

IRSTI 06.77.02; 06.77.97

UDC 331.526

JEL J13; J16; R23

<https://doi.org/10.46914/1562-2959-2026-1-3-165-181>

LIPOVKA A.V.,^{*1}

PhD, associate professor.

*e-mail: a.lipovka@almau.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0471-2040

NUGMANOVA M.S.,²

PhD, associate professor.

e-mail: maigul.nugmanova@narxoz.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1911-3166

MEURS M.E.,³

PhD, professor.

e-mail: mmeurs@american.edu

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1327-4206

¹Almaty Management University,

Almaty, Kazakhstan

²Narxoz University,

Almaty, Kazakhstan

³American University,

Washington, USA

NAVIGATING THE CARE ECONOMY GAP: A STUDY OF URBAN AND RURAL CHILDCARE IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

The care economy represents a significant area for the country's development, effective investment in which leads to raising gender equality and the population's wellbeing. The study aims to identify childcare features and challenges in Kazakhstani rural and urban areas by examining caregivers' employment, experiences, and needs. The mixed research method included a survey and focus groups conducted in Northern, Central, and Southern urban and rural areas. SPSS was used for econometric modeling, whereas Atlas.ti software was utilised for analysing the interview transcripts and identifying initial categories and codes. The elaborated Logistic regression model identified that caregivers living in urban areas, having children aged 2 to 3 years old, with more adult women in the household, demonstrate a higher probability of seeking employment if quality childcare is available compared to other categories. The results demonstrate a structural and psychological gap between the types of settlements. The research revealed the family's crucial role in childcare in both urban and rural settlements; however, in villages, it relates to a kin care approach, while in cities, to mostly mothers' sole care responsibilities, with fathers' limited involvement. The study uncovered systemic barriers: the shortage of public nurseries, the lack of extended-day groups in schools, and the high cost of quality services. The article substantiates the need to strengthen the care economy and develop policies aimed at recognizing care as a collective responsibility, and not just an invisible maternal burden.

Keywords: employment, labor, family, mother, gender equality, caregivers, intensive mothering.

Introduction

Enhancing the care economy is not just an option but a necessity for driving economic growth and fostering social well-being within the state. By developing a comprehensive care system, a state can create new jobs across diverse sectors, significantly reduce healthcare costs, empower women with greater access to employment, and elevate household welfare. These advancements lead to increased tax revenues, bolster pension savings, enhance the purchasing power of our citizens, and ultimately strengthen both businesses and the economy.

It is important to recognize that most child carers are women, who often face obstacles to full-time employment due to their caregiving responsibilities at home. Establishing a decent care system and promoting vast employment opportunities for women can catalyze job growth and enhance

family well-being. In Kazakhstan, the value of unpaid female caregiving labor is estimated at 1.8% of GDP – a statistic highlighting the critical role women play in the economy [1].

The Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which extends paid parental leave from 1 to 1.5 years, is a positive step forward [2]. Another progressive measure introduced in 2025 is determining eligibility for targeted social assistance for families based on median income rather than the subsistence minimum [3]. While Kazakhstan has made commendable strides in expanding institutional childcare services for children over two years old, vital areas such as unpaid and paid home care, as well as institutional services for children under two, remain underdeveloped.

While official data shows high preschool coverage for children aged 3 to 6 (99.7% in 2024), the coverage for the younger 1–6 cohort is notably lower, particularly in urban areas (81.7% compared to 93.3% in rural areas), leaving approximately 120,000 children without services [4]. Because these official indicators aggregate part-time development programs with full-time care, the actual availability of comprehensive daily childcare remains even more restricted.

The initially conducted analysis of the Time Use Survey (TUS) data of Kazakhstani households for 2024 [5] by the authors of this article has served as a driver for the present study. The TUS covered 17 oblasts and the cities of republican significance, with around 12,000 respondents. The analysis resulted in identifying that women at the age of 30–49 years had the most considerable unpaid work overload compared to other categories of citizens. Moreover, urban, married, having children and working women of the specified age spend the least time of the entire population of Kazakhstan on leisure, recreation, personal hygiene, and communication activities. On average, women engage in about 3 hours and 46 minutes of unpaid household labor each day, while men only contribute around 1.5 hours. Women primarily handle tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and caregiving, whereas men spend significantly less time on these responsibilities [5].

The review of international and local studies on the specifics of childcare in rural and urban settlements was conducted to evaluate the existing scientific knowledge on the examined topic. Families living in cities rely more on formal childcare and demonstrate more desire to pay for institutional care, while households in villages remain tied to family care and saving costs [6]. Zhao found that the division of childcare labor also varied between settlements, since rural and urban families applied different forms of gendered care responsibility. As a rule, in villages, care responsibilities are on women, while in cities they are more distributed between spouses [7]. Rural mothers face numerous barriers and the scarcity of institutional care opportunities. Even with decent financial resources, families in rural areas have weaker service supply and scarce choices. The childcare deficit in rural communities is often engendered by considerable workforce retention and budget shortages [8]. Villagers tend to appeal for public allowances to render childcare services themselves, while having less inclination to apply for public childcare services due to their quality concerns [9].

Where formal childcare is thin or mistrusted, kin care becomes a practical solution. Abrassart and Bonoli defined that cultural traditions played a vital role in rural households; even if they had enough funds, they still could rely on their communities and distrusted paid babysitters as aliens [10]. Similar findings were obtained by Park and Choi, who found that rural mothers with low income made choices in favor of relatives as carers because they considered them trustworthy, reliable, and competent [11]. Rendering care services by grandparents was found to be widespread in rural low-income households, motivated by the kin system and family tradition [12].

Childcare in megacities is often associated with the intensive mothering phenomenon, which signifies women's ultimate dedication to their child's life, which may cause mothers' anxiety, burnout, depression, family-work conflicts and other destructive consequences [13]. Mothers may feel anxious about the safety and health of their little children due to distrust of unknown caregivers, nannies, and teachers in kindergartens. Egami defined that in cities, mothers feel guilty of breaching the ideal of a good mother and experience anxiety while appealing to paid caregivers [13]. A recent study in Kazakhstan defined the pressure of an ideal mother image on urban women who seek commercial nannies and worry about their professional competence and human qualities to provide a sufficient level of care for their children [14].

The Kazakhstani research on childcare is mostly concentrated on reform analysis, children's enrollment, and the quality of preschool education and care [15–17]. Despite the Kazakhstani government's investment in the expansion of early childhood care and education between 2006 to

2015, it did not automatically result in solving the early care constraints [15]. Enrolment and access to preschool care are often shaped by household and community aspects, whereas national policy targets may ignore them [16]. The qualitative research about parenthood revealed that women's childcare burden prevents their employment and careers [18], while men have to hold back information about their childcare to meet the social expectations about patriarchal gender labor division in families [19]. The critical reliance of the care system on family directly impacts the employment outcomes for Kazakhstani women and their psychological well-being [20, 21].

The present study is aimed at identifying childcare features and challenges in Kazakhstani rural and urban settlements by examining caregivers' employment, experiences, and needs.

Materials and methods

This study is grounded in a mixed-methods approach, embracing the survey and focus groups. The survey was based on an adapted version of the internationally validated Life in Transition Survey (LiTS) III questionnaire, developed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank. It was distributed to households with at least one child under the age of three across urban and rural areas of Northern, Central, and Southern Kazakhstan to ensure sample reliability. Around 650 invitations were sent to the target group, 500 completed questionnaires were returned, and 400 of them were used since 100 were excluded from further econometric modeling due to missing values in them. The snowball stratified sampling technique was used: the contacts of the first respondents in each area were obtained from the akimat, and further, the participants advised whom to contact based on the criteria of the urban/ rural settlement and caring for at least one child under the age of 3. This technique was employed because a comprehensive administrative registry of informal caregivers does not exist in Kazakhstan. While this non-probability method was necessary to access this hard-to-reach population, it introduces potential selection bias.

