

Research on the Current Situation of Intergenerational Income Flow and Its Influencing Mechanism

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Abstract: As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, further deepening reform requires breaking through the barriers of solidified interests. It is essential to analyze the current situation of inter-generational income flow, explore the causes of inter-generational income flow. The research first consulted the population of each administrative region of Xiamen City through the seventh population census data, conducted multi-stage sampling. It conducted a qualitative and quantitative investigation of the existing state of intergenerational income flow using a questionnaire survey. Thus, three features of the current state of intergenerational income flow were obtained: Parents' assistance in children's growth, education and employment, individuals' views on intergenerational income flow, and their cognition of income comparison. Then, based on the multiple linear regression model, the influence mechanism of the child income is analyzed. Additionally, the income elasticity across generations is determined. The findings indicate that the study's contents have a favorable effect on the offspring's intergenerational income.

1 INTRODUCTION


The primary focus of social mobility research is intergenerational mobility. Intergenerational income mobility (IIM) refers to the relationship or elasticity of children's income to that of their parents. The situation can reflect the basic order and opportunity structure of the society as well as the relationship model between different classes, so it has been paid much attention.

IIM was mainly studied about human capital (Becker & Thomes, 1979). At first, in order to accurately measure IIM, many scholars studied temporary income bias. Life cycle bias and co-resident sample bias are used to correct intergenerational mobility.

To address the issue of temporary income bias, combined with the theory of permanent income and reduced the bias caused by short-term fluctuations by taking the average years of the current income of the parents as the proxy variable of permanent income (Solon et al., 1992). Bjorklund corrected the upward bias of intergenerational income elasticity based on Solon by using the father's years of education and

occupation as instrumental variables (Bjorklund et al., 1997). About the correction of life cycle bias, Haier found that the actual income in the early 30s and mid-40s was used to estimate the minimum bias and was most suitable for estimating the average income close to the lifetime (Haider et al., 2006). Co-living sample selection bias, that is, co-living sample in the same family can easily lead to high estimation of intergenerational income elasticity. At present, the proportion of parents living with their children in China is gradually declining, and most of the existing databases conduct unified surveys based on the family level, which is easy to lead to the situation of respondents asking more questions than answers, resulting in large intra-sample bias.

Based on gradually improving the correction of the bias of income indicators, Dahl proposed to use the correlation coefficient of intergenerational income rank as a new measurement index to describe the intergenerational income relationship (Dahl et al., 2008). C&H introduced quantile regression of instrumental variables to further eliminate its bias (Chernozhukov & Hansen, 2008). Zhang deeply discussed the impact of education level on the

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intergenerational transmission of relative poverty in rural families (Zhang, 2024). Wang sorted out and summarized the research results on intergenerational income mobility (Wang Shanshan, 2023). Levi found that the ability of education to regulate intergenerational mobility is limited (Levi, 2018), just as Chen thought that the expansion of higher education has reduced its value (Chen, 2023). Shu demonstrated how the opening up and restructuring of the economic system have undermined the value transformation of education (Shu, 2022).

Through questionnaire design and investigation, the paper carries out factor analysis after data differentiation analysis, reliability analysis and validity analysis, and explores the causes of intergenerational income flow by analyzing the current situation (CS) of inter-generational income flow and multiple linear regression model, and puts forward constructive suggestions.

2 INVESTIGATION METHOD

2.1 Questionnaire Survey Method

The research group conducted two questionnaire surveys, namely pre-survey and formal survey. The questionnaire was randomly sampled and distributed using the questionnaire star platform. After clearing the faulty surveys, the pre-investigation yielded 62 valid questionnaires, while the official investigation yielded 150 valid questionnaires.

The questionnaire used in this survey is set into three sections: the basic information of the respondents, the situation of the respondents' parents, and the factors affecting the intergenerational income flow.

2.1.1 Questionnaire Content Design

In the first step, it determines the topic direction according to the research content: analysis of the CS of intergenerational income flow and its influence mechanism. In the second step, it consulted relevant literature and books according to the direction of topic selection, carried out field investigation in Xiamen, collected relevant information, and further understood the relevant situation. The third step is to design different types of questions according to the situation of field investigation and enrich the contents of the questionnaire.

2.1.2 Modification and Improvement of the Questionnaire

After the questionnaire was designed and completed, the content, wording, format and sequence of the questionnaire were analyzed several times, and the questionnaire was adjusted and modified to make it more concise and substantial, to better obtain the information needed for the survey.

