

Rural-Urban Differences in Unpaid Care Work: A Systematic Review

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Abstract - This systematic review aims to summarise the evidence of differences in unpaid care work in rural and urban areas. The systematic review is based on articles dealing with any category of unpaid care work in rural and urban areas. The reviewers used Web of Science and Scopus databases for identifying studies. Making use of the resource-based approach and the gender-centred approach, we identify five themes. (i) The caregiving intensity of women is greater than that of men, (ii) Coresidence and the relationship between caregivers and care recipients, (iii) Education, income, paid work, and unpaid care work, (iv) Bargaining power and gender display, and (v) Rural-urban differences in unpaid care work. More studies show that rural women contribute more to unpaid care work than urban women. It is also observed that the gender-centred approach better explains the gender gap in unpaid care work than the resource-based approach.

Keywords: Unpaid Care Work, Household work, Caregiving, Rural-urban differences, Gender Roles

1. Introduction

Women are the major contributors to unpaid care work. Unpaid care work includes household maintenance, care of people in the household and voluntary community service (Budlender, 2010). Globally, women spend, on average, three to six hours a day on unpaid work, while men spend half an hour to two hours (Ferrant et al., 2014). Elson (2000) argues that these are works which require time and energy, and we could pay someone to do these jobs. Women primarily undertake this work as an obligation. Apart from these unpaid household obligations, women need to find time for paid work. This leads to the double burden of women (Ferrant et al., 2014). People spending more time on unpaid work and paid work are more likely to be time-poor. Also, women are the most time-poor. This is because women spend significantly more time in childcare, elderly care, and housework (Qi & Dong, 2018).

The “doing gender” and the gender display perspectives indicate that household members spend their time based on traditional gender roles. Traditional gender roles are different for men and women. While men are expected to be the breadwinners of the household, women are expected to be the carers. Women are expected to perform unpaid household obligations. The relative resources and bargaining power perspective holds that the relative resources of the wife to her husband would increase her bargaining power within the household (Blood Jr. & Wolfe, 1960). Education level and employment status determine the bargaining power of women in the household. These relative resources help wives bargain out of unpaid care work (Aassve et al., 2014). There is another theory called the gender deviance neutralisation perspective, which iterates that women may compensate for the deviance from the traditional norm of the male being the breadwinner and the woman being the carer. It posits that women who earn more than their husbands might take up more

household work as a way to adhere to traditional gender roles. (Bittman et al., 2003). Employed women might thus engage in more unpaid work so as to neutralise their deviance and comply with the traditional gender roles.

The negative relationship between unpaid care work and paid work is well established. Women, being the primary caregivers, find it difficult to engage in paid work. A component of unpaid care work that has a significant negative effect on the paid work time of women is childcare (Blau & Robins, 1988). Household work, childcare and elderly care greatly influence women's overall time availability and thus result in more work at home and less market work.

This systematic review of the literature aims to summarise the evidence of differences in unpaid care work in rural and urban areas. The review also addresses the nuances relating to paid work, coresidence, education, bargaining power, and gender roles in the context of unpaid care work in rural and urban areas.

2. Methods

The reviewers used Web of Science and Scopus databases for identifying studies. The search in Scopus and Web of Science was conducted on 15/06/2023 and 16/06/2023, respectively. The search was limited to original articles in the English language and published between 2000 and 2022. The following search strategies were used for the identification of studies.

Web of Science: TS= ("Unpaid Care Work" OR "Unpaid Care*" OR "Unpaid Caregiving" OR "Unpaid domestic work*" OR "Unpaid domestic Labour*" OR "Unpaid Household Work*" OR "Unpaid household obligations*" OR "Household Work*" OR "Informal care*" OR "Informal Care work*" OR "Care work*" OR "Domestic work*" OR "Time allocation*" OR "Time use*" OR "Time budget ") AND TS= ("*rural*") AND TS=("*urban*").

Scopus: TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Unpaid Care Work" OR "Unpaid Care*" OR "Unpaid Caregiving" OR "Unpaid domestic work*" OR "Unpaid domestic Labour*" OR "Unpaid Household Work*" OR "Unpaid household obligations*" OR "Household Work*" OR "Informal care*" OR "Informal Care work*" OR "Care work*" OR "Domestic work*" OR "Time allocation*" OR "Time use*" OR "Time budget ") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("*rural*") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("*urban*") AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2023 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE , "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")).

The inclusion criteria for this systematic review are as follows: The articles should deal with unpaid care work or any category of unpaid care work in rural and urban areas. The participants or some participants in the study should be adults. We used the Cochrane Handbook (Higgins & Green, 2008) for the review and the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) for reporting the results of the review (Page et al., 2021).

The two datasets from Web of Science and Scopus were merged, and duplicates were removed. After the removal of duplicates, the articles were screened by title and abstract. The articles shortlisted after the abstract screening were retrieved for full-text screening. The shortlisted articles were examined to screen for inclusion in the review (see the inclusion criteria in Figure 1).

3. Results

The search in Scopus resulted in 520 records (limited to articles in English), and the search in Web of Science resulted in 447 records (limited to articles in English). The total records from both databases were 967, of which 337 were duplicates.

After removing duplicates, 630 records were screened using the title and abstract. Sixty full-text articles were retrieved. 30 out of the 60 met the inclusion criteria (For details, see Figure 1).