The questionnaires were sent in two languages – Kazakh and Russian for the convenience and preferences of the participants. Google Forms was used to distribute and collect questionnaires, and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 24, was further used to elaborate the basic econometric model.

Only 2% of the sample were men, which exhibits a significant gender imbalance. Such distribution and its implications are discussed as a limitation in the Results and Discussion section. 80.9% of participants were married, 10.6% were divorced, 4.7% were single, and 3.8% were widowed. As for the settlement type, 57.4% of the participants resided in urban areas, and 42.6% lived in villages, of whom 19.2% resided in nearby cities and 23.4% lived remotely from the city. Three types of families constituted the sample: mono-family with one parent (9.6%), nuclear with two parents and child/ren (44.4%), and an extended type with children, parents, and grandparents (46%).

The Logistic regression model was applied to analyze the factors associated with caregivers' readiness to seek employment if quality childcare services are available. The Logit model represents an equation containing the values of the regression coefficients:

$$P = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-Y}}, \quad (1)$$

Where:

P - the probability that a caregiver will seek employment if quality childcare services are available.

e - the base of the natural logarithm (Euler's number).

Y - the value obtained from the regression equation.

The dependent variable is a binary indicator, where Y = 1 represents the caregiver's readiness to go to work if quality childcare is available, and Y = 0 represents the lack of such readiness. Five primary independent variables were used for the regression model. First, distance from the city is a nominal variable transformed into dummy variables – living close to the city (1/0) and living far from the city (1/0) – with residing in the city serving as the reference category (assigned a value of zero and excluded from the model). Second, the presence of children under 1 year old and those aged 2 to 3 years are captured through binary variables (1 = Yes, 0 = No). Third, the number of adult women in the family over 18 is treated as a discrete numeric variable. Finally, net family monthly income is

treated as a continuous variable scaled in hundreds of thousands of Kazakhstani Tenge (KZT) (e.g., a monthly income of 80,000 KZT is coded as 0.8).

Four focus groups were conducted – two in Almaty and the Almaty region and two in Karaganda and Karaganda oblast. Informants were engaged via purposive snowball sampling: first contacts recommended by the akimat in each settlement were approached to obtain the contact information of the initial informants to recommend further caregivers. This technique was selected because no comprehensive sampling frame of informal caregivers exists in Kazakhstan: caregiving is an informal, largely invisible activity that is not recorded in administrative databases or population registers [22].

Inclusion criteria were women, employed, at the age of 30–45, mothers of 1–3 children, with at least one child of preschool age. We deliberately excluded mothers with 4 or more children who represent a minority group with some allowances and public support. The difference in inclusion criteria between the survey sample and the focus groups was an intentional design choice. The survey was restricted to the under-three cohort to model the immediate labor market re-entry decisions during the most acute childcare deficit in RK, where formal nurseries for infants are extremely scarce. In contrast, the focus groups adopted a broader scope (children up to age six) to capture the long-term, lived complexities of managing work-life balance. These broader qualitative criteria allowed us to investigate systemic barriers that emerge as children grow, such as the transition to kindergarten, rigid facility operating hours, and the reliance on older siblings for shared household care.

The focus groups were conducted in September-October of 2025 in Kazakh and Russian, depending on the groups' preferences, and lasted 1 and a half hours. The academic ethics of the research were secured by consideration and further approval of the focus group discussion guide and its supplementary materials by the Research Ethics Committee of Narkhoz University, no.13 dated August 26, 2025. All participants were updated in advance about the FGDs' goals, terms, and procedures, and signed the informed consent forms, providing all necessary information, including further depersonalized data use and the opportunity to stop their participation and withdraw data at any stage of this research.

The focus groups included 4 people each, which is classified as a mini group, that was caused by the sensitivity of the care topic (table 1).

Table 1 – Social and demographic characteristics of focus groups' participants

№	City/ settlement	Participant's age	No of children	Age of children	Employment status
1	Almaty city	42	2	6 and 16 years old	Full-time
2	Almaty city	30	2	3 and 5 years old	Full-time
3	Almaty city	33	1	5 years old	Full-time
4	Almaty city	33	1	2 years old	Maternity leave, part-time
5	Almaty rural settlement	30	2	6 months and 6 years old	Part-time
6	Almaty rural settlement	36	2	6 and 10 years old	Part-time
7	Almaty rural settlement	37	3	4, 10 and 13 years old	Full-time
8	Almaty rural settlement	37	1	6 years old	Full-time
9	Karaganda city	30	1	4 years old	Full-time
10	Karaganda city	30	1	4 years old	Full-time
11	Karaganda city	37	2	5 and 15 years old	Part-time
12	Karaganda city	32	2	4 and 6 years old	Part-time
13	Karaganda rural district	40	2	5 and 10 years old	Full-time
14	Karaganda rural district	30	1	5 years old	Full-time
15	Karaganda rural district	42	3	5, 9 and 12 years old	Part-time
16	Karaganda rural district	44	3	4, 10 and 17 years old	Full-time
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.					

In care studies, participants share the details of their personal lives and experiences, including the sensation of motherhood, parenting challenges, family budget issues, and peculiarities of their

relationships with relatives, including their husband, parents, and mother-in-law. Occasionally, their conversations triggered past or current emotions of anxiety, isolation, depression, and burnout stemming from high home workload, feelings of loneliness, or challenges of balancing between life and work.

Following Table 1, 16 participants took part in focus group discussions – 8 in Almaty and its oblast and 8 in Karaganda and its oblast, with 8 participants from villages and 8 from cities. The participants were between the ages of 30 and 44 years, with 1 to 3 children. The informants were engaged in paid labour activities with full- and part-time employment. The youngest child was 6 months old, whereas the oldest was 17; the age difference between the children of the same mother was considerable.

The conversations were tape-recorded with the participants agreeing to it. Initially, the original transcripts were generated by converting voice to text in Microsoft Word, after which clean verbatim transcriptions were produced by eliminating filler words, interjections, stuttering, false starts, and non-verbal distractions. These intelligent verbatim transcripts were first analyzed with the Atlas.ti 25 software, with further manual exclusion of excessive, duplicate, and superficial codes.

Results and discussion

First, the survey results regarding carers' employment were analyzed. Around 59.5% of the participants were employed, among whom over 34% were self-employed. Women chose self-employment to have flexible working hours and work from home to care for their children. In rural areas, many women worked in their households and family small businesses – processing food, raising cattle, and growing agricultural products. 66.9% of the unemployed participants noted that their status is caused by their care responsibilities (figure 1), and it was mentioned as the main reason for not searching for a job. Villagers also emphasized the scarcity of job supply in their settlements.

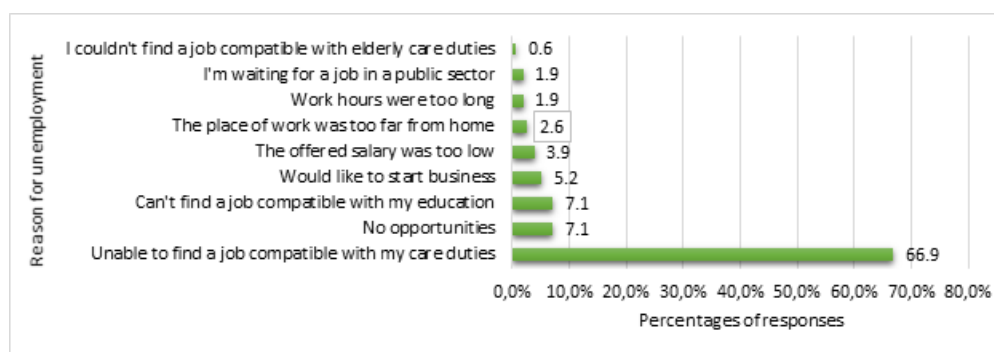


Figure 1 – The main reason for carers' unemployment

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.

Following figure 1, the other main reasons for unemployment were limited opportunities (7.1%), not being able to find a job compatible with my education (7.1%), wanting to start a business (5.2%), and the offered wage being rather insufficient (3.9%). The first two reasons in the sentence above were mostly stated by rural dwellers.

The respondents reported that most childcare was provided by them and their families (76%), only 18% used institutional care services (private or public, including kindergartens), and paid care rendered at home (nannies, etc.) was accessed by 6%. Meanwhile, villagers more often relied on grandparents' care compared to urban residents. The respondents expressed different reasons for not using the kindergarten's services (figure 2).

Following figure 2, the reasons connected with the personal desire to care oneself (18.4%) and the child's young age (11.2%) were more often marked by the carers with child(-ren) under 2 years old. Village residents constituted the overwhelming majority of those who answered that grandparents care for my child (15.2%), and it's a decision of my spouse or relatives (8.8%), while urban citizens most regularly expressed anxiety about the quality of services (17.6%), educators' unfriendly treatment (14.4%), and dissatisfaction with the educators' professional qualification (5.6%).

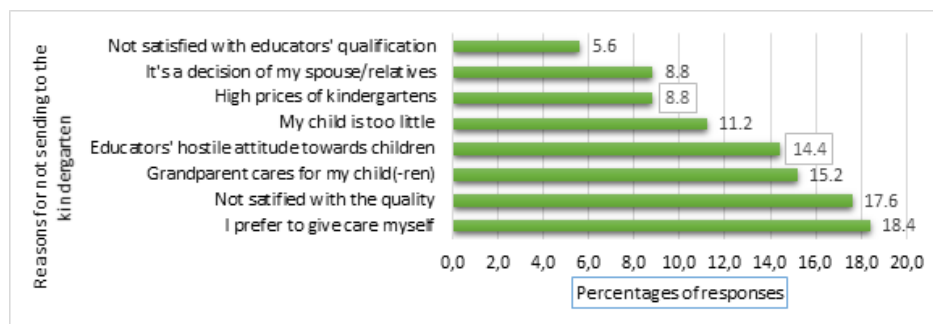


Figure 2 – Carers' primary reason for not sending a child to kindergarten

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.

In case of the child's illness, most of the carers (39.7%) asked for help from their spouses, 56.4% asked for help from parents and relatives, and 2.4% of respondents had no one to turn to. In the need for direct childcare assistance, women most often (41.9%) turned to their husbands, and 50.5% approached their parents and relatives. Around 5% of women replied that they had no one to ask for help.

The average calculated time spent by a respondent on childcare constituted 45.1 hours per week, whereas other family members' (spouse, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, etc.) total time spent per week equaled 34.7 hours on average. The analysis showed that most of the time, women devoted to childcare and other unpaid chores like cooking, washing dishes, cleaning the house, ironing clothes, etc., whereas men spent most of their time on paid work. This care burden exceeds the national Time Use Survey baseline because national statistics aggregate all women regardless of parental status, whereas our study isolates active caregivers of children.

60% of respondents replied that they would go to work if quality childcare services were available for their child(ren). The distribution of the responses among the children's age groups is given in figure 3.

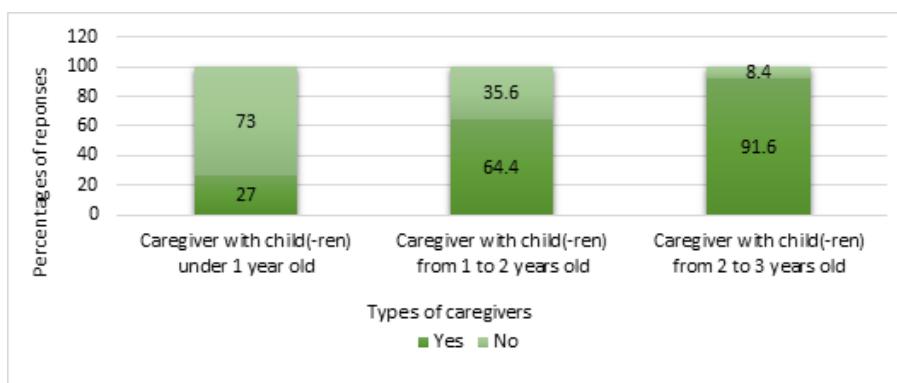


Figure 3 – Carers' readiness to go to work under the availability of quality childcare

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.

Following figure 3, the most positive responses were given by carers with children from 2 to 3 years old (91.6%), fewer by those caring for children aged 1 to 2, and the least by participants with children under 1 year old (27%). However, the overall willingness to enter employment is high, which underscores the crucial role of quality childcare availability in supporting caregivers' labor market participation.

The Logistic regression model was developed based on the survey results analysis to define the probability of the carer's inclination to go to work if the quality of public care services were available (table 2).

Table 2 – Regression coefficients of the variables

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	.f.	Sig.	Exp (B)
City			38.259	2	0.000	
Close to the city	-0.402	0.322	1.555	1	0.212	0.669
Far from the city	-2.292	0.374	37.605	1	0.000	0.101
Family monthly income	0.147	0.060	5.960	1	0.015	1.158
Presence of children under 1 year old	-1.677	0.289	33.752	1	0.000	0.187
Presence of children aged 2 to 3 years	2.291	0.406	31.855	1	0.000	9.883
No of women in the family over 18	1.580	0.333	22.548	1	0.000	4.853
Constant	-1.441	0.486	8.801	1	0.003	0.237
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.						

Following table 2, the present model focuses on variables that serve as significant predictors of the carer's desire to seek employment. A variable is deemed statistically significant if its significance level is below 0.05. This low significance threshold indicates that the likelihood of this value occurring by chance is minimal, ideally below 5%, as demonstrated in this model. Notably, the analysis has revealed that factors such as having a child under one year old, residing far from the city, and having children aged 2 to 3 years are most strongly associated with caregivers' readiness to seek employment, as indicated by the value of Wald's statistics. The analysis has identified negative regression coefficients for families living far from the city ($B=-2.292$; $p=0.000$), indicating that those outside the city are less likely to seek jobs. For families living near the city, the coefficient is also negative, but not statistically significant ($B=-0.402$; $p=0.212$). Additionally, the negative coefficient for families with infants under one year ($B = -1.677$; $p=0.000$) suggests that the high dependency of these young children makes it harder for parents to pursue employment, emphasizing the need for targeted support for such families.