2.2 Multi-Stage Sampling

This research group adopts multi-stage sampling, and the sampling process is carried out in stages. Different sampling methods are used in each stage, that is, various sampling methods are combined to consider not only the sample representativeness, but also the manpower required and the total cost incurred in issuing questionnaires.

3 SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Differentiation Analysis

The primary purpose of item analysis is to delete items with low differentiation degree. After recovering the pre-survey questionnaire, the research team first selects effective questionnaires and analyzes the differentiation degree of scale items in the questionnaire. The purpose is to study whether the data can effectively distinguish between high and low levels, to evaluate the quality of a specific item. The total scores of all respondents were ranked in high order. From the analysis results, it can be seen that the score of the high group is above 42 points, and the score of the low group is below 25 points. The test results of 10 items in the scale are all significant ($P < 0.05$). The final result shows that all items in the scale have differentiation and can identify different interviewees.

3.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis is to prove the reliability of the research sample data through analysis, which can be divided into four categories: *Cronbach α* coefficient, broken half reliability, duplicate reliability and retest reliability. Since multiple measurements were not made in this pre-survey, the internal uniform convergence coefficient *Cronbach α* was adopted to test the reliability of the data in consideration of the reliability analysis. The calculation formula of the coefficient is shown:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^k S_i^2}{S_p^2} \right) \quad (1)$$

Where k is the total number of questions in the scale, S_i denotes the i th in-question variance, and S_p is the variance of the total score of all items. The coefficient *Cronbach* α evaluates the internal consistency of the scores of each survey item in the

scale question. Generally speaking, the coefficient *Cronbach* α is best above 0.8, and 0.7-0.8 is an acceptable range. If the coefficient is below 0.6, the scale needs to be reconsidered.

The questionnaire was divided into five dimensions: health status, education concept, CS view, income comparison, and family help, and the coefficients *Cronbach* α were calculated by SPSS analysis software to judge their reliability level. The output is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Pre-survey Coefficients *Cronbach* α

Dimensions	<i>Cronbach</i> α Coefficient	Number of terms	Evaluation result
Health status	0.838	2	Good reliability
Educational concept	0.712	2	Good credibility
Status quo view	0.776	2	Reliability is good
Income comparison	0.844	2	Good reliability
Home help	0.719	2	Good reliability
Scale overall	0.821	10	Good reliability

3.3 Validity Analysis (VA)

VA is to continue to analyze the validity of the item after completing the reliability analysis. There are many kinds of VA, and the VA of the pre-survey questionnaire can usually be divided into content VA and structural VA. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor (CFA) were used to analyze the validity of the questions.

Firstly, the EFA was carried out, which was a cyclic exploration process. The research group used

Bartlett sphericity (BS) test and KMO test on the scale, the purpose of which was to test whether the questionnaire items and factors had a good correspondence.

For BS test, check whether its value is less than 0.05. If the value is less than 0.05, it means that BS test is passed. For KMO test, check whether its KMO value is greater than 0.6, if the KMO value is greater than 0.6, it indicates that it is suitable for exploratory factor analysis, and the larger the value, the better. The output results of SPSS are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Pre-investigated KMO and BS tests

Adequacy test	KMO test	0.831
BS test	Approximate Chi-square	1335.116
	Degrees of Freedom	378
	<i>P</i> value	0.000

As can be seen from Table 2, KMO value is 0.831 and BS test value P is less than 0.05, which is significant, indicating that the questionnaire scale is suitable for factor analysis.

When factor extraction was carried out by the principal component analysis method, the number of

factors to be extracted was set to 5 due to the research dimensions of 5 when designing the scale, and the results were rotated by variance orthogonal. At the same time, the display format of factor load coefficients was set to form a matrix according to the order of size, and variables with load coefficients less

than 0.4 were excluded. The *Varimax* variables with higher load on the same factor are grouped together, so as to better observe the corresponding relationship between factors and items and get a

conclusion. The output result of total variance interpretation is shown in Table 3,

and the factor load matrix obtained after orthogonal rotation is shown in Table 4:

Table 3: Total variance interpretation table

Components	Initial eigenvalues			Extract the sum of squares of loads			Rotate the load sum of squares		
	total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)	Total	Variance (%)	Cumulative (%)
1	10.015	35.766	35.766	10.015	35.766	35.766	5.15	18.392	18.392
2	2.6	9.285	45.052	2.6	9.285	45.052	3.298	11.779	30.171
3	2.347	8.382	53.434	2.347	8.382	53.434	3.294	11.763	41.934
4	1.654	5.906	59.34	1.654	5.906	59.34	2.922	10.437	52.371
5	1.262	4.508	74.054	1.262	4.508	74.054	1.41	5.035	74.054