Of the 30 included studies, 14 are from journals indexed in both Scopus and Web of Science, 11 are in Web of Science alone, and five are in Scopus alone. Fifty per cent of the included studies are funded. Most number of articles were published by Springer (8), Routledge (6), Elsevier (5) and Sage (4) (Table 1). The included studies are published in 26 journals; Social Indicators Research (3) makes it to the top for the greatest number of articles from a single source, followed by Chinese Sociological Review and Feminist Economics (2 each) (Supplementary Table 1). The included articles were published in between 2000 and 2022. Four (13 %) studies were published in 2022; three (10 %) each in 2014, 2015, 2017, 2020 and 2021; two (7 %) each in 2011, 2012, 2018 and 2019, and one (3%) each in 2007, 2013 and 2016 (Table 2). One hundred authors contributed to these 30 articles. While 11 (37 %) articles have two authors, eight (27 %) articles have three authors, five (17 %) articles have four authors, and two (7 %) articles have a single author (Supplementary Table 2). Authors affiliated with institutions in the US (35 %) and China (33 %) make the greatest contributions to the included studies (Supplementary Table 3). Eleven studies (37 %) have authors with three affiliations, whereas 12 (40 %) studies have authors with two affiliations, and seven (23 %) studies have authors with a single affiliation. Twenty-six (87 %) articles use secondary data, and 4 (13 %) make use of primary data. Twenty-eight studies use the quantitative approach, one is a qualitative study, and one employs the mixed methods approach. Twenty-three studies (77 %) use data from male and female participants, and seven (23 %) studies use data from only female participants. Table 5 describes the theoretical perspectives used in the studies. Eleven (37 %) out of the 30 studies use at least one theory in their study, and the remaining 19 (63 %) do not evidently use any theoretical background in their study. The relative resources theory is used in six (20 %) studies, the doing gender theory in four (13 %) studies, the gender deviance neutralisation perspective, and the time availability perspectives in two (7 %) studies each.

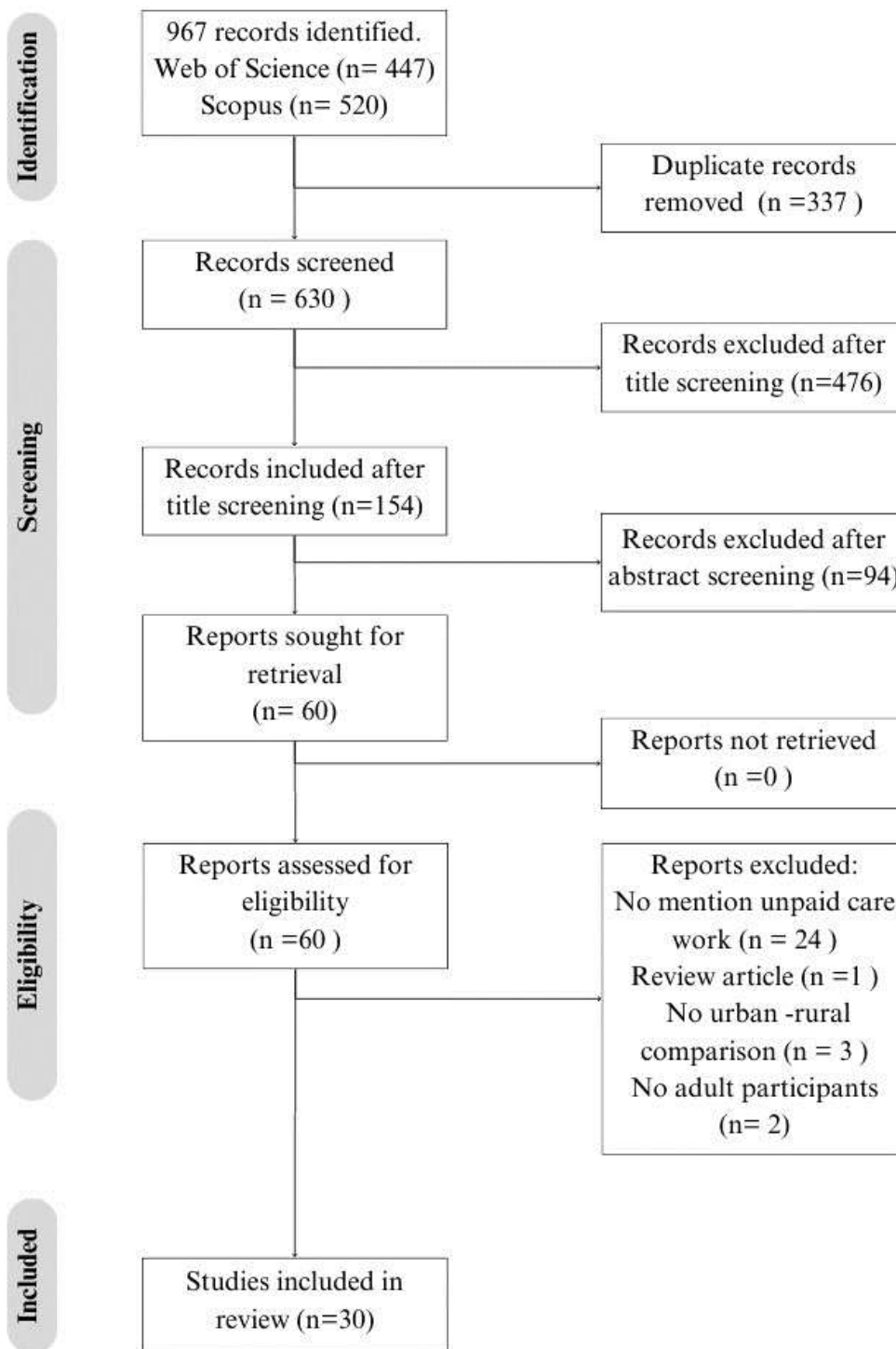


Figure 1 Inclusion Criteria based on PRISMA.