The regression coefficient for children aged 2 to 3 years showed a positive relationship ($B = 2.291$; $p=0.000$), indicating that caregivers with toddlers aged 2 to 3 are significantly more likely to express readiness to seek employment. While our survey did not explicitly measure the direct financial impact of policy transitions, we hypothesize that this positive association may relate to the child's growing independence or the termination of state childcare allowances after the child reaches 1.5 years of age, which potentially heightens the household's financial pressure to secure employment. Higher net monthly family income is also positively associated with the likelihood of readiness to seek work ($B=0.147$; $p=0.015$). Although the proposed empirical model does not test the mediating role of childcare affordability, a plausible explanation is that households with higher incomes have greater financial capacity to purchase private childcare services, which in turn facilitates the carer's entry into the labor market. Additionally, having more adult women in the household aged 18 and older is a significant predictor of a higher likelihood of seeking employment ($B=1.580$; $p=0.000$). With multiple women available to share childcare responsibilities, families can better support those who wish to work, leading to greater workforce participation. This model can be used as an exploratory predictive framework. By inputting the values of the independent variables into the regression equation, one can gain preliminary predictive insights. To assess the likelihood of someone wanting a job, simply substitute the values of the five key variables into the model.

$$Y = -1.441 + 0*City - 0.402*Close\ to\ city - 2.292*Far\ from\ city - 1.677*Having\ children\ under\ 1 + 2.291*Having\ children\ from\ 2\ to\ 3 + 0.147*Mon.\ fam.\ income + 1.58*No\ of\ women\ over\ 18$$

For example, if one substitutes the values of the variables for a caregiver who lives far from the city, has a child from 2 to 3 years old, has a family monthly income of 80,000 KZT, and has two adult women in the household, as shown in the following formula, a value equal to 1.8356 is obtained.

$$Y = -1.441 + 0*0 - 0.402*0 - 2.292*1 - 1.677*0 + 2.291*1 + 0.147*0.8 + 1.58*2$$

This value should be used in the logistic function provided above. Therefore, the probability of carers seeking a job if quality childcare becomes available is 86.2%. One can evaluate the model's quality and predictive ability using indicators like R-squared and prediction accuracy (table 3).

Table 3 – R-squared model

#	Model's characteristics	Indicator
1	-2 Log - likelihood	356.133
2	R-square of Cox and Snell	0.381
3	R-square of Nagelkerke	0.510
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.		

Based on table 3, the quality of a constructed model can be evaluated through important measures of certainty, such as the Cox-Snell R-squared and the Nagelkerke R-squared. These metrics indicate how well the model explains variation in the dependent variable, with Nagelkerke's R-squared showing it accounts for 51% of the variance. To further assess the model's robustness, the Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test was conducted, showing a non-significant result ($= 6.42, p = 0.599$), which indicates that the model fits the data well. Additionally, multicollinearity was assessed using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, which were all below 2.5, confirming the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. The classification table highlights the model's effectiveness by displaying the number and percentage of correctly predicted values (table 4).

Table 4 – Model classification

No of observed		No of predicted		
		Would you like to go to work if quality childcare services were available?		Percentage correct
		No	Yes	
Would you like to go to work if quality childcare services were available?	No	120	54	69.0
	Yes	50	176	77.9
Total percentage				74
Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.				

Following table 4, the model demonstrates a strong performance with a 74% accuracy rate in its predictions. The survey revealed that the desire to find a job, dependent on better access to quality childcare services, is associated with the key carers' characteristics. Notably, one can predict job-seeking likelihood based on factors such as the child's age and the distance from the city. This underscores the need for tailored childcare solutions that accommodate these demographics.

To define critical ideas expressed by the informants, an analysis of concepts that emerged during the focus groups was conducted. The designed concept tree map helped to visualize the results of the transcripts' preliminary analysis processed in Atlas.ti 25 software (figure 4).

The tree map exhibited the most frequently mentioned concepts and objects that defined the everyday experiences of the participating working mothers in the studied regions. The size of each block corresponds to the number of mentions (frequency) of the given word in the conversations of the participants, which allows us to quickly determine the focus of the participants' attention. In accordance with figure 4, the most significant concepts according to the analysis conducted were defined:

- ♦ Children: child, baby, kid, daughter, and son.
- ♦ Needs in institutional help: kindergarten, school, club, development center, state, help, service, and quality.
- ♦ Balancing work and family: care, time, work, hour, day, weekend, maternity leave, job, organisation, salary, and schedule.
- ♦ Family support. Considerable attention is paid to the roles of mom, grandmother, husband, and babysitter/nanny.

- ♦ Parent, mother, woman, city, and law relate to the concept of intensive mothering.
- ♦ Neighbours and friends reflected on the urban women's coping strategies for childcare through appealing to alternative caregivers for short-term, fragmentary, but urgent support.

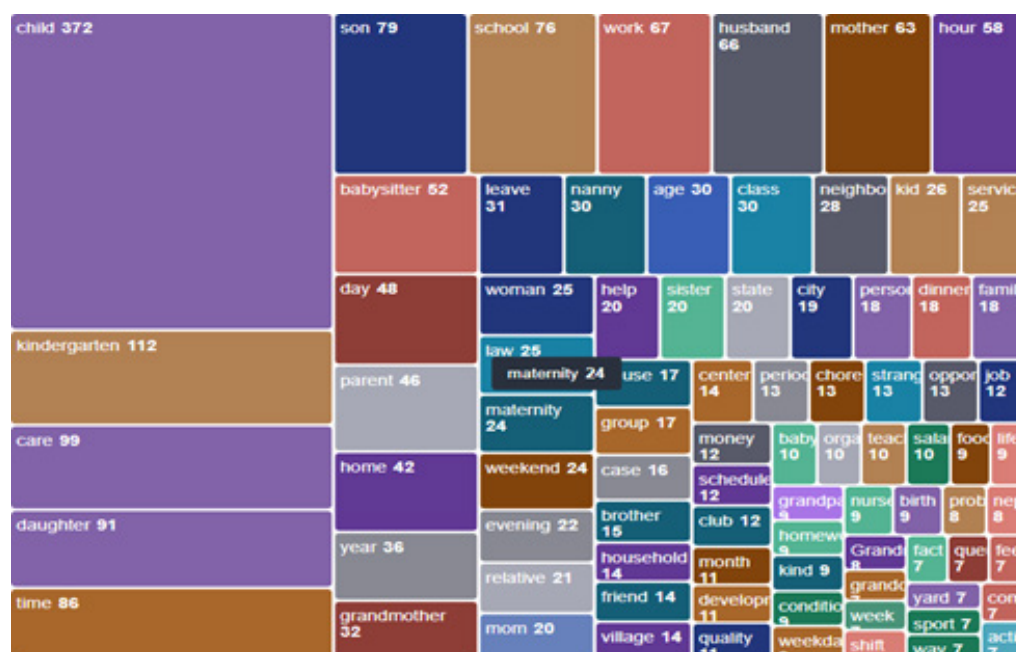


Figure 4 – Concept tree map based on the transcripts

Note: Compiled by the authors based on Atlas.ti and the conducted research.

The tree map served as an initial indication of basic direction for further qualitative investigation of the transcripts. Afterward, the thematic analysis was implemented to define the main categories and thematic codes. The analysis resulted in defining commonalities and differences in dealing with care responsibilities and needs between urban and rural dwellers with children (table 5).

Table 5 – Thematic categories and codes

#	Categories	Codes
1	Family members engagement	✓ Active care ✓ Passive care
2	Rural caregiving	✓ Optionless care ✓ Dependence on grandparents ✓ Shifting care responsibilities
3	Urban mothering	✓ Intensive mothering ✓ Anxiety, stress, and isolation ✓ Work-life balance ✓ Neighbors' support
4	Systemic barriers and support needs	✓ Need for alternative forms of care ✓ Limited public support ✓ Service quality and accessibility

Note: Compiled by the authors based on the conducted research.

Following table 5, the four categories were defined: family members' engagement, rural caregiving, urban mothering, and systemic barriers and support needs. All categories with the codes constituting them were explained sequentially in the text below.

Category 1. Family members engagement

The focus-group discussions showed that care was mostly rendered by families. However, there is regional specificity. In cities, women often strive to find flexible, remote, or part-time jobs to combine their care responsibilities and paid work. They are seriously concerned with alternative care options,

such as extended daycare in kindergartens and primary schools. The services of extended day care are limited and are provided only by a few kindergartens for extra money, but usually no later than 7 p.m. In urban settlements, women perform care with some involvement of fathers. In cases of unexpected urgency to leave their children, urban mothers ask their spouses to babysit, whereas rural mothers appeal to grandparents: “After kindergarten, my mother-in-law provides care to my children. She feeds them. The children mostly play in the yard on their own. Any help from my parents-in-law is free” (Participant 13).

In both urban and rural contexts, older children support their families with care. Usually, they can pick up their little brothers and sisters from kindergarten or primary school, feed and entertain them. However, in rural settlements, older children provide more active care compared to their urban peers. This might be engendered by safer environments, the convenience of daycare centers and schools, and their less involvement in extracurricular activities. The older children’s care is usually short, from several minutes to 2 hours: “My older daughter usually picks her little sister up from kindergarten; it’s good that the kindergarten is nearby. She takes her to art class twice a week. She used to take her to dance classes, but now the dance class is far from home” (Participant 11).

The informants spend from 2.5 to 7 hours on passive care of children per day, varying between weekends when they dedicate a whole day to their children and family, and weekdays when they perform work functions. Elder siblings also provide passive childcare within their households. Usually, they look after their little brothers and sisters and watch cartoons with them: “Passive care takes about 2-2.5 hours of my daily time. My husband and I come in the evening, I cook dinner, and my son reads a book or retells a text, learns a poem, and I listen to him and correct mistakes. It’s the same with my daughter; she can do math while I am bringing order to the wardrobe” (Participant 7).

Category 2. Rural caregiving

Optionless care. There is a notable shortage of formal care services in rural settlements, with participants indicating that they have never used paid services for childcare. The residence certainly defines access to care services. Particularly, women from villages lack any choice of care provider. The private kindergartens available in cities and towns are often absent in rural areas; the only option is to send one’s child to a public kindergarten. Many families do not send their children to kindergarten or hobby classes but replace this service with grandmother’s care, following a long-term tradition of intergenerational help: “There are no private daycare centres for children. There is only one at the school, but it’s very far from our home. Salaries in the village are low, and there is no way to hire a nanny or pay for extracurricular activities for children” (Participant 15).

Dependence on grandparents. Rural participants rely heavily on grandparents for childcare, often describing their involvement as crucial for managing daily responsibilities. Being out of reach of any paid care options, both because of the extremely limited availability of any paid care and low income, they are totally dependent on their mothers or mothers-in-law. The participants do not see their lives without their older family members’ involvement and are extremely grateful to those who sustain their opportunities for paid work: “My parents or my husband’s parents provide care when I am out of the home. I rely entirely on their help. Without their assistance, I must work only part-time, remotely, or not work at all” (Participant 5).

Shifting care responsibilities. Significant reliance on grandmothers’ care services engenders shifting care responsibilities from mother to an older adult. In rural settlements, women often spend weekends at their mothers’ houses, continuing to use their services even in their free time. Additionally, grandparents often simultaneously look after their sons’ and daughters’ children and provide care services for years, with temporary or constant residence of their children with families in their houses. Although we did not empirically measure the psychological stress levels of the participants, we suggest that shifting care responsibilities to older family members may trigger some physical and mental overload for rural grandmothers: “Because my mom couldn’t come to our village as she looked after my little nephews, who were sent by my brother to her home for a long-term stay, I was temporarily residing with my parents during the most difficult time. Since I couldn’t find a proper babysitter or kindergarten, three families – my parents, my brothers’ children, and we with my husband and kids were living together in the parents’ cottage” (Participant 7).

Category 3. Urban mothering

Intensive mothering. The intensive mothering was reflected in the high expectations that participants had for themselves regarding childcare and household management. They talked of their

husbands and felt sorry that they were too overloaded to be with their little ones, as they should economically provide for their families. The urban informants often reflected on their mother's image, questioning themselves whether they were good mums, and how to earn money and bring up their children as comprehensively developed personalities. Urban women appeared to be focused on their children's comprehensive development, searching for better care and education services: "My daughter goes dancing three times a week. She also attends art classes on Sundays. Recently, we also decided to take English classes. I was a little hasty with her early development, but I think additional subjects are significant" (Participant 1).

Anxiety, stress, and isolation. Urban participants expressed feelings of stress related to balancing work and childcare, often feeling overwhelmed by the demands placed on them. City dwellers reported feelings of isolation, particularly when they lacked support from family or community. Generally, women from megacities sought and juggled different options to survive under pressuring environmental conditions, including employers, kindergarten teachers, long distances, logistical challenges, and traffic jams: "When seeking outside caregiving, I started looking for people [nannies], reviews of them, and whether the candidate was verified. As for a babysitter, it means I bring her to my home and trust her with my little kid, who basically can't complain to me if something goes wrong. Therefore, the state of anxiety is very disturbing" (Participant 4).

Work-life balance. Urban mothers challenge themselves to find effective solutions to meet both their family's expectations and fulfill their employers' tasks posed before them, and complete work duties on time. Their time becomes compressed, and the deadline pressure makes them continuously run. So, megapolis mothers feel like running a series of sprints within the endless marathon with little chance to relax: "A woman, even working full-time, still spends as much time on household chores as she did while on maternity leave. It turns out that a woman sacrifices her sleep because there are no other options to save time. Accordingly, she feels unwell and needs to restore her physical condition, but there is no time as she has children" (Participant 2).

Neighbors' support. The urban participants mentioned relying on neighbors for occasional childcare. Being isolated from their parents, living in a city, and facing heavy traffic jams to take their children to their friends' homes, they establish good relationships with their neighbours to ask them for temporary, usually 1-3-hour care for their kids. This service is rendered free of charge, based on the sense of friendship, and often on mutually beneficial cooperation, since neighbours also ask to babysit their child next time. Neighbours have become an important source of urgent and short-term childcare, particularly in times of force majeure: "We also have a neighbour, an old woman who lives on the floor above. She always said when my son was little that I could leave him with her, and she would look after him" (Participant 1).

Category 4. Systemic barriers and support needs

Need for alternative forms of care. Mothers' communities in cities are underdeveloped. People usually live far from their parents because of the massive migration of regional citizens to large cities, such as Almaty and Karaganda. Older adults often stay in rural settlements since their other children remain in the same area, and they do not have enough financial opportunities to relocate, since they care for their farms or livestock. While leaving their hometowns, young people acquire higher salaries, career opportunities, and access to better health and public care, simultaneously losing their parents' support in coping with household chores and caring for children: "The main problem is that, to be honest, the moment of how a mother should be on maternity leave has not been thought out at all. To provide for a family in the realities of today's world, you need a lot of money. It is necessary to go to work early after giving birth. There is a huge problem with public kindergartens getting to" (Participant 6).

Limited public support. Participants mentioned the absence of public daycare centers and the challenges of accessing existing services, which are often far away and require substantial fees. The institutional care system does not provide plenty of opportunities for childcare, particularly in villages. Rural mothers mostly have access to public kindergartens, sometimes with zero or few private daycare centers. Those who have more money try to send their kids to a nearby city to a private and higher-quality daycare, while those who experience financial shortages send their children to a nearby settlement with lower prices. However, the isolated villages are left without any alternative care and mostly rely on their mothers or mothers-in-law: "In reality, there is no free day extension in schools;

there is a paid one. When my daughter wanted to go there, she was not accepted, so I had to prepare my child for a primary school myself and take a maternity leave with my second child simultaneously” (Participant 7).

Service quality and accessibility. The quality of available services is a concern, with participants noting that kindergartens are often underfunded and lack proper facilities. The quality of rendered services is criticized by urban dwellers, who prefer private kindergartens over public ones due to smaller group sizes and more diverse opportunities for kids’ development (various hobby classes). The accessibility of public daycare requires improvement since public nurseries are in deficit and mostly available via state-private partnerships, where the government reimburses 50% of private nurseries’ expenses, and 50% is paid by parents. Since mothers often have to rejoin the workforce when they have children under 2 years old to sustain the family income, they often apply to private care: “To take care of your child, you need to invest a huge amount of money and pay for private development centers, because within the framework of state-funded education and care, a child might not receive comprehensive development, quality care and education” (Participant 5).

The results contradict the macro statistics that rural areas have higher coverage with preschool care and education compared to urban settlements. The explanation of this discrepancy might lie in the fact that the official high coverage of rural children does not automatically signal their geographical benefit, since the number of preschool facilities in a state of disrepair is 12 times higher in villages compared to cities. Additionally, the issue of quality service is also more acute for villages, where one kindergarten often represents a monopoly with no choice for other institutional care options.

The findings of this study align with international literature regarding the geographic divide in childcare strategies. Like trends observed in China, where rural families often face a childcare deficit and a lack of institutional supply, Kazakhstani rural mothers operate in an environment of optionless care. While urban mothers in Kazakhstan increasingly value formal, private services for their quality and developmental benefits, mirroring the preferences of urban dwellers in China, and rural mothers remain heavily reliant on intergenerational kin care due to a complete absence of private providers and developmental centers in their settlements [7].

The qualitative findings further highlight a distinct psychological divergence among the interviewed mothers: urban participants frequently struggle with intensive mothering characterized by high self-expectations, isolation from extended family [13], and chronic anxiety regarding work-life balance and the safety of paid nannies [14]. Conversely, the rural participant model is defined by shifted care, where responsibilities are distributed among grandparents and older siblings, a practice rooted in long-term family traditions, which follows the findings in another emerging economy [6, 7].

While urban mothers seek support from neighbours and involve their spouses in care, which is in line with the earlier study [10], to sustain their employment, rural mothers benefit from continuous and multifaceted care services of relatives, though this comes at the cost of total dependence on grandmothers. These findings expand upon previous Kazakhstani research, providing a deeper look at the lived experiences of working mothers [14, 18, 19]. The findings bring new insights into the results of the nationwide survey [5] on why working urban mothers with children at the age of 30-45 have longer hours of childcare and less time for relaxation and personal routine. Their intensive mothering is enhanced by the large city constraints and the lack of relatives’ support, while rural mothers practice shifting their care burden to grandparents.

The analysis confirmed that having toddlers aged 2 to 3 and additional adult women in the household are the strongest positive predictors of entering the labor market, whereas remote rural residency and caring for an infant remain the primary structural barriers. By applying these coefficients, the model illustrates that providing quality childcare could result in a job-seeking probability as high as 86.2% even for caregivers in remote areas, provided they have toddlers and support from other female family members. These results emphasize the necessity of targeted, accessible institutional care to bridge the employment gap for caregivers across Kazakhstan.

Limitations

The applied non-probability snowball sampling technique may engender selection bias, as participant referrals often occur within similar socio-economic networks, which limits the results’ generalizability. Also, although gender imbalance represents an empirical reflection of the structural care gap in Kazakhstan, as continuously depicted in the Time Use Survey [5], the near absence of

male voices limits a comprehensive analysis of the care economy. To address this structural gap, future research should focus specifically on the experiences of male caregivers or implement targeted recruitment strategies to ensure their representation. In terms of econometric modeling, a limitation of this study is the lack of model validation on an independent holdout sample due to the sample size constraints. While the classification accuracy of 74% indicates good performance within the sample, future research should incorporate split-sample validation to confirm its external predictive performance. Another limitation relates to the qualitative phase, which was restricted to 16 focus-group participants. While these discussions provided deep contextual insights into the lived experiences of caregivers, the qualitative findings are exploratory and should not be generalized to the entire population of Kazakhstan.

Additionally, due to the cross-sectional research design of the survey, the regression results demonstrate statistically significant associations and predictive relationships rather than direct causal effects. The identified correlations should be interpreted cautiously, as longitudinal data would be required to establish robust causal claims. Since the present study relies on self-reported techniques, it can be subject to recall bias, imprecise estimation, and potential social desirability bias, which may affect the obtained results. Although the quantitative survey spanned Northern, Central, and Southern Kazakhstan, the qualitative focus-group discussions were restricted to Almaty and Karaganda, including their surrounding areas. While Almaty and Karaganda represent the Southern and Central regions, the qualitative phase lacks representation from the Northern part. Overall, the study does not capture the Western and Eastern regions, which is recommended to examine in future research endeavors.

Conclusion

This research aimed at defining distinctive features of childcare in Kazakhstani villages and cities by examining caregivers' employment, experiences, and needs. The article serves as an initial basis for further research on the experiences, desires, and needs analysis of women in RK based on their type of settlement. The analysis highlights significant barriers faced by mothers in both rural and urban settings, particularly regarding the availability and quality of childcare services. The study has revealed a noticeable contrast between rural and urban childcare experiences within the studied regions.

The obtained findings underscore the critical need to strengthen Kazakhstan's care economy as a driver for both economic growth and social well-being. Despite the positive steps in public care significant gaps remain in the quality and accessibility of institutional services in the form of nurseries, primary school day extension, and the provision of public and commercial care in rural settlements. The proposed logistic regression model offers an informative predictive framework with a 74% classification accuracy rate, providing policymakers with valuable predictive insights into women's likelihood of seeking employment based on key demographic and geographic factors. To attain gender equality and improve household welfare, policy interventions must prioritize the development of a multifaceted childcare approach for addressing the specific systemic barriers identified in rural and urban settings. The care economy should become a priority for Kazakhstan due to the dynamic population growth and promising prospects of raising women's and their families' well-being.

Funding information. This work was prepared with the support of the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan within the framework of the AP26100389 project "Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) Model for the Development of the Care Economy in Kazakhstan: Promoting Employment and Gender Equality".

REFERENCES

- 1 National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2025. 112 p.
- 2 Социальный кодекс Республики Казахстан от 1.07.2023 года. – Министерство юстиции Республики Казахстан, 2023. URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/K2300000224> (дата обращения: 23.03.2026)

3 Адресная социальная помощь (по состоянию на 28.01.2025 г.). – Бюро национальной статистики, 2025. URL: <https://stat.gov.kz/en/industries/social-statistics/stat-medicine/dynamic-tables/> (дата обращения: 23.03.2026)

4 Бюро национальной статистики Агентства по стратегическому сотрудничеству и реформам Республики Казахстан. Образование. Охват детей дошкольным воспитанием и обучением, 2024. URL: <https://bala.stat.gov.kz/ohvat-detej-doshkolnym-vospitaniem-i-obucheniem/> (дата обращения: 20.05.2026)

5 Выборочное наблюдение использования суточного фонда времени населением Республики Казахстан за 2024 год. Бюро национальной статистики Агентства по стратегическому планированию и реформам Республики Казахстан. – Астана, 2025. URL: https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=112&slug=-88&cat_id=2&lang=en (дата обращения: 23.03.2026)

6 Chen C., Hu H., Shi R. Regional differences in Chinese female demand for childcare services of 0–3 years: the moderating and mediating effects of family childcare context // *Children*. 2023, vol. 10(1), p. 151. DOI: 10.3390/children10010151

7 Zhao S. Gender in families: a comparison of the gendered division of child care in rural and urban China // *Child and Youth Care Forum*. 2020, no. 49, pp. 511–531. DOI: doi.org/10.1007/s10566-019-09541-5

8 Hamel E.E., Avari P., Hatton-Bowers H., Schachter R.E. “The kids. that’s my number one motivator”: understanding teachers’ motivators and challenges to working in early childhood education // *Early Childhood Education Journal*. 2025, no. 53 (2), pp. 563–574. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01612-6>

