



The Impact of Care Burden of Young Carers on Their Preference for Social Supports

Ziyan Wang^{1*}, Bing Niu¹

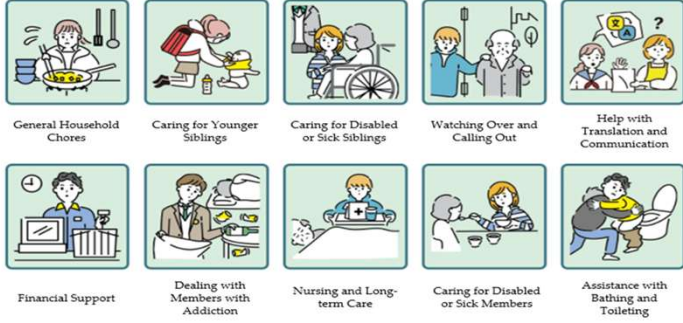
¹Graduate School of Economics, Osaka Metropolitan University, Osaka, Japan

*wzy20071214@gmail.com

Social issues

- Young carers are **children under 18** taking on adult caregiving roles for family members.
- Young carers sacrifice their youth, yet their **specific needs** remain overlooked.
- Support needs to be shaped by **care burden** among young carers.

Figure 1. Caregiving tasks among young carers.



Source: Children and Families Agency. (2025). <https://www.cfa.go.jp/policies/young-carer/>

Aims

- Classify preference for social support of young carers into **four aspects** from **10 types of needs for support**, based on House's "Work stress and social support" (House, 1981).
- Examine how **care burden (complexity & intensity)** influences these preferences.

Methods

Data

- Source:** Pooled cross-sectional data from nationwide internet surveys in Japan.
- Sample:** A total of 1,581 young carers (816 in 2021, 765 in 2024)

Measures

- Preferences for social support:**
 - Preferences were categorized into four aspects based on 10 specific support needs:

Figure 2. Framework of social support assessment: categories and items

Emotional support	Direct support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for family/friend communication Need for external communication Need for sharing experiences with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for reducing caregiving tasks Need for external support for caregiving Need for substantive economic support
Indirect support	Appraisal support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for acquiring caregiving knowledge Need for support from school/work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for school/work recognition Need for societal awareness

Care Burden

- Complexity:** types of care provided
- Intensity:** overall percentage of care burden & primary carer status

Estimated framework

- OLS and probit models:**

$$E[Support_i | X_i] = P(Support_i = 1 | X_i) = Burden_i' \beta_1 + Covariate_i' \beta_2, (1)$$

$$P(Support_i = 1 | X_i) = \Phi(Burden_i' \beta_1 + Covariate_i' \beta_2), (2)$$

- multivariate probit model (MVP)**

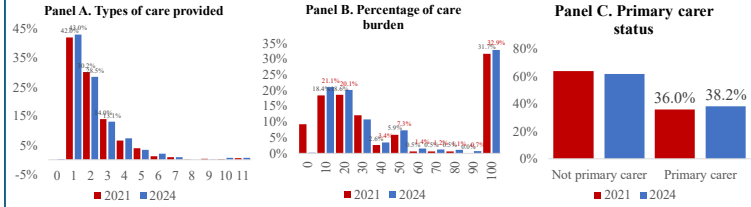
$$Support_{mi}^* = Burden_{mi}' \beta_{m1} + Covariate_{mi}' \beta_{m2} + \epsilon_{mi}, \quad m = 1, 2, 3, 4$$

$$(\epsilon_{1i}, \epsilon_{2i}, \epsilon_{3i}, \epsilon_{4i}) \sim MVN(0, \Sigma), (4)$$

Where Σ is a 4×4 correlation matrix with diagonal elements equal to 1 and off-diagonal elements $\rho_{jk} = Corr(\epsilon_{ji}, \epsilon_{ki})$ representing the correlation between the unobserved disturbances affecting outcomes j and k .

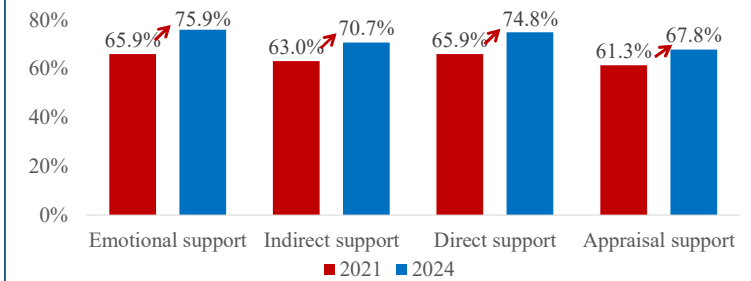
Results

- Panel A & C: **2.175 types of care provided** and **37.1%** were **primary carers** on average. But there was no significant difference between the two periods by t-test.
- Panel B: **45.94%** of **care burden** they held during COVID-19, increased to **50.42%** post-COVID-19.



- During COVID-19 (2021), **65.9%** of young carers preferred to receive **emotional support**, **63.0%** **indirect support**, **65.9%** **direct support** and **61.3%** **appraisal support**.
- After COVID-19 (2024), the percentage of preference increased to **75.9%**, **70.7%**, **74.8%** and **67.8%** significantly.

Figure 4. Distribution of young carers by preferences for social support (N=1,581)



- Results of MVP model

1. Number of types of care provided

- As the types of care provided by young carers increased, their preference for all four aspects of support significantly increased

Table 1. Results of the number of types of care provided

	Emotional	Indirect	Direct	Appraisal
The number of types of care provided	0.110***	0.098***	0.058***	0.070***
Age	0.049*	0.056**	0.070**	0.054**
Female	-0.009	-0.088	-0.029	-0.003
Other gender	-0.316	-0.255	-0.273	-0.164
Friends	0.062	0.117*	0.123*	0.096
Main income	-0.049	0.004	-0.034	-0.070
Post-COVID	0.339***	0.233***	0.322***	0.182***
Constant	-0.630	-0.831*	-0.926*	-0.788*

2. Overall percentage of care burden

- A 10% increase in the overall percentage of care provided was significantly associated with an increase in the preference for emotional support. No significant effect was found on other support types.

Table 2. Results of the overall percentage of care burden

	Emotional	Indirect	Direct	Appraisal
Overall percentage of care burden	0.023***	0.010	0.012	0.008
Age	0.032	0.046	0.063**	0.048
Female	0.024	-0.063	-0.016	0.012
Other gender	-0.260	-0.23	-0.252	-0.148
Friends	0.069	0.124*	0.126*	0.102
Main income	-0.027	0.014	-0.027	-0.065
Post-COVID	0.331***	0.229***	0.317***	0.179**
Constant	-0.267	-0.535	-0.762	-0.583

3. Being or not primary carer

- Young carer who considered himself as the primary carer had a higher probability of preferring emotional support compared to those not in a primary role.

Table 3. Results of primary carer status

	Emotional	Indirect	Direct	Appraisal
Being or not primary carer	0.146**	0.011	0.024	-0.017
Age	0.033	0.049*	0.066**	0.051*
Female	0.023	-0.066	-0.018	0.009
Other gender	-0.292	-0.256	-0.281	-0.173
Friends	0.069	0.125*	0.128*	0.103
Main income	-0.033	0.003	-0.037	-0.077
Post-COVID	0.338***	0.233***	0.321***	0.184***
Constant	-0.232	-0.530	-0.750	-0.582

4. Post COVID-19

- Compared to 2021, young carers in 2024 showed a significantly **higher preference for all four aspects of support**. This suggests a heightened need for comprehensive support in the post-COVID era.

Conclusions

- Our study contributes to the global discourse on formulating classification standards for social support based on representative individual data and quantitatively measuring the care burden of young carers. Results led to several key observations:
 - As caregiving duties become **more complex and varied**, a broader, **more comprehensive** range of support becomes necessary.
 - Emotional support is a universal and critical need**, especially for those with the heaviest and most central caregiving roles.
- These findings underscore the necessity of **moving beyond one-size-fits-all solutions**. **Tailored support mechanisms** that consider the specific nature of a young carer's burden are essential for effective policy and practice. Our study provides a quantitative framework for classifying support needs, contributing to a more nuanced and evidence-based global discourse on supporting young carers.