

INTERGENERATIONAL CHILDCARE SUPPORT TRANSFER: INSIGHTS FROM THE GENERATION AND GENDER SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Understanding intergenerational transfers of childcare is crucial in the context of declining birth rates, changing family structures, and population aging. Informal assistance in childcare is highly significant for many families with young children as it helps them balance their professional and parenting responsibilities. Existing research indicates that support provided by parents to their adult children in childcare positively impacts decisions regarding childbirth and women's participation in the labor market.

The aim of this study is to analyze patterns of support transfer between different generations and identify factors influencing intergenerational transfers in Moldova. It is based on data from the "Generations and Gender" (GGS) study conducted in 2020. Thanks to its representative sample, the study encompasses aspects such as intergenerational transfers related to childcare and grandchildren, attitudes toward childcare, and socio-demographic variables. Statistical analysis involves cross-tabulations and logistic regressions to identify factors determining participation/transmission of support in childcare.

The research findings demonstrate that grandparents provide significant assistance to their adult children in childcare, particularly during the initial years of the child's life. This support is predominantly received by women with young children and women with higher education with children. Typically, childcare assistance is offered by grandparents approaching pre-retirement and retirement ages. Factors such as children's ages, family size, level of education, and urban residence significantly influence the receipt of childcare assistance. The results underscore the importance of traditional values and societal expectations, providing a nuanced understanding of intergenerational relationships amidst a changing demographic landscape. They could prove valuable for policymakers and developers of programs supporting families with children.

Keywords: *intergenerational transfers, childcare support, Moldova*

Înțelegerea transferurilor intergeneraționale pentru îngrijirea copiilor are o importanță deosebită în contextul reducerii ratei fertilității, schimbării structurii familiale și îmbătrânirii populației. Asistența informală pentru îngrijirea copiilor este extrem de valoroasă pentru multe familii cu copii mici, ajutându-le să îmbine responsabilitățile lor profesionale și cele parentale. Studiile existente arată că ajutorul pe care părinții îl oferă copiilor lor adulți în îngrijirea copiilor are un impact pozitiv asupra deciziilor legate de nașterea copiilor și participarea femeilor pe piața muncii. Scopul acestui studiu este de a analiza modelele transferului de sprijin între diferite generații și de a identifica factorii care influențează transferurile intergeneraționale în Moldova. Acesta se bazează pe datele studiului „Generații și Gen” (GGS), efectuat în 2020. Datorită eșantionului reprezentativ, studiul include aspecte precum transferurile intergeneraționale în îngrijirea copiilor și nepoților, atitudinea față de îngrijirea copiilor și variabilele socio-demografice. Analiza statistică implică tabele încrucișate și regresii logistice pentru a identifica factorii care determină implicarea/transferul de sprijin în îngrijirea copiilor.

Rezultatele studiului au arătat că bunicii oferă un sprijin semnificativ copiilor lor adulți în îngrijirea copiilor, în special în primii ani de viață a acestora. De regulă, acest sprijin este acordat femeilor cu copii mici și femeilor cu studii superioare care au copii. De regulă, asistența în îngrijirea copiilor este oferită de bunicii aflați înainte de vârsta de pensionare și de cei pensionați. Factori precum vârsta copiilor, dimensiunea familiei, nivelul de educație și locuirea în mediu urban influențează semnificativ primirea asistenței pentru îngrijirea copiilor. Rezultatele subliniază importanța valorilor tradiționale și a așteptărilor sociale, oferind o înțelegere subtilă a relațiilor dintre generații în contextul unei situații demografice în schimbare și ar putea fi utile pentru elaboratorii de politici și programe de susținere a familiilor cu copii.

Cuvinte cheie: *transferuri intergeneraționale, îngrijirea copiilor, Moldova*

Понимание межпоколенных трансфертов по уходу за детьми имеет важное значение в контексте снижения рождаемости, изменения семейной структуры и старения населения. Неформальная помощь по уходу за детьми является очень важной для многих семей с маленькими детьми, помогает им совмещать свои профессиональные и родительские обязанности. Существующие исследования показывают, что помощь, оказываемая родителями своим взрослым детям по уходу за детьми, положительно влияет на решения о рождении детей и участии женщин на рынке труда. Целью данного исследования является анализ закономерностей передачи поддержки между разными поколениями и выявление факторов, влияющих на межпоколенные трансферты в Молдове. Оно основывается на данных исследования «Поколения и Гендер» (GGS), проведенного в 2020 году. Благодаря репрезентативной выборке исследование включают такие аспекты, как межпоколенные трансферты по уходу за детьми и внуками, отношение к уходу за детьми и социально-демографические переменные. Статистический анализ включает перекрестные таблицы и логистические регрессии для выявления факторов, определяющих участие/передачу поддержки по уходу за детьми.

Результаты исследования показали, что бабушки и дедушки оказывают значительную помощь свои взрослым детям по уходу за детьми, особенно в первые годы их жизни. Чаще всего такую поддержку получают женщины с маленькими детьми и женщины с высшим образованием, имеющие детей. Как правило, помощь по уходу за детьми оказывают бабушки и дедушки предпенсионного и пенсионного возраста. Такие факторы, как возраст детей, размер семьи, уровень образования и проживание в городской среде, существенно влияют на получение помощи по уходу за детьми. Результаты подчеркивают важность традиционных ценностей и общественных ожиданий, обеспечивая тонкое понимание отношений между поколениями в условиях меняющейся демографической ситуации, и могут оказаться полезными для разработчиков политики и программ поддержки семей с детьми.

Ключевые слова: межпоколенческие трансферты, помощь по уходу за детьми, Молдова

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of intergenerational relationships have gained significant attention in recent years, especially in the context of the imbalance between generations caused by the low birth rate, population aging and migration. Intergenerational relationships refer to the chain of relationships between parents, adult children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. There is a certain reciprocity between each family member that benefits each generation. The intensity of these relationships, the mutual support, will change depending on the stage of life, the composition of the family (own and of parents), family relationships during childhood, attitudes related to intergenerational support, the socio-economic status of adult children and their parents. At the same time, these relationships are influenced by the level of socio-economic development of the country, urbanization, social policy and developed services, etc. As societies age and family structures evolve, understanding the nature and patterns of intergenerational help has become more important.

In Moldova, relations between parents and children have a strong traditional and emotional charge. The context of intergenerational support is reflected, albeit somewhat summarily and tangentially, in the Constitution of the

Republic of Moldova through Article 48, which provides normatively for "the right and duty of parents to ensure the upbringing, education, and training of children", as well as the fact that "children are obligated to take care of their parents and provide them with assistance". Actors of intergenerational social networks take different roles in the exchange of private aid (transfers): either as beneficiaries/recipients (those who receive the aid), or as givers (those who provide/offer the aid), or both (both those who receive and those providing aid).

In the article, based on data from Generations and Gender Survey, we analyse one of the potentially most important domains that characterize the parent-adult offspring relationships - the support and assistance that is exchanged between them. The purpose of the study is to examine the extent of support for child care and the factors of intergenerational support. Informal childcare support is essential for many families with young children to help them fulfil their work and family responsibilities.

The subject of the analysis consists of respondents who have children under the age of 14, as well as respondents who provide assistance to them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent decades, research into intergenerational relationships and transfers has garnered substantial attention in the scientific arena, particularly regarding financial, time, and support care transfers within the context of assistance provided in raising and educating children/grandchildren. Several empirical studies in the USA and Europe have delved into these complex dynamics, shedding light on various aspects of intergenerational transfers. Research consistently shows that intergenerational support flows primarily downward from old to young, or is balanced, but parents become net beneficiaries of help only at an advanced age (Albertini & Kohli, 2013; Kohli, 2004; Gierveld, Dykstra, & Schenk, 2012). Elderly parents often provide assistance in various

areas, including household chores, financial support, child care, and emotional support (Ingersoll-Dayton, et.al., 2001).

Utilizing the GGS data, various types of intergenerational support were delineated, and a comparative analysis was conducted for Eastern and Western European countries (Gierveld, Dykstra, & Schenk, 2012). It was found that there is a greater likelihood of being involved in providing support to adult children than receiving support from them.