Table 1 Details of Publishers

Publisher	Number of Articles	Percentage
Springer	8	26.67
Taylor & Francis	6	20
Elsevier	5	16.66
Sage	4	13.34

BMC	2	6.67
Wiley	2	6.67
UNESCAP	1	3.33
Cambridge University Press	1	3.33
SciELO	1	3.33
Total	30	100

Table 2 Publication Year and Number of Articles Published

Publication Year	Number of Articles	Percentage
2022	4	13.33
2021	3	10
2020	3	10
2019	2	6.67
2018	2	6.67
2017	3	10
2016	1	3.33
2015	3	10
2014	3	10
2013	1	3.33
2012	2	6.67
2011	2	6.67
2007	1	3.33
Total	30	100

Table 3 Study Description

Authors and Publication Year	Title	Objectives	Findings Relevant to the Study
Zhao, 2020	Gender in Families: A Comparison of the Gendered Division of Child Care in Rural and Urban China	(1) to determine how childcare time is divided differently between husbands and wives in urban and rural sectors; and (2) to determine how this division are associated with factors such as one's own or one's spouse's employment status, educational achievement, and earnings.	Compared to rural parents, urban men and women spent more time with their children on average (15.7 and 27.4, respectively), and the ratio of the wife's childcare time to the husband's childcare time was smaller in the urban sector than in the rural sector.

Gu et al., 2017	Changing Caregiving Relationships for Older Home-Based Chinese People in a Transitional Stage: Trends, Factors and Policy Implications	The aim of this paper is to examine the evolution of caregiving relationships for home-based elderly individuals and to investigate the changing factors of care use on a national scale.	Elderly rural residents are more likely to be dependent on family caregivers compared to elderly urban residents.
J. Chen et al., 2014	Factors that Influence Female Labor Force Supply in China	To investigate the factors that influenced the labour force participation of female workers in urban and rural areas, from the perspectives of individuals and families.	Childcare is a significant determinant of female labour force participation in urban areas and not in rural areas.
Hu & Mu, 2021	Extended Gender Inequality? Intergenerational Coresidence and Division of Household Labor	Based on the huge gap between urban and rural areas, this paper aims to investigate the factors that attribute to the variation of the participation rate of females and how these factors function in both areas.	Both rural women and men spent more time on housework than their urban counterparts. The absolute gender gap in housework hours was larger among rural hukou holders than among urban hukou holders
Luo & Chui, 2019b	Trends in Women's Informal Eldercare in China, 1991-2011: An Age-Period-Cohort Analysis	To explore the extent to which informal eldercare, one of the main forms of domestic work performed by women, has changed in post-socialist China, to examine whether and how education and the rural–urban divide affect women’s care-giving behaviour, interaction effects between age and education, and age and residency will also be explored in order to determine whether there is change in the effects of educational level and rural–urban residency on informal eldercare across a woman’s life course.	women who live in urban areas are nearly twice as likely to provide eldercare to their parents or in-laws than women who live in rural areas controlling for period and cohort effects

Boone et al., 2011	Household Water Supply Choice and Time Allocated to Water Collection: Evidence from Madagascar	How is the household's choice of water source affected by the distance to available alternatives, wealth, and other household characteristics? How are the burdens of water collection distributed across different types of individuals within the household? How do the distance to water and the types of sources available affect time spent in water collection – or conversely, what are the potential time benefits of investments in different water source infrastructures?	People in rural areas spend more time in water collection than people in urban areas.
Zhai et al., 2020	Education and Gender Gap in Couples' Time Use: Evidence from China	This study focuses on the gender gap in time use among married Chinese couples and whether education can help narrow the gender gap across urban-rural settings.	Similar to their urban peers, rural wives spent much more time on personal and household care and much less time on paid work as well as leisure/social activities than their husbands, on both work and non-work days.
Kan & He, 2018	Resource Bargaining and Gender Display in Housework and Care Work in Modern China	To investigate the patterns of gender division of labour among different types of domestic work in China by micro-level analysis.	Evidence of gender display is observed in the case of rural women but not urban women.
Saboor et al., 2016	Time Use Poverty and Gender Inequality: Empirical Evidences from Punjab	The study investigates the extending classifications across the region in general and with respect to gender in particular, at the administrative division level in the Punjab province of Pakistan on the basis of the unique Time Use Survey, which was conducted for the first time in the history of country. The present study also estimates the extent of time use poverty across regions and genders and identifies the challenges faced by women in different geographical locations of the Punjab province	The regional (urban and rural) classification exposed that urban time use poverty was around 21 %, whereas rural was slightly higher at 25 %.

Ribeiro & Marinho, 2012	Time poverty in Brazil: Measurement and Analysis of its Determinants	This article analyzes well-being on an individual level, through the allocation of work hours done by adults and children and thus it measures time poverty in Brazil.	20.4% of people who reside in urban areas are time-poor against only 17.1% of time-poor people living in rural areas
Yokying et al., 2016	Work-Life Balance and Time Use: Lessons from Thailand	This paper examines the factors that influence the ability of married women and men to attain work-life balance by examining the determinants of time allocated towards household work, market work and social and leisure activities	Rural women manage their care responsibilities by allocating less time for leisure. Urban women manage their care responsibilities by reducing their time spent in market work.
Giménez-Nadal et al., 2022	The Daily Mobility of Older Adults: Urban/Rural Differences in Ten Developed Countries	This paper explores the mobility patterns of older adults in ten countries, with a focus on the differences produced by urban environments in their non-work trips.	On average, trips for housework purposes are similar in urban and rural areas.
Qi et al., 2017	A Note on Chinese Couples' Time Synchronization	To study time synchronization in China, and to provide a profile of couples' coordination of time allocation in the socio-economic context of a developing country.	Urban couples synchronise more time on household work than rural couples.
Luo & Chui, 2019a	Moving from Rural to Urban China: How Urbanization Affects Women's Housework	The present study explores within-gender differences in domestic labor by studying housework variations across five different groups of women in contemporary China	Moving to urban areas has a negative association with women's housework time
Hui-fen et al., 2012	Time Use Patterns Between Maintenance, Subsistence and Leisure Activities: A Case Study in China	To investigate and analyse the time use patterns of Chinese individuals in 2008, with a focus on their activities categorized into maintenance, subsistence, and leisure. The study also aimed to identify and understand how different population segments, including gender, region, age, employment status,	Urban residents spend 4.8, 14.7, and 4.5 h, and rural residents 6.8, 14.1, and 3.1 h on SA, MA, and LA respectively. Urban residents spend 0.6 hours more on MA than rural residents.

		and income, allocate their time to these three broad types of activities.	
Gao et al., 2014	Welfare Participation and Time Use in China	This study examines the possible influence of participation in China's primary welfare program, Dibao, on household head's time use patterns in both urban and rural areas.	Rural Dibao recipients spent less time on work activities but more time on personal care and household activities than urban Dibao recipients.
Wang et al., 2022	Urban-Rural Disparities in Informal Care Intensity of Adult Daughters and Daughters-in-Law for Elderly Parents from 1993-2015: Evidence from a National Study in China	This paper intends to explore the urban-rural disparities in the intensity of informal care from the perspective of daughter and daughter-in-law for elderly parents in the Chinese context by drawing on a large-scale national survey	Urban hukou holders were more likely to provide informal care for their elderly parents, both in low-intensity and high-intensity care, than their rural counterparts.
de Bruin & Liu, 2020	The Urbanization-Household Gender Inequality Nexus: Evidence from Time Allocation in China	To investigate the time allocation of females and males in matched couples in urban, rural-urban migrant, and rural households	while traditional gendered time-use patterns persist among rural households, urbanization and migration reduce gender differentials in unpaid work. Both urban and migrant fathers engage in more care work than their rural counterparts.

Meurs & Slavchevska, 2014	Doing it All: Women's Employment And Reproductive Work in Tajikistan	To examine factors affecting women's participation in employment and reproductive household work in Tajikistan, drawing on the 2003 Tajikistan Living Standards Survey.	Rural women spend longer hours collecting water and wood (14 hours versus 5.5 hours per week) and working in subsistence production (25.5 versus 6.6 hours per week) compared to urban women. But urban women spend more time on housework (like cleaning and cooking) and care than rural women.
Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013	Estimating the Impact of the 2008-09 Economic Crisis on Work Time in Turkey	To estimate the impact of the 2008–09 economic crisis on paid and unpaid work time in Turkey.	The rise in unpaid work time for women is approximately four times more than that for men. These differences between women and men are much sharper in urban areas than in rural ones.
Nkwake, 2015	Spousal Wealth and Fathers' Involvement in Childcare in Uganda	The study objectives included examining the nature and range of fathers' involvement in childcare activities (including feeding, holding, bathing, healthcare, playing with, changing nappies, taking children to and from school, and helping children with their homework) in families where the mother is employed, as well as the factors that influenced this involvement	Fathers are more likely to engage in childcare when husbands and wives share or have equal wealth than when spouses have wealth differences. Urban men engage in more childcare than rural men.
Cohen et al., 2022	Rural-Urban Differences in Informal Caregiving and Health-Related Quality of Life	(1) to assess geographic (rural-urban) and related sociodemographic factors associated with being an informal caregiver, (2) to investigate (a) whether people living in rural areas have poorer health, health behaviours, and HRQoL than their urban counterparts, and (b) whether being an informal caregiver moderates any associations between rural-urban status and health outcomes, and (3) to determine if rural-urban status is associated with worse health, health behaviours, HRQoL, and caregiving intensity among informal caregivers.	Rural respondents were more likely to be caregivers than urban respondents. After adjustment for confounders, rural caregivers were more likely than urban caregivers to provide 20 or more hours of caregiving per week.

Dong & An, 2015	Gender Patterns and Value of Unpaid Care Work: Findings from China's First Large-Scale Time Use Survey	The purpose of this paper is to document the gender patterns of unpaid care work, examine how unpaid care work interacts with paid work and non-work activity, and estimate the monetary value of unpaid care work using data from China's first large-scale time-use survey	Compared with the urban sector, the gender gap in unpaid care work is larger for the rural sector.
L. Chen et al., 2017	Informal Care and Labor Market Outcomes: Evidence from Chinese Married Women	First, we use a Chinese sample to yield a comprehensive and cohesive picture of the influence of informal care on all three labour market outcomes comprising LFP, hours of work, and earnings derived from employment. Second, our study will assess whether a caregiving intensity threshold exists for labour market outcomes in China. Third, we stratify our sample by rural and urban status in order to identify potential differences in the effects of caregiving on labour market outcomes	The significant positive effect between employment and caregiving only existed in the rural sample
Quadlin & Doan, 2018	Sex-Typed Chores and the City: Gender, Urbanicity, and Housework	We interrogate the role of urbanicity in time spent on sex-typed housework.	Urbanicity rarely predicts women's time use, implying that women spend considerable time on household chores regardless of where they live.
Ampim et al., 2022	'I Do Not Want Her to be Doing Anything Stressful': Men's Involvement in Domestic Work during Pregnancy in Ghana	The primary purpose of this article is to examine how gender is done in the household when couples are expecting a baby and identify the extent to which acts of gender transgression may potentially take place during this peak in the reproductive lives of Ghanaian couples	During their partner's pregnancy, men in both urban and rural areas were willing to modify their daily schedule to incorporate more housework.

Wang et al., 2021	The effect of socioeconomic status on informal caregiving for parents among adult married females: evidence from China	The objectives of the present study were to empirically examine the association between the Socioeconomic Status of married female caregivers and informal caregiving for their elderly parents when needed in China	Urban females were 1.34 times more likely than their rural counterparts to provide low-intensity care vs. no care and were 1.33 times more likely to provide high-intensity care vs. no care.
Chahal et al., 2021	Tanzanian Men's Engagement in Household Chores is Associated with Improved Antenatal Care Seeking and Maternal Health	The purpose of the current study was to use data from the Addressing Stunting in Tanzania Early (ASTUTE) program to describe factors associated with male involvement and to explore the relationship between male involvement and maternal health and ANC outcomes, as there is currently a gap in knowledge and literature surrounding these associations.	Men's engagement in household activities was significantly associated with living in an urban setting.
Bień et al., 2007	Rural and Urban Caregivers for Older Adults in Poland: Perceptions of Positive and Negative Impact of Caregiving	The purpose of this study is to examine rural-urban differences in caregiver characteristics and perceptions of negative and positive aspects of caregiving.	The findings of this study indicate that rural caregivers experience greater strain and burden, and they are more vulnerable to negative caregiving outcomes than urban caregivers.
Yu & Xie, 2011	The Varying Display of Gender Display: A Comparative Study of Mainland China and Taiwan	The first aim is to test whether there is any cross-society difference in the pattern of the association between relative resources and housework time. If such a difference does, in fact, exist, our second aim is to try to explore which macro-level factor is plausible as an explanation for this difference.	(1) there is some evidence for gender display in rural China and Taiwan but not in urban China, and (2) the evidence for gender display is more pronounced in Taiwan than in rural China.

Table 5 The Number of Studies in which theories are used.

Theory	Number of Studies
Relative Resource Theory	6
Doing Gender Theory	5
Gender Deviance Neutralisation Theory	2
Time Availability Theory	2
Maternal Gatekeeping Perspective	1
The Gendered Resources Theory	1
Gender Display Perspective	1
Two-Factor Model of Caregiving	1
Julie Brines' Household Economic Theory	1
Gender Roles Attitude Model	1
Andersen And Newman's Behavioural Model	1
Hakim's Preference Theory	1

3.1 Themes

We identified five main themes based on the 30 articles included in the review: (i) The Caregiving Intensity of women is greater than that of men, (ii) Coresidence and the Relationship between Caregivers and Care Recipients, (iii) Education, Income, Paid Work, and Unpaid Care Work, (iv) Bargaining Power and Gender Display, and (v) Rural-Urban Differences in Unpaid Care Work.

3.1.1 The Caregiving Intensity of women is greater than that of men.

Under this theme, three subthemes- household work, care for family members, and time poverty are dealt with.

Twenty-three out of the 30 studies use data from male and female participants. Out of the 23 studies, 65 % (15) of the studies explicitly address the gender gap in household work (Ampim et al., 2022; Boone et al., 2011; Chahal et al., 2021; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Dong & An, 2015; Hu & Mu, 2021; Hui-fen et al., 2012; Kan & He, 2018; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Qi et al., 2017; Quadlin & Doan, 2018; Ribeiro & Marinho, 2012; Saboor et al., 2016; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2020). According to Qi et al. (2017), on average, women spend 3.84 hours on weekdays and 4.66 hours on weekends, whereas men spend 1.28 hours on weekdays and 2.02 hours on weekends on household chores. Dong and An (2015), from the first large-scale time use survey in China, note that the male-female gap in the time allocated to unpaid care work is 16.7 hours per week. An interesting observation made by Chahal et al. (2021) is that men become less likely to help women with chores as they age. Kan and He (2018) note that while women take on the major portion of unpaid care work, men are mainly responsible for nonroutine domestic work such as home repair.

Thirty-five per cent (8) of the 23 studies which use data from male and female participants deal with the gender gap in family caregiving, whether it be elderly care or childcare (Bieñ et al., 2007; Cohen et al., 2022; Kan & He, 2018; Nkwake, 2015; Saboor et al., 2016; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2020; Zhao, 2020). An interesting observation of Zhao (2020) is that, on average, when wives spend 27.2 hours a week on childcare, husbands spend 14.145 hours on the same. Three

studies (Dong & An, 2015; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhao, 2020) show that having children significantly increases the time allocated to unpaid care work for both men and women. Although the need for childcare increases the time spent on unpaid care work for men and women, the increased burden is disproportionately shouldered by women (Yokying et al., 2016).

Two studies (Saboor et al., 2016; Yokying et al., 2016) deal with the time poverty of men and women. Ribeiro and Marinho (2012) analysed the time poverty of individuals in Brazil and concluded that regardless of locality, women are the time-poorest individuals. This is contrary to the findings of Saboor et al. (2016), who found that men and women are equally time-poor in Pakistan. The authors noted that women are more time-poor in unpaid care work, and men are more time-poor in paid work.

3.1.2 Coresidence and the Relationship between Caregivers and Care Recipients

Five studies analyse the relationship between caregivers and care recipients (Bień et al., 2007; Gu et al., 2017; Luo & Chui, 2019b, 2019a; Wang et al., 2022) and five study the effect of coresidence on care work (Bień et al., 2007; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Hu & Mu, 2021; Luo & Chui, 2019a; Meurs & Slavchevska, 2014). A finding of Luo and Chui (2019b) is that it has increasingly become likely for women to provide informal care to parents and in-laws since 2000. Wang et al. (2022) analysed data regarding the caregiving intensity of adult daughters and daughters-in-law for elderly parents in China from 1993 to 2015 and observed that daughters-in-law provide more elderly care than daughters. However, Bień et al. (2007) analysed data from Poland and noted that most of the caregivers were adult children. Gu et al. (2017) comment that although in China, child caregivers were the major caregivers, their proportion has decreased by 11.4 %. The authors also point out that the second major type of caregivers is spousal caregivers, which has increased from 25 % in 2002 to 40 % in 2011. While gender and marital status are the major determinants of having spousal caregivers, according to Gu et al. (2017), the likelihood of having child caregivers is greatly determined by education, occupation and living arrangements. Anyhow, Luo and Chui (2019) concluded that the caregiving behaviour of women is greatly determined by the caregiving needs of parents and in-laws.

Luo and Chui (2019b) find that coresidence with parents or in-laws increases the chance of providing care to the elderly by 50 per cent. According to Hu and Mu (2021) and Meurs and Slavchevska (2014), coresidence with other adult women seems to reduce the demand for housework time, but the demand for care increases. Hu and Mu (2021) explain that this housework-reducing effect was greater when the couple lived with the wife's parents than when the couple lived with the husband's parents. The authors also make an interesting observation that although coresidence with parents/in-laws reduces the total housework demand of the couple, the housework-reducing effect mostly relieves men from housework, reinstating the gender gap. While Luo and Chui (2019a) and Meurs and Slavchevska (2014) iterate that the number of young children in the household increases both the time spent in care work and in household work, de Bruin and Liu (2020) note that the parental time costs of young children are significantly reduced by the presence of grandparents, especially grandmothers. An interesting conclusion of Hu and Mu (2021) is that the housework-reducing effect of intergenerational coresidence is observed only in the early stages of the family life course as at later stages, the care demands of the elderly increase.

3.1.3 Education, Income, Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work.

Under this theme, four sub-themes are detailed- the relationship between education and women's paid work time, the effect of education on the unpaid work time of men, the effect of education on time spent on unpaid care work of women, and the relationship between income and unpaid care work.

Out of the 30 studies, five studies (J. Chen et al., 2014; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Meurs & Slavchevska, 2014; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2020) detail the relationship between education and women's paid work time. Evidence from four studies shows that education has a significant positive effect on women's paid work time (J. Chen et al., 2014; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2020). Contrary to this, Meurs and Slavchevska (2014) concluded that in Tajikistan, educated women were less likely to have paid work. The positive effect of education on women's employment hours was greater in urban areas than in rural areas, according to Yokying et al. (2016) and Zhai et al. (2020). While Chen et al. (2014) conclude that the effect of education on labour force participation was negative in rural areas, Meurs and Slavchevska (2014) find that the effect is negative in both rural and urban Tajikistan. The latter also observed that urban women were more educated than their rural counterparts but spent less time in paid work.

Three studies deal with the effect of education on the unpaid work time of men (Chahal et al., 2021; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013). All three studies affirm that educated men contributed significantly more time to unpaid care work than their uneducated counterparts (Chahal et al., 2021; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013). While this observation was consistent across the urban-rural scenario in two studies (Chahal et al., 2021; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013), de Bruin and Liu (2020) conclude that rural men in the more educated category reduced their time spent on unpaid work significantly compared to urban men in the same category.

Nine studies address the effect of education on time spent on unpaid care work of women (Chahal et al., 2021; Cohen et al., 2022; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Luo & Chui, 2019a, 2019b; Wang et al., 2021, 2022; Zhai et al., 2020). While four studies (Chahal et al., 2021; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Luo & Chui, 2019a; Zhai et al., 2020) found that education reduces time spent on household work, an equal number of studies (Cohen et al., 2022; Luo & Chui, 2019b; Wang et al., 2021, 2022) posits that education has a positive impact on informal caregiving. Wang et al. (2022) point out that those with a high school degree or university degree are 1.90 times more likely to provide high-intensity care than low-intensity care compared to illiterate individuals. A similar observation made by Luo and Chui (2019b) is that a woman who has 13 or more years of education is two times more likely to provide elderly care than a woman with six or fewer years of education. According to de Bruin and Liu (2020), urban women who have more education than their spouses spend significantly less time in unpaid care work than their rural counterparts. Contrary to their findings, Wang et al. (2022) found that urban women were more likely to provide informal care. They also concluded that educational differences explained 25 % of the urban-rural disparity in informal caregiving. Nevertheless, an important conclusion of Ribeiro and Marinho (2012) is that an increase in the mean years of school education significantly reduces the likelihood of being time-poor.

Five studies examine the negative relationship between income and unpaid care work (L. Chen et al., 2017; Kan & He, 2018; Meurs & Slavchevska, 2014; Nkwake, 2015; Yu & Xie, 2011). However, Kan and He (2018), Nkwake (2015) and Yu and Xie (2011) assert that it is not the absolute income but the relative income (or wealth) of the wife which influences unpaid care work. Yu and Xie (2011) calculate the difference in household work between wives who contribute no income

and wives who contribute two-thirds of the household income. The authors find that the latter category of wives reduces their weekly time spent on unpaid care work by 8 hours. Ribeiro and Marinho (2012) noted that while education had a negative effect on time poverty, income increases the propensity to be time-poor.

3.1.4 Bargaining Power and Gender Display.

Six studies make use of the relative resources and bargaining power perspectives (Kan & He, 2018; Nkwake, 2015; Quadlin & Doan, 2018; Yu & Xie, 2011; Zhai et al., 2020; Zhao, 2020). The relative resources or bargaining power explains the division of unpaid work in four studies (Kan & He, 2018; Yokying et al., 2016; Yu & Xie, 2011; Zhao, 2020). However, the evidence regarding the effect of relative resources and bargaining power on the division of unpaid work in rural and urban areas is mixed. Zhao (2020) found that while the relative resources theory could explain the gendered division of childcare in rural areas, it could not in urban areas. The author concludes that a full-time employment status increased women's bargaining power within rural households, resulting in more engagement of men in childcare. Also, the rural husband's relative income negatively affected his time spent in childcare. Contrary to the above findings, Kan and He (2018) and Yu and Xie (2011) observe that the relative resources theory better explains the gendered division of housework in urban areas than in rural areas.

The gender-centred approaches (doing gender theory, gender deviance neutralisation theory, the gendered resources theory, gender display perspective, and the gender roles attitude model) are used in six studies (Ampim et al., 2022; Hu & Mu, 2021; Kan & He, 2018; Quadlin & Doan, 2018; Zhai et al., 2020; Zhao, 2020). These perspectives explain the gendered division of unpaid care work in five studies (de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Kan & He, 2018; Yu & Xie, 2011; Zhai et al., 2020; Zhao, 2020). While four studies found that traditional gender roles were more evident in rural households (de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Kan & He, 2018; Yu & Xie, 2011; Zhai et al., 2020), Zhao (2020) observed that traditional gender roles are found in urban households. An interesting conclusion of Ampim et al. (2022) is that during times of pregnancy, the division of household labour is less gendered as urban and rural men engage more in unpaid care work during those times. Four studies establish that rural residents hold traditional gender beliefs, whereas urban residents have more egalitarian gender attitudes (de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Luo & Chui, 2019; Nkwake, 2015; Zhao, 2020). According to de Bruin and Liu (2020) and Nkwake (2015) educated men in urban areas tend to have more egalitarian gender attitudes, resulting in their greater engagement in unpaid care work than their uneducated counterparts.

3.1.5 Rural-Urban Differences in Unpaid Care Work.

Eighty-three per cent (25) of the studies explicitly address the rural-urban differences in unpaid care work of women. While seven studies conclude that urban women contribute to unpaid care work more than their rural counterparts (J. Chen et al., 2014; Hui-fen et al., 2012; Luo & Chui, 2019b; Meurs & Slavchevska, 2014; Wang et al., 2021, 2022; Zhao, 2020), eleven studies indicate the opposite trend (Bieñ et al., 2007; Boone et al., 2011; Cohen et al., 2022; de Bruin & Liu, 2020; Dong & An, 2015; Gao et al., 2014; Hu & Mu, 2021; Kan & He, 2018; Luo & Chui, 2019a; Saboor et al., 2016; Yu & Xie, 2011). There are seven studies which observe rural-urban indifference in caregiving intensity (L. Chen et al., 2017; Cohen et al., 2022; Giménez-Nadal et al., 2022; Kaya Bahçe & Memiş, 2013; Quadlin & Doan, 2018; Yokying et al., 2016; Zhai et al., 2020).

Three studies focus on men's engagement in either housework or childcare (Ampim et al., 2022; Chahal et al., 2021; Nkwake, 2015). A finding of Nkwake (2015) is that urban men engage in more childcare than rural men. While Ampim

et al. (2022) observe that there is no urban-rural difference in men's engagement in housework during the wife's pregnancy, Chahal et al. (2021) find that men's engagement in housework during the wife's pregnancy is greater in urban areas compared to rural areas. Qi et al. (2017) studied the synchronisation of Chinese couples' time allocation and observed that urban couples synchronise more time in household work than rural couples. Saboor et al. (2016) posit that while urban men are more time-poor than rural men, rural women are more time-poor than their urban counterparts. Contrary to this, Ribeiro and Marinho (2012) found that urban men and women are more time-poor than rural men and women, although women are more time-poor than men regardless of urbanicity.

4. Discussion

Through this review, we establish that the gender gap in time spent on unpaid care work persists. This is in line with the previous literature (Baxter, 2002; Bonke & Jensen, 2012; Chauhan, 2021; Craig & Churchill, 2021; Gimenez-Nadal & Sevilla, 2012; Janiso et al., 2023; Qi & Dong, 2016; Sayer & Gornick, 2012). Unpaid care work is predominantly seen as women's work across cultures, although there has been a significant fall in the gender gap in many countries, especially in the West (Bonke & Jensen, 2012; Gimenez-Nadal & Sevilla, 2012). Also, women are found to spend significantly more time on childcare, which validates the literature (Gimenez-Nadal & Sevilla, 2012; Ice, 2023; Sayer & Gornick, 2012). The case is the same for elderly care, confirming the studies done by Ice (2023) and Zhan and Montgomery (2003). While women spend more time on routine housework, non-routine housework like house repairs is done by men.

Daughters and daughters-in-law are the major caregivers in households. Spousal caregivers also make up a significant proportion of caregivers. It is very common for children to be caregivers due to the concept of "filial piety". It is an idea that children feel obligated to take care of old parents. Since most of the studies in the review are from China, this observation is quite true because "filial piety" is common among Chinese households. This has been observed in previous studies (Canda, 2013; Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). Coresiding with parents or in-laws significantly affects the caregiving burden of women. The presence of other women in the household has two implications. If the other women in the household are not too old to demand care, then the women share the unpaid care work at home. Also, parents or in-laws are a great help to couples with young children, especially when both the husband and the wife are employed. So, coresiding with the mother or mother-in-law could mean that the housework gets shared. This is in line with the observation by Hertog and Kan (2021). Coresidence with parents or in-laws increases the demand for care if the parents are too old or sick. The propensity to be an informal caregiver depends on the care demands of the elderly, as pointed out by Oshio and Kan (2018). So, while the presence of elderly women in the household has a housework-reducing effect in the early stages of life, there could be a housework-increasing effect in the later stages. As long as parents or in-laws do not demand care, the housework is shared between the women in the household. Rural couples are more likely to live with parents or in-laws than urban couples. This may be because institutional care is more accessible in urban areas than in rural areas. Another possible explanation is that rural households have more traditional beliefs regarding taking care of the elderly. Intergenerational coresidence seems to widen the gender gap in housework. This is because, although the presence of elders reduces housework for both men and women, the reduction is greater for men, reinstating the gender difference.

In line with the findings of Craig (2006), education seems to have a positive impact on women's paid work time. This effect is greater in urban areas than in rural areas. While education has a negative impact on women's housework time, it has a positive impact on men's housework time. This may be due to the influence of education on the gender attitude of

people. Educated men and women are more likely to have egalitarian gender attitudes. This, in turn, leads to a reduction in the gender gap in housework. The housework-reducing effect of education is not observed in the case of childcare and elderly care, as evidence from other studies suggests that education has a positive impact on the childcare and elderly care time of women (Craig, 2006; Hertog et al., 2021). This may be because educated couples are well-informed about childcare and elderly care needs.

The wife's income, relative to the husband's, has a significant negative impact on her unpaid work time (Bittman et al., 2003; Carlson & Lynch, 2017). As discussed previously, this could be a result of the increasing bargaining power in the household. As the relative resource of the wife (income in this context) increases, the increase in bargaining power, in turn, could lead to a fall in her unpaid work time. This phenomenon would only persist till the wife's income is equal to the husband's income, after which the unpaid work time of the wife increases as hypothesised by the gender deviance neutralisation or the compensatory gender display perspectives. This is consistent with the literature (Greenstein, 2000).

Generally, rural households have a traditional gender role attitude compared to urban households. Moreover, the traditional gender roles are more observable in rural households than in urban households. Urban men have a more egalitarian gender attitude, which could be a result of higher education, as discussed above. These egalitarian gender attitudes of men lead to men engaging in more unpaid care work and women engaging in more paid work. The relative resources theory and the gender display perspectives explain the division of unpaid care work in households in various studies, although the gender display perspective is more evident (Brines, 1994). The difference in rural-urban caregiving intensity is not simple. While some studies show that urban caregiving intensity exceeds rural caregiving intensity, more studies confirm the opposite trend. A possible reason why more studies establish that rural women spend more time on unpaid care work than urban women is that rural households hold traditional gender attitudes and thus comply with traditional gender roles. Urban households, on the other hand, might hold a more egalitarian gender attitude and thus reduce the gender gap in unpaid care work.

5. Limitations

The systematic review only considered articles published in English between 2000 and 2022. Only two databases (Scopus and Web of Science) were searched for articles. The search strategy includes terms relating to unpaid care work or time use and the terms "rural" and "urban". The results of the search are limited by the terms used in the search strategy.

6. Scope for Further Studies

This systematic review focuses on the rural-urban differences in unpaid care work. Topics discussed include the gender gap in unpaid care work, the roles of relative resources and gender attitude and coresidence. Further research could investigate the role of paid domestic workers in the reduction of unpaid care work in households and the roles of age and marriage in unpaid care work in the rural-urban setting. Also, further research could investigate the role of governments and NGOs in providing Informal care.

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