9 Bučaitė-Vilkė J. Family choices on welfare and territorial disadvantages: the perception of the child care services approach in urban and rural areas // *Sage Open*. 2021, no. 11(3). DOI: 10.1177/21582440211032641

10 Abrassart A., Bonoli G. Availability, cost or culture? Obstacles to childcare services for low-income families // *Journal of Social Policy*. 2015, no. 44(4), pp. 787–806. DOI: 10.1017/S0047279415000288

11 Park H., Choi S. Understanding the perceptions of low-income American working mothers in rural areas: exploratory analysis of relative care // *Journal of Family Studies*. 2023, no. 29(3), pp. 1154–1179. DOI: 10.1080/13229400.2022.2032797

12 Yancura L., Barnett M.A., Sano Y., Mammen S. Context matters: Nonresident grandparent contributions to low-income rural families // *Child and Family Social Work*. 2020, no. 25(2), pp. 267–276. DOI: 10.1111/CFS.12682

13 Egami S. Effect of intensive parenting attitude on maternal well-being and self-efficacy among Japanese housewives and part-time working mothers // *Psychology International*. 2025, no. 7(2), p. 47. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/psycholint7020047>

14 Isupova O. Babysitting practices and attitudes in Kazakhstan // *The Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes*. 2025, no. 4, pp. 78–96. DOI: 10.14515/monitoring.2025.4.2807

15 Zainiddinov H., Habibov N., Auchynnikava A. Tracking a decade of development of early childhood care and education in Kazakhstan, 2006–2015 // *Child and Youth Services*. 2024, pp. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/0145935x.2024.2427927

16 Needham M., Kuleimenov D., Soltanbekova A. Sticking and tipping points: a case study of preschool education policy and practice in Astana, Kazakhstan // *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*. 2018, no. 26(3), 432–445. DOI: 10.1080/1350293X.2018.1463909

17 Habibov N. On individual, household, and community factors explaining enrollment to early childhood education and care in post-Soviet transitional countries // *Child Indicators Research*. 2015, no. 8, pp. 825–843. DOI: 10.1007/S12187-014-9277-Z

18 Kabylova M. Factors contributing to and preventing mothers of children 1-6 aged from participating in the labour market in Kazakhstan // *New Trends in Qualitative Research*. 2022, no. 11, e549. URL: <https://doi.org/10.36367/ntqr.11.2022.e54>

19 Kjellstrand I. Middle manager mothers and fathers in academia: embracing and resisting traditional values in Kazakhstani higher education institutions // *A Research Agenda for the Future of Inclusivity in Work*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing. 2026, pp. 149–164. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035328932.00014>

20 Dugarova E. Gender, work, and childcare in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia // *Social Policy and Administration*. 2019, no. 53, pp. 385–400. DOI: 10.1111/SPOL.12479

21 Helmer J., Durrani N., Mir G., Polat F., Karimova N., Qanay G. Navigating homeschooling, parenting, and work during an educational emergency: insights from Kazakhstan // *Sage Open*. 2024, no. 14(4), pp. 1–15. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241307440>

22 Falcão R., Cruz E., Costa Filho M., Elo M. Researching hard-to-reach populations: lessons learned from dispersed migrant communities // *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 2024, no. 44(1–2), pp. 76–95. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-06-2023-0134>

REFERENCES

- 1 National Statistics of the Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2025. 112 p. (In English)
- 2 Social'nyj kodeks Respubliki Kazakhstan ot 1.07.2023 goda. Ministerstvo justicii Respubliki Kazakhstan, 2023. URL: <https://adilet.zan.kz/eng/docs/K2300000224> (data obrashhenija: 23.03.2026) (In Russian)
- 3 Adresnaja social'naja pomoshh' (po sostojaniju na 28.01.2025 g.). Bjuro nacional'noj statistiki, 2025. URL: <https://stat.gov.kz/en/industries/social-statistics/stat-medicine/dynamic-tables/> (data obrashhenija: 23.03.2026) (In Russian)
- 4 Bjuro nacional'noj statistiki Agentstva po strategicheskom sotrudnichestvu i reformam Respubliki Kazakhstan. Obrazovanie. Ohvat detej doshkol'nyh vospitaniem i obucheniem, 2024. URL: <https://bala.stat.gov.kz/ohvat-detej-doshkolnym-vospitaniem-i-obucheniem/> (data obrashhenija: 20.05.2026) (In Russian)
- 5 Vyborochnoe nabljudenie ispol'zovanija sutochnogo fonda vremeni naseleniem Respubliki Kazakhstan za 2024 god. Bjuro nacional'noj statistiki Agentstva po strategicheskomu planirovaniju i reformam Respubliki Kazakhstan. – Astana, 2025. URL: https://gender.stat.gov.kz/page/frontend/detail?id=112&slug=-88&cat_id=2&lang=en (data obrashhenija: 23.03.2026) (In Russian)
- 6 Chen C., Hu H., Shi R. (2023) Regional differences in Shinese female demand for childcare services of 0–3 years: the moderating and mediating effects of family childcare context // *Children*, vol. 10(1), p. 151. DOI: 10.3390/children10010151 (In English)
- 7 Zhao S. (2020) Gender in families: a comparison of the gendered division of child care in rural and urban China // *Child and Youth Care Forum*, no. 49, pp. 511–531. DOI: doi.org/10.1007/s10566-019-09541-5 (In English)
- 8 Hamel E.E., Avari P., Hatton-Bowers H., Schachter R.E. (2025) “The kids. that’s my number one motivator”: understanding teachers’ motivators and challenges to working in early childhood education // *Early Childhood Education Journal*, no. 53 (2), pp. 563–574. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-023-01612-6> (In English)
- 9 Bučaitė-Vilkė J. (2021) Family choices on welfare and territorial disadvantages: the perception of the child care services approach in urban and rural areas // *Sage Open*, no. 11(3). DOI: 10.1177/21582440211032641 (In English)
- 10 Abrassart A., Bonoli G. (2015) Availability, cost or culture? Obstacles to childcare services for low-income families // *Journal of Social Policy*, no. 44(4), pp. 787–806. DOI: 10.1017/S0047279415000288 (In English)
- 11 Park H., Choi S. (2023) Understanding the perceptions of low-income American working mothers in rural areas: exploratory analysis of relative care // *Journal of Family Studies*, no. 29(3), pp. 1154–1179. DOI: 10.1080/13229400.2022.2032797 (In English)
- 12 Yancura L., Barnett M.A., Sano Y., Mammen S. (2020) Context matters: Nonresident grandparent contributions to low-income rural families // *Child and Family Social Work*, no. 25(2), pp. 267–276. DOI: 10.1111/CFS.12682
- 13 Egami S. (2025) Effect of intensive parenting attitude on maternal well-being and self-efficacy among Japanese housewives and part-time working mothers // *Psychology International*, no. 7(2), p. 47. URL: <https://doi.org/10.3390/psycholint7020047> (In English)
- 14 Isupova O. (2025) Babysitting practices and attitudes in Kazakhstan // *The Monitoring of Public Opinion: Economic and Social Changes*, no. 4, pp. 78–96. DOI: 10.14515/monitoring.2025.4.2807 (In English)
- 15 Zainiddinov H., Habibov N., Auchynnikava A. (2024) Tracking a decade of development of early childhood care and education in Kazakhstan, 2006–2015 // *Child and Youth Services*, pp. 1–19. DOI: 10.1080/0145935x.2024.2427927 (In English)
- 16 Needham M., Kuleimenov D., Soltanbekova A. (2018) Sticking and tipping points: a case study of preschool education policy and practice in Astana, Kazakhstan // *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, no. 26(3), 432–445. DOI: 10.1080/1350293X.2018.1463909 (In English)
- 17 Habibov N. (2015) On individual, household, and community factors explaining enrollment to early childhood education and care in post-Soviet transitional countries // *Child Indicators Research*, no. 8, pp. 825–843. DOI: 10.1007/S12187-014-9277-Z (In English)
- 18 Kabylova M. (2022) Factors contributing to and preventing mothers of children 1-6 aged from participating in the labour market in Kazakhstan // *New Trends in Qualitative Research*, no. 11, e549. URL: <https://doi.org/10.36367/ntqr.11.2022.e54> (In English)
- 19 Kjellstrand I. (2026) Middle manager mothers and fathers in academia: embracing and resisting traditional values in Kazakhstani higher education institutions // *A Research Agenda for the Future of Inclusivity in Work*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 149–164. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035328932.00014> (In English)

20 Dugarova E. (2019) Gender, work, and childcare in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia // Social Policy and Administration, no. 53, pp. 385–400. DOI: 10.1111/SPOL.12479 (In English)

21 Helmer J., Durrani N., Mir G., Polat F., Karimova N., Qanay G. (2024) Navigating homeschooling, parenting, and work during an educational emergency: insights from Kazakhstan // Sage Open, no. 14(4), pp. 1–15. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241307440> (In English)

22 Falcão R., Cruz E., Costa Filho M., Elo M. (2024) Researching hard-to-reach populations: lessons learned from dispersed migrant communities // International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy, no. 44(1–2), pp. 76–95. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-06-2023-0134> (In English)

ЛИПОВКА А.В.,*¹

PhD, қауымдастырылған профессор.

*e-mail: a.lipovka@almatau.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0471-2040

НҮГМАНОВА М.С.,²

PhD., қауымдастырылған профессор.

e-mail: maigul.nugmanova@narxoz.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1911-3166

МЕРС М.Е.,³

PhD, профессор.

e-mail: mmeurs@american.edu

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1327-4206

¹ Алматы менеджмент университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

²Narxoz Университеті,

Алматы қ., Қазақстан

³Америкалық университет,

Вашингтон қ., АҚШ

КҮТІМ ЭКОНОМИКАСЫНДАҒЫ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРДІ ШЕШУ: ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ ҚАЛАЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ АУЫЛДЫҚ ЕЛДІ МЕКЕНДЕРІНДЕГІ БАЛА КҮТІМІ ЖҮЙЕСІН ТАЛДАУ

Андатпа

Күтім экономикасы – ел дамуының стратегиялық саласы. Бұл салаға салынған тиімді инвестициялар гендерлік теңдікті нығайтуға және халықтың әл-ауқатын арттыруға тікелей ықпал етеді. Зерттеу бала күтімін жүзеге асыратын тұлғалардың жұмыспен қамтылуын, тәжірибесі мен қажеттіліктерін зерделеу арқылы Қазақстанның ауылдық және қалалық жерлеріндегі бала күтімінің ерекшеліктері мен қиындықтарын анықтауға бағытталған. Аралас зерттеу әдісі солтүстік, орталық және оңтүстік өңірлеріндегі қалалық және ауылдық елді мекендерде жүргізілген сауалнамалар мен фокус-топтарды қамтыды. SPSS эконометрикалық модельдеу үшін пайдаланылды, Atlas.ti бағдарламалық жасақтамасы сұхбат транскриптітерін талдау және бастапқы санаттар мен кодтарды анықтау үшін пайдаланылды. Өзірленген логистикалық регрессия моделі 2 жастан 3 жасқа дейінгі балаларға күтім жасайтын, қалаларда және ересек әйелдер саны көп үй шаруашылықтарында тұратын адамдардың басқа санаттағы адамдармен салыстырғанда сапалы бала күтімі қолжетімді болған жағдайда жұмыс іздеуге дайындығы жоғары екенін көрсетті. Зерттеу қала мен ауыл арасындағы құрылымдық және психологиялық алшақтықты айқындап берді. Ауылдық жерлерде бала күтімі толығымен туыстар мен әжелердің қолдауына тәуелді және баламалы қызмет түрлері мүлдем жоқ. Ал қалалық жерлердегі аналар «қарқынды ана болу» (intensive mothering) жағдайында өмір сүреді, бұл олардың бойында стресс пен оқшаулану сезімін тудырып, жұмыс пен жеке өмір теңгерімінің бұзылуына әкеп соғады. Зерттеу барысында бірқатар жүйелі кедергілер айқындалды: мемлекеттік балабақшалардың тапшылығы, мектептерде ұзартылған күн топтарының жоқтығы және сапалы қызметтердің қымбаттығы. Мақала түйінінде күтім экономикасын дамытудың маңыздылығы негізделіп, бала күтімін тек «ананың көрінбейтін міндеті» емес, ортақ ұжымдық жауапкершілік ретінде қарастыратын мемлекеттік саясатты қалыптастыру қажеттілігі ұсынылады.

Тірек сөздер: жұмыспен қамту, еңбек, отбасы, ана, гендерлік теңдік, күтім жасаушы тұлғалар, қарқынды ана болу.

ЛИПОВКА А.В.,*¹

PhD., ассоциированный профессор.

*e-mail: a.lipovka@almu.edu.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0471-2040

НУГМАНОВА М.С.,²

PhD., ассоциированный профессор.

e-mail: maigul.nugmanova@narxoz.kz

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1911-3166

МЕРС М.Е.,³

PhD., профессор.

e-mail: mmeurs@american.edu

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1327-4206

¹ Алматы Менеджмент Университет,

г. Алматы, Казахстан

²Narxoz Университеті,

г. Алматы, Казахстан

³Американский Университет,

г. Вашингтон, США

УСТРАНЕНИЕ ПРОБЕЛОВ В ЭКОНОМИКЕ УХОДА: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СИСТЕМЫ УХОДА ЗА ДЕТЬМИ В ГОРОДСКОЙ И СЕЛЬСКОЙ МЕСТНОСТИ КАЗАХСТАНА

Аннотация

Экономика ухода представляет собой важную область для развития страны, эффективные инвестиции в которую приводят к повышению гендерного равенства и благосостояния населения. Исследование направлено на выявление особенностей и проблем ухода за детьми в сельской и городской местности Казахстана путем изучения занятости, опыта и потребностей лиц, осуществляющих уход. Смешанный метод исследования включил опрос и проведение фокус-групп в северных, центральных и южных городских и сельских районах. SPSS использовался для эконометрического моделирования, программное обеспечение Atlas.ti применялось для анализа транскриптов интервью и определения исходных категорий и кодов. Разработанная модель логистической регрессии показала, что лица, ухаживающие за детьми в возрасте от 2 до 3 лет, проживающие в городах, в домашних хозяйствах с большим числом взрослых женщин, демонстрируют более высокую готовность искать работу при наличии качественного ухода за детьми по сравнению с другими категориями лиц. Результаты также показывают структурный и психологический разрыв между типами поселений. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что уход за детьми в сельской местности связан с возложением заботы на бабушек, полной зависимостью от поддержки родственников и отсутствием альтернативных форм ухода, в то время как городские женщины вовлечены в интенсивное материнство, часто испытывают беспокойство, стресс, чувство изоляции и нарушение баланса работа – личная жизнь. Исследование выявило ряд системных барьеров: недостаточное число государственных детских садов, отсутствие групп продленного дня в начальной школе и высокую стоимость качественных услуг. В статье обосновывается необходимость укрепления экономики ухода и разработки политики, направленной на признание ухода коллективной ответственностью, а не просто невидимым материнским бременем.

Ключевые слова: занятость, труд, семья, мать, гендерное равенство, лица, осуществляющие уход, интенсивное материнство.

Article submission date: 03.04.2026