Linked to economic models of fertility decision-making, studies suggest that time transfers and availability

of grandparental childcare play a significant role in childbearing decisions of young adults (Eibich & Siedler, 2020). Addressing the demographic and socioeconomic implications of intergenerational transfers some papers are concluding on the relationship between the willingness of grandparents to provide childcare and the fertility and employment decisions of the second generation (Thomese & Liefbroer, 2013; García-Morán & Kuehn, 2017; Hank & Buber, 2009). It has been found that the proximity of parents and adult children also plays a role in intergenerational time transfers, affecting childcare support. So, in this context authors estimated that around 50 percent of grandparents in the U.S. and Europe provide some form of assistance with childcare. British and Australian studies have shown that between a quarter and a half of employed women have their children looked after by a grandmother while they are at work (Millward, 1998).

For grandparents, it is important to provide both financial and emotional support to their grandchildren. This reflects a desire to build strong bonds and ensure the well-being of younger generations (Pillemer, et al., 2007). There are studies that focus on intergenerational transfers of financial assistance to adult children, emphasizing income and wealth as the predominant determinants of such provisions (Albertini & Radl, 2012). Other studies present empirical arguments and evidence of cross-national variation concerning the relationship between family size, birth order, and intergenerational financial transfers in Europe (Emery, 2013).

In Romanian literature, it is shown that the primary beneficiaries of intergenerational support transfers are grandchildren that have grandparents under 70 years old and, to a lesser extent, elderly individuals over 70 years old. The relevance of interfamily support in the Romanian context is fueled by the traditional obligation to assist family members in need. Studies indicate that individuals with lower levels of education, greater religiosity, no professional activity, and who have grandchildren tend to feel a higher sense of responsibility towards family members in need (Mureșan, 2012).

The diversity in intergenerational transfers and its specifics in Moldova have received relatively less attention. The subject has been explored in works and studies that evaluate the challenges faced by families with children in reconciling professional and parental roles (Chistruga-Sînchevici, 2021). Some tangential reflections on the topic are presented in the study on the reproductive behavior of women in the Municipality of Chisinau, which reveals significant support from grandparents through financial assistance (54%) and support in raising and educating the first grandchild (65%). It was observed that the traditional family relationship model and mutual support remain relevant (Grigoraș, 2022). Several facets of intergenerational transfers have been elucidated through analytical studies conducted using the National Transfer Accounts and the estimation of financial transfers across generations (Gagauz & Prohniński, 2022). Intergenerational support has been a subject of analysis, even in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with studies highlighting the various challenges faced by families, intergenerational support mechanisms during crises, and the vulnerability of their members (Gagauz et al 2021). The relationships between generations are explored in more detail in the Generations and Gender study conducted in 2020 (GGS, 2020). Initial analyses of the survey data have highlighted the presence of strong traditional bonds among family members of different ages and mutual support.

Overall, the specialized literature on intergenerational transfers is complex and encompasses a wide range of aspects related to the support and interactions among members of different generations within a family. The present study contributes to the body of research on the support transfers between generations by analysing particularities and determinants factors of intergenerational help and support especially given by adult parents to their adult children.

The use of data from Moldova, one of the countries in Eastern Europe facing both a declining birth rate and insufficiently developed childcare services for preschool children, is notable for exploring the factors influencing the receipt of childcare.

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights into understanding the support received for childcare from elderly parents. The Intergenerational Solidarity Theory is instrumental in comprehending the reciprocal exchanges of support among different generations. This theory categorizes support into emotional, instrumental, and financial dimensions, emphasizing the delicate balance between giving and receiving support within families (Bengtson & Robert, 1991; Chisholm, 1999; Giarrusso & Putney, 2020).

Role theory emphasizes the challenges arising from the multiple roles that individuals assume within the family and society. It offers a lens to analyse the potential conflicts and stressors that stem from juggling caregiving responsibilities alongside other roles such as spouse, parent, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, grandparents (Georgas, 2004).

Generativity theory, proposed by Erik Erikson, posits that middle-aged individuals experience a sense of generativity - a desire to contribute positively to younger

generations and leave a lasting legacy. Peterson (2002) elaborates on how this theory underlines the significance of caregiving as a means to fulfil generative needs.

Social exchange theory and role modelling are alternative theories of how the willingness to provide intergenerational assistance is transmitted from one generation to the next. Homans, Blau, and Emerson were the key theorists who developed the original theories of social exchange. Theoretical and empirical developments include the extension of their work to the analysis of power and dependence, social networks, reciprocity, fairness, social cohesion, and solidarity (Ribar & Wilhelm, 2006).

Many studies draw on stress and coping theories. These theories explore how caregivers experience stress and employ various coping strategies to manage

their caregiving responsibilities (Ingersoll-Dayton, et al., 2001).

The key concept of this work is centred on the theory of intergenerational solidarity and the theory of roles. The intergenerational relationships arising from mutual support in the results of the GGS study are presented through private material transfers between parents and children, children and parents, friends, etc. Thus, four types of transfers are delineated: financial assistance; assistance in self-care (e.g., in performing hygiene procedures); assistance in child care provision; practical household help (such as housework, cooking, cleaning, laundry, minor repairs, etc.). In our article, the focus is on intergenerational transfers related to the support provided/received in the care and upbringing of children/grandchildren.

DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

The empirical basis of the current research consists of data from the Generations and Gender Study, one of the most comprehensive sociodemographic studies conducted for the first time in the Republic of Moldova in 2020 (GGS, 2020). The Generations and Gender Survey was administered to a sample of over 10000 respondents aged between 15-79 years, collecting information about the dynamics of people's lives and families in society and at the individual level. In numerous sections, intergenerational dialogue is assessed through a set of questions designed to reveal the intergenerational relationships and support provided and received by parents and their adult children.

In this article, our focus is particularly on evaluating intergenerational support in childcare, how childcare assistance received and provided varies and interacts with different socio-demographic indicators. This support is informal, meaning it is not a professional activity for the person providing it. For this analysis, the main variables indicating intergenerational support given and received in childcare for children/grandchildren were HHD18, "In the last 12 months, have you regularly received help in taking care of your child(ren) from relatives, friends, or other individuals who do not work in childcare?" and HHD25, "In the last 12 months, have you provided help to someone else in taking care of a child?" As filters for selecting first and second-degree relatives, questions HHD19, "Who has regularly helped you with childcare?" and HHD26 - 1, "Whom have you provided assistance to?" were used.

The analysis of GGS data includes two complementary components. The first component involves a descriptive analysis of the sociodemographic profile (gender, age, residence, level of education, occupational status) of the two selected categories of respondents extracted from the GGS study: *givers of non-formal childcare support*,

persons aged 15-79 years (N=1822) and recipients of childcare support, parents aged 15-59 years (N=454) whose children are up to 14 years old (Appendix, Table 2). Additionally, respondents' perceptions of the duty of parents/grandparents to take care of their children/grandchildren were assessed (ATT05 a, c, "Should grandparents take care of grandchildren if parents cannot do so? / Should parents adapt their own lives to be able to help their adult children when they face difficulties?" (Table 4).

The second component is the inferential statistics based on binary logistic regression analysis conducted using the SPSS statistical package. The first regression model (Table 5), represented by question HHD19 (Regular help with childcare: People), includes the dependent variable equal to 1 – respondents who received help in taking care of children from parents and 0 – respondents who received help in taking care of children but not from parents in the last 12 months. Independent variables are age, sex, place of residence, education level, child age, partner presence, relationships with parents and household size. The logistic regression model on predictors of receiving childcare support from parents in the last 12 months shows that the independent variables (individual characteristics of respondents) explain 15% of the total variance of the dependent variable - *receiving permanent childcare support in the last 12 months* (Nagelkerke R-sq. is 0.157).

Table 6 contains the results on predictors of providing childcare support from grandparents in the last 12 months and reflects their sociodemographic characteristics. The dependent variable is the HHD25 question "Helped others with childcare?", where 0 - parents who gives help to their adult children, and 1 - parents who gives help but not to their adult children. Independent variables are age, sex, place of residence,

household size, parents' age. The model is statistically significant and the independent variables included in the analysis explain 32% of the 1406 cases of giving support to care for grandchildren (Nagelkerke's R-sq. is 0.32).

The regression tables contain the coefficients and expressed values of the logistic regression model showing the probability (odds ratio) that the studied event will

occur. The significance of the Wald statistic (under the column labelled Sig.) indicates the importance of the predictor variable in the model. The exponential beta column Exp (B) is the factor that changes the probability of having childcare/household help (odds ratio) when the independent variable increases by one. The odds ratio measures the association of two categorical variables, representing a proportion of two odds.