Table 4: Composition matrix after rotation

	Ingredients						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mental health status	0.666						
Physical health	0.791						
The degree to which an individual values education		0.784					
The degree to which one's parents value education		0.693					
Agree that "a poor family cannot produce a noble son"			0.602				
"Knowledge changes destiny"			0.865				
Income versus peers				0.622			
Compare your income to that of your parents				0.853			
The extent to which the income gap is influenced by the family					0.838		
The extent to which parents help with employment					0.699		

According to the requirement of factor load in factor analysis, if the total variation rate of principal factor explanation is greater than 60% and the factor load is greater than 0.6, then the structural validity is good. From the observation of Table 3, it can be seen that the accumulated variance explanation rate of the five factors extracted is 74.054%, and the factor load of the 10 indicators studied is greater than 0.6, indicating that the factors can extract the information of each item well, and the convergent and discriminative validity of the scale meet the relevant requirements. Further observe the rotation component matrix in Table 4. The corresponding relationship between the five factors extracted and the items was consistent with the expectation.

3.4 Formal Questionnaire Data Processing and Testing

This data review primarily uses a manual format that is broken down into two phases: The first step is to confirm the questionnaire's thoroughness by reviewing it soon after the survey, correctness, and consistency. Considering that the survey subjects come from all walks of life and have different educational backgrounds, whether the questionnaire content is clear and easy to understand is also the key to consider; In the second stage, I audited all questionnaires after completing all questionnaire distribution tasks, to ensure the consistency of processing methods. After first examination, 849 of

the 886 questionnaires that were distributed for this study were recovered, yielding a 95.8% recovery rate.

After finishing the questionnaire, the specific coding method was as follows: the question number was set as Q1, Q2, Q3.... The function of calculating variables refers to a mathematical transformation that deals with the items in the questionnaire. This function is usually used in two situations in questionnaire research, namely, variable production and variable processing. The four items Q10, Q26, Q27, Q28, and Q29 were respectively calculated and the data columns generated were named as "health level", "education concept", "CS view", "income comparison" and "family help".

For missing, duplicate, incomplete and other questionnaire data, data cleaning, for a small number of missing values will be replaced by the mean of the same category, and for a large number of missing values of the questionnaire will not be investigated and analyzed, that is, scrapped.

3.5 Data Inspection

Table 6: The *Cronbach α* coefficients of the formal survey

Dimensions	<i>Cronbach α</i> Coefficient	Number of terms	Evaluation results
Health status	0.838	2	Good reliability
Educational concept	0.712	2	Good credibility
Status quo view	0.776	2	Reliability is good
Income comparison	0.844	2	Good reliability
Home help	0.719	2	Good reliability
Scale ensemble	0.821	10	Good reliability

The results show that the *Cronbach α* coefficients of all dimensions are greater than 0.7, and the *Cronbach α* coefficient of the scale as a whole is 0.821, which indicates that the internal consistency of the questionnaire is good, and the scientific and rational design of the questionnaire structure and questions meet the requirements of market research and analysis in this line.

3.5.3 Validity Test

The concept and basic theory of questionnaire validity test have been mentioned in the pre-survey data analysis, so it will not be repeated. In the same process as the pre-survey validity test, KMO test and BS test are first performed. The calculated KMO

3.5.1 Random Run Test

Random run test uses the run to construct the *Z* statistic and gives the corresponding associated probability value according to the normal distribution table. The test results were shown in Table 5, all *P* values were greater than 0.05, and the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, the questionnaire samples could be considered as random samples and could be analyzed in the following data.

Table 5: Run test table

	Fitness Level	Educational perception
<i>Z</i>	-0.711	0.512
<i>P</i> value	0.477	0.608

3.5.2 Reliability Test

The test method and process of the reliability of the formal questionnaire are the same as those of the pre-survey, and the results show that the *Cronbach α* coefficients at all levels are shown in Table 5.

value is 0.893 and greater than 0.7, and the corresponding *P* value of BS test is less than 0.05, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE7. Formal investigation of KMO and BS test

Adequacy test	KMO test	0.893
	Approximate Chi-square	2893.846
	Degrees of Freedom	378
	<i>P</i> value	0.000

4 CURRENT ANALYSIS OF INTERGENERATIONAL INCOME FLOWS

Through the analysis of parents' help in children's growth, education and employment, