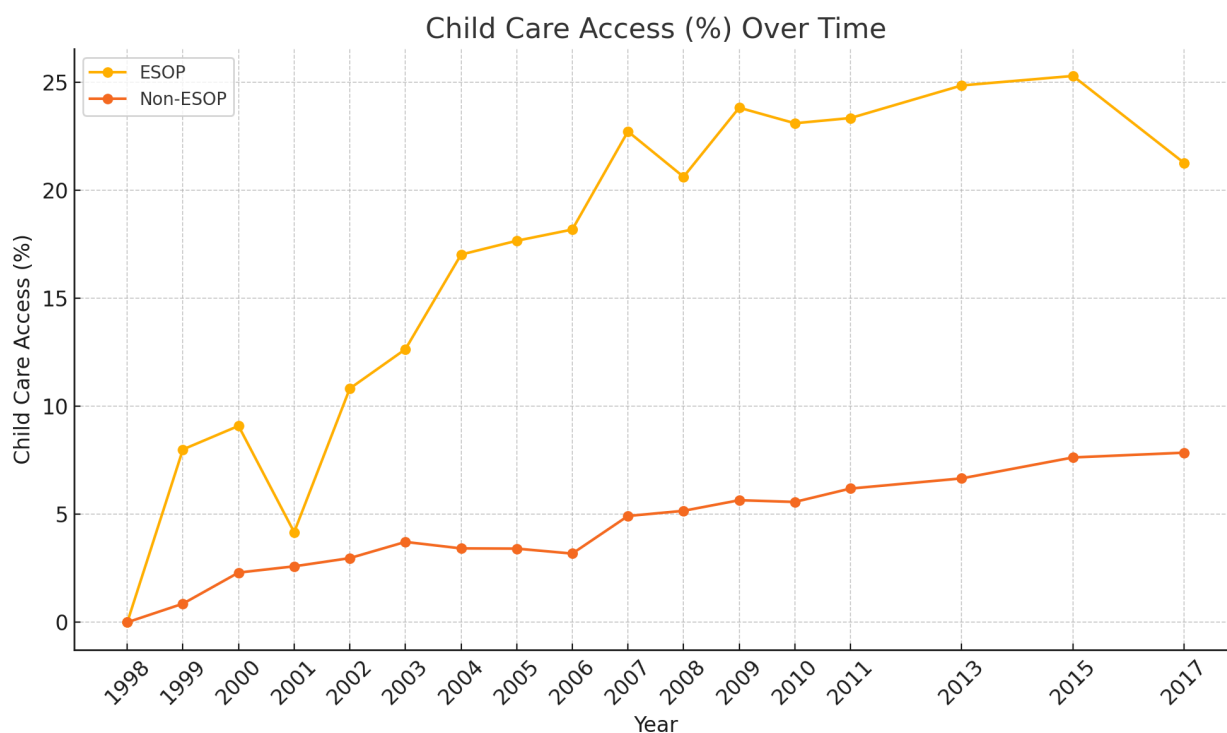


What does the analysis find?

ESOPs are linked to workplace supports for families. Employees with an ESOP report greater access to childcare, paid leave, and flexible scheduling, compared to other employees.

Childcare Benefits

Employees with ESOPs are more than twice as likely as non-ESOP employees to have access to employer-provided childcare benefits (as of 2017 – the last round of this survey 21% of ESOP employees had childcare access vs. 8% of non-ESOP employees).



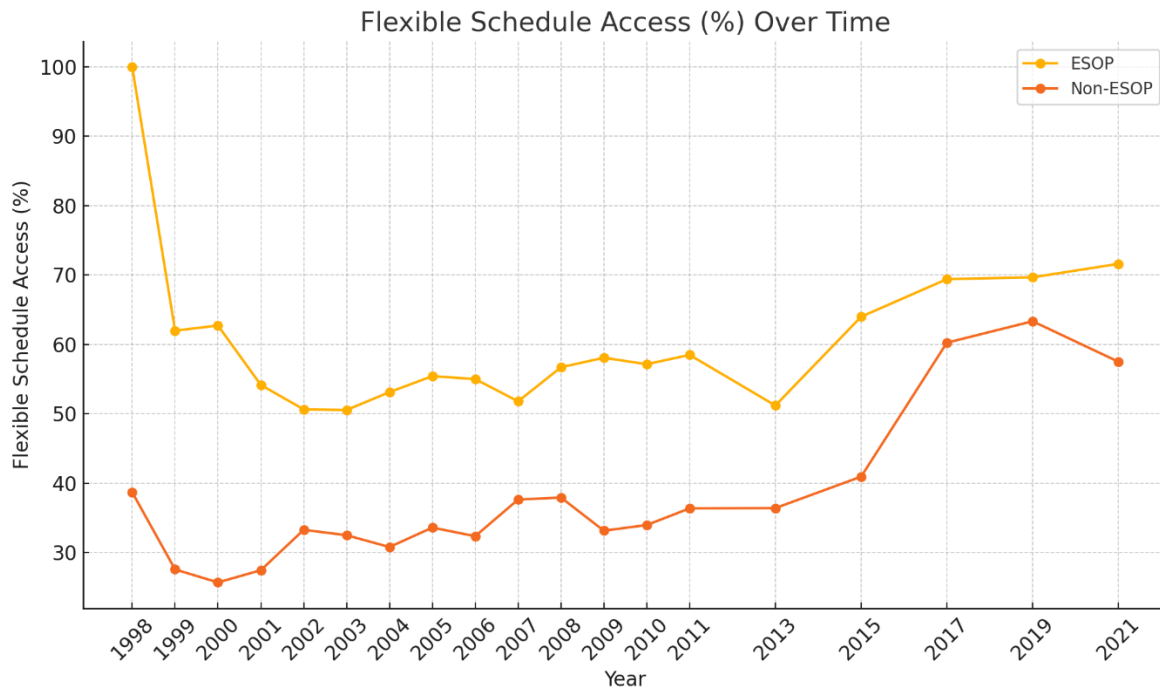
Paid Leave

ESOP workers are far more likely to have paid leave benefits. Of ESOP workers, 80% received access to some form of paid leave in 2017, as compared to 49% of workers in non-ESOP firms.



Flexible Scheduling

ESOP employees also report somewhat greater access to flexible scheduling. As of 2021, 72% of ESOP workers had access to flexible scheduling compared to 58% of non-ESOP workers.



Takeaway

Employees with ESOPs not only share an ownership stake in the companies where they work, they are also more likely to benefit from stronger work-family supports and protections at work. This reinforces the idea that employee ownership can go hand in hand with a more robust and protective employment arrangement.

Family supports such as paid leave, childcare, and flexible scheduling matter for all workers, but they are especially critical for those with children or other caregiving responsibilities. Because women continue to take on a disproportionate share of caregiving, the absence of these supports can limit their earnings over time and reinforce persistent gender gaps in income and wealth. Stronger supports not only help all workers balance family and career but also advance equity.

Implications for Practice

For Workers

ESOP firms do more than provide employees with an ownership stake. The data suggest they may also be more likely to offer work-family supports—such as paid leave, childcare assistance, and flexible scheduling. These benefits can make it easier for workers to balance job and family responsibilities while strengthening their long-term economic security..

For Employers

ESOPs are associated with family-supportive benefits. This analysis suggests that the two may complement one another. Both can strengthen a company's ability to retain employees. Integrating employee ownership with family-friendly workplace practices may serve as a strategy for building a stable and committed workforce for the long term.

For Policymakers

The analysis suggests that ESOPs are linked to stronger workplace supports for families. Policymakers seeking to improve family economic security could therefore view ESOPs as one tool within a broader policy strategy, and one fruitfully paired with family-supportive workplace practices.

For the Field (Practitioners & Advocates)

Highlighting the connection between ownership and family supports may help to position ESOPs not just as financial tools, but as vehicles for building more supportive workplaces. Communicating these findings may expand the appeal of ESOP transitions.

The findings suggest that ESOP participation is linked to a broader bundle of family-supporting arrangements including paid leave, childcare assistance, and flexible scheduling.

Authors

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Find more information about employee ownership at
<https://eohub.rutgers.edu>.