MAIN RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

According to research results over 18% of respondents aged 15-79 years were givers (donors) of help to another person in caring for their minor child/children (*Appendix, Table 1*). The structure of the sample (N=1822) according to the individual characteristics of the givers of non-formal support shows that: women constitute 68.9%, while men - about 31.1%; from rural areas are 51.7%, and urban 48.3% of which 24.6% are from Chisinau municipality (*Appendix, Table 2*). Donors with low and medium level of education have equal proportions of 41%, and those with higher level of education only 17.6%. The distribution by occupational status shows the high share of retired people 34.7% and employed - 30.1%, followed by unemployed people - 10.1%, those on maternity or paternity leave/on parental leave or childcare leave 4.4% and others 20.6%.

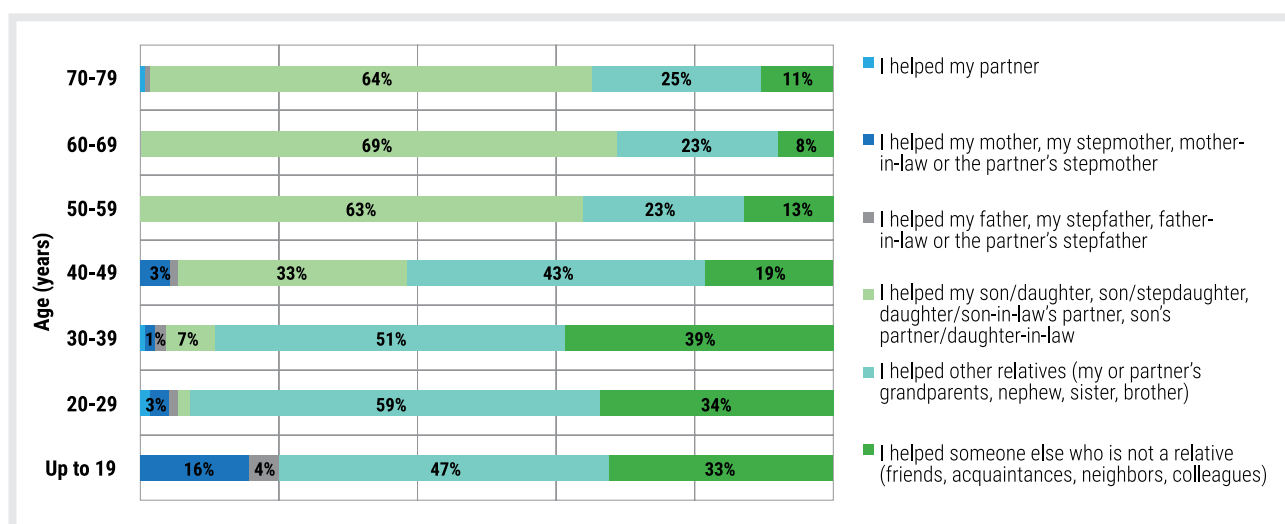
Around 19% of the total respondents aged 15-59 years received permanent childcare support in the 12 months up to the survey (*Appendix, Table 1*). The particularities of the sub-group of beneficiaries of childcare support show that 73.6% are women, compared to men (26.4%); most of them are young people aged 30-39 (56.4%)

and 20-29 (29.5%). 44.1% of the beneficiaries are from rural areas, almost one third from Chisinau municipality (28.9%) and 27.1% from urban areas. By occupational status most are employed (44.1%), on maternity or childcare leave 29.3%, not employed 10.4% and others 15.9%.

The age distribution and degree of kinship of those who helped someone with childcare illustrate significant differences. Up to the age of 40 respondents mainly help other relatives such as nephews, sister, brother but also non-relatives (neighbours, friends) and to an insignificant extent to partners. As people get older and raise their own children, social transfers change (*Figure 1*). From the age of 40-49, support for grandparents' care of grandchildren increases to 33%. Towards the pre-retirement and retirement ages - the share of people involved in childcare increases sharply. Thus, at the age of 60-69 years, 69% provide help in raising children, and after the age of 70 years - 64%. In the subsequent age groups following 40-49 years old, there is a noticeable decrease in the percentage of respondents who offer childcare support to other relatives as well as non-relatives.

Figure 1.

Distribution of childcare support givers by degree of kinship and age groups, % (N=1822)



Over 40% of recipients of childcare support reported support most often from their mother, stepmother, mother-in-law or partner's stepmother (Table 3). About 30% of respondents receive help from other relatives such as parents or parents-in-law, nephew, sister, brother. Support from their own father, stepfather, father-in-law or partner's stepfather receive 15.9% of respondents. Also worth mentioning is the support received from other non-relatives - 10.8% and from the partner - 3.3%.

It is found that parents with pre-school and school-age children are most likely to benefit from childcare support. Thus, among the beneficiary parents, the largest share is for parents with pre-school children (4-6 years) - 50.2%, followed by parents with school-age children (7-14 years)

- 26.4% and those with children aged under three years - 23.3%.

In Moldova, families with minor children actively use formal care and education services: crèches, kindergartens, after-school groups. Despite the fact that parents with children aged up to 14 years receive permanent help from relatives, they also use educational services such as: kindergarten 75.8%, after-school groups 13% and very rarely use the services of a nanny 2.7%. (Table 3). According to the GGS survey report (GGS, 2020), 40.2% of parents with children aged 3-6 years received regular childcare support from a nursery/preschool, for children aged 0-6 years this indicator is 34.5%.

Table 3.

Descriptive statistics regarding informal childcare support

From whom did he receive help with childcare		Total (N)	Total for parents with children aged up to 14 years (%)
Got help (total)		454	100
Degree of relationship	My partner helped me	15	3,3
	My mother, stepmother, mother-in-law or partner's stepmother helped me	182	40,1
	My father, stepfather, father-in-law or partner's stepfather helped me	72	15,9
	My son/daughter, son/stepdaughter, daughter's partner/son-in-law, son's partner/daughter-in-law helped me	1	0,2
	Other relatives helped me (my grandparents or my partner's, nephew, sister, brother)	135	29,7
	I was helped by someone else who is not a relative (friends, acquaintances, neighbours, colleagues)	49	10,8
Age of children	0-3 years	106	23.3
	4-6 years	228	50.2
	7-14 years	120	26.4
Formal help: Childcare providers	Babysitter	223	2.7
	Day care centre		1.8
	Nursery or pre-school		75.8
	After-school care-centre		13.0
	Self-organised childcare group		1.3
	Other institutional arrangement		5.4

Moldovan society exhibits a profound sense of duty, underscored by traditional attitudes regarding the role of family and parental responsibilities. These cultural values emphasize the significant support that the older generation of grandparents can offer to their adult children (Table 4). A generally accepted beliefs among people aged 50 and over is that "grandparents have to

look after grandchildren if their parents can't" (70%) and "if their adult children have difficulties, parents have to adapt their own lives to help them" (64.5%). Smaller but significant proportions of people aged under 50 also hold the same traditionalist opinions (58% and 54% respectively).

Table 4.*Opinions on parents'/grandparents' duty to care for their children/grandchildren*

Age groups	Grandparents must take care of grandchildren if parents are unable to do so		If their adult children have difficulties, parents must adjust their own lives to help them	
	Disagree (strongly)	Agree (total)	Disagree (strongly)	Agree (total)
Aged up to 50 years	2,8	58	5,2	54
Aged 50 years and more	1,2	70	1,8	64,5

INFERENCE STATISTICS

The association between childcare help received from own parents in the last 12 months, and the eight control variables was studied separately with logistic regression. The results of the binomial logistic regression (Table 5) show that of the eight predictor variables, only four were statistically significant. Parental age, place of residence, education level, and relationship to parents predicted more childcare help (in the past 12 months) given to their own adult children compared to those giving childcare help but not to their adult children. The age of respondents with minor children influences the likelihood of receiving informal help from grandparents. Parents aged up to 49 are 90% likely to receive help from their parents. Place of living significantly influences the probability: moving from a rural to an urban area increases the odds by 2.298, and in Chisinau it is more than twice as likely to

receive help from parents than in a rural area. For the variable "level of education" the reference category is "low education". Those with secondary or higher education also receive help more often, the difference is significant but less pronounced (68% and 77% respectively). However, those with higher education are 3.3 more likely to get their parents' help. It can be explained that families with higher level of education receive help often which may be an attempt to balance work and family life commitments. The good relation with parents increases the probability of getting the help. The probability of receiving help for those who are very satisfied with their relationship with their parents is 1.191 more likely than for those who are not satisfied at all. However, neither the age of children nor sex, presence of partner and household size, predicted minor childcare help given by grandparents.

Table 5.*Childcare help received from own parents in the past 12 months.**Logistic regression (OR), base group: receive childcare help but not from own parents*

Independent variable	B	Sig. (p)	Exp(B)
Intercept	-2,725	0.01*	0.066*
Parent aged 49 or younger	2,235	0.002**	9.346**
Parent aged 50-59	1,523	0.009**	4.586**
Parent aged 60-69	0,997	0.08	2.71
Sex	-0,244	0.482	0.783
Urban area	0,832	0.032*	2.298*
Chisinau	0,933	0.021*	2.542*
Medium education	0,774	0.029*	2.168*
Higher education	1,194	0.003**	3.3**
Child aged 0-3	-0,277	0.489	0.758
Child aged 4-6	-0,17	0.708	0.844
Partner is not present due to work	0,232	0.719	1.261
Relationships with parents	0,175	0.022*	1.191*
Household size	0,21	0.109	1.234
Number of observations	351		
R-sq. Nagelkerke	0,157		
Reference values of variables included in the analysis: 1) Parent aged 70-79; 2) Male; 3) Rural area; 4) Low level of education; 5) Child aged 7-14 years; 6) Partner is present; 7) Relationships with parents - Not satisfied at all; 8) Household size – more than 3 members.			

*** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$

Source: developed by the authors based on GGS data, 2020

The association between childcare help given and the four control variables was also studied separately with binomial logistic regression. Parent age, sex, place of residence and household size predicted childcare help (in the past 12 months) to their own adult child(ren) when compared with those who give childcare help but not to their adult children (*Table 6*).

The results for the binary logistic regression show that, those aged 60 - 64 years are the most usual helpers. The help coming from the other groups varies, but overall people aged 50-69 are the most usual help-givers. We hence have an inverted-U-shaped relationship between the helper's age and help-giving. For respondents living

in urban areas or in Chisinau, the probability of receiving help is higher than for those from rural areas. A bigger household increases the probability that the person will help somebody, and each new member adds 54% to the probability. We would note, however, that women help more than men (1.725). Grandmothers care for their grandchildren more often than grandfathers, and the number of respondents' household members predicts the amount of childcare assistance.

Being a woman aged 60-64 years, having more than three members in the household, living in urban area and mun. Chisinau, were good predictors of giving major childcare help to the respondents' own offspring.

Table 6.

Childcare help given to their adult children in the past 12 months. Binomial logistic regression (OR), the base group: give childcare help but not to their own adult children

Independent variable	B	Sig. (p)	Exp(B)
Intercept	-2,643	0***	0.071***
Parent aged 40-44	1,615	0***	5.028***
Parent aged 45-49	2,269	0***	9.67***
Parent aged 50-54	3,439	0***	31.156***
Parent aged 55-59	3,69	0***	40.045***
Parent aged 60-64	4,195	0***	66.354***
Parent aged 65-69	3,881	0***	48.473***
Parent aged 70-74	3,912	0***	49.999***
Parent aged 75-79	4,379	0***	79.758***
The interviewee is a woman	0,545	0***	1.725***
Urban area	-0,382	0.022*	0.682*
Chisinau	-0,713	0***	0.49***
Household size	0,165	0.022*	1.179**
Number of observations	1406		
R-sq. Nagelkerke	0,32		
Reference values of variables included in the analysis: 1) Parent aged 39 and younger; 2) Male; 3) Rural area; 4) 5) Household size – more than 3 members.			

*** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$

Source: developed by the authors based on GGS data, 2020

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This article analyzes childcare assistance as intergenerational support from the perspectives of both recipients and providers. The findings suggest that parents serve as a crucial source of private childcare aid for their adult children. Childcare assistance represents a form of social interaction, indicating that intergenerational solidarity is currently robust in Moldova. Both older and younger generations, show a strong sense of intergenerational support confirming the duty to help if their adult children have difficulties. Traditional attitudes about the role of the family and

parental responsibilities highlight the support that the grandparents' generation can give to adult children.

The results show that women often than men receive childcare support from relatives. The same finding was obtained by other researchers (Svensson-Dianellou et al, 2010; Kyungmin et al, 2016). Furthermore, childcare support given from the maternal side of the family and to daughters is called “female linkage” (Hank, Buber, 2009). Studies have shown that in families where there is only one adult child the bond is even more pronounced

when the adult child becomes a parent, and support in caring for the grandchild(ren) from the grandmother is more likely (Hagestad, 2006).

Most frequently, respondents under the age of 49 receive assistance with childcare from their parents. Respondents with minor children in urban areas, especially those residing in the capital of Moldova - the municipality of Chisinau, more often receive support in childcare.

The probability of receiving help in childcare from their parents is higher for respondents with tertiary education. This is because university-educated women have demanding jobs or career responsibilities that require additional support with childcare. Therefore, they turn to their parents for assistance in managing childcare responsibilities to effectively balance their careers and family life.

In the realm of childcare givers, it's evident that women predominantly play the role of the primary caregivers. Specifically, grandmothers between the ages of 60 and 64 tend to provide childcare assistance more frequently to their own offspring compared to grandfathers.

Additionally, certain factors emerged as significant predictors for providing substantial childcare help to their descendants. Residing in urban areas, particularly within the municipality of Chisinau, along with having households consisting of more than three members, stood out as strong indicators of offering significant childcare assistance to the respondents' own offspring. These factors appear to contribute significantly to the likelihood of grandparents providing substantial support and aid in childcare duties to their adults' children.

Nowadays, childcare is a crucial topic, since it is one of the key mechanisms to reconcile work and family. Intergenerational transfers are critical in countries where state welfare is weak and institutional provision of services is low and Moldova is an example in this sense. And studies show that receiving childcare help from grandparents has a positive impact on mothers' labor force participation (Aassve, et. al., 2012), which is an important goal for Moldova in the coming years, especially considering the decreasing working-age population. This topic deserves further study for a deeper understanding of intergenerational connections and their influence on various aspects of family life, including decision-making about the birth of children.

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APPENDIX

Table 1.

Share of providers and recipients of informal childcare support by gender, age, residence

		Total (N)	Provided childcare support (%)	Total (N)	Have received childcare support (%)
TOTAL		1822	18,2	454	19,3
Sex	Men	566	14,8	121	17,2
	Women	1256	20,3	337	20,2

		Total (N)	Provided childcare support (%)	Total (N)	Have received childcare support (%)
TOTAL		1822	18,2	454	19,3
Age groups	Up to 19 years	88	21,5	5	38,5
	20-29 years	200	19,6	134	25,0
	30-39 years	240	15,2	260	21,8
	40-49 years	207	15,0	50	9,7
	50-59 years	397	22,5	9	10
	60-69 years	539	21,2	0	0,0
	70-79 years	151	11,5	0	0,0
Place of residence	Rural	942	15,0	201	14,8
	Urban	431	19,3	123	21,0
	M. Chisinau	449	30,3	134	31,7
Level of education*	Low	748	15,5	182	16,9
	Medium	752	20,3	135	18,0
	Higher	322	21,7	141	26,2

*Note: According to the National Bureau of Statistics, low educational attainment (education) implies at most secondary education; medium educational attainment (education) - at least middle/high school and at most college education; and high educational attainment (education) - at least tertiary education (1st cycle).

Table 2.

Structure of the sample of providers and recipients (beneficiaries) of informal childcare support by gender, age, residence, education level and occupational status

Profile of respondents in providing/receiving permanent assistance to childcare		Providers of childcare support		Beneficiaries of childcare support	
		Total respondents Providers of childcare support	(%)	Total respondents	(%)
Total		1822		454	
Sex	Men	566	31.1	120	26.4
	Women	1256	68.9	334	73.6
Age groups	Up to 19 years old	89	4.9	5	1.1
	20-29 years old	199	10.9	134	29.5
	30-39 years	239	13.1	256	56.4
	40-49 years	208	11.4	50	11.0
	50-59 years	397	21.8	9	2.0
	60-69 years	539	29.6	-	-
	70-79 years	151	8.3	-	-
Place of residence	Rural	942	51.7	200	44.1
	Urban	431	23.7	123	27.1
	Mun. Chisinau	449	24.6	131	28.9
Level of education	Low	750	41.1	127	28.0
	Medium	753	41.3	188	41.4
	Higher	322	17.6	139	30.6
Occupational status	Employed	549	30.1	200	44.1
	Unemployed	184	10.1	47	10.4
	On maternity or paternity leave/On parental leave or childcare leave	81	4.4	133	29.3
	Retired	632	34.7	2	0.4
	Others	375	20.6	72	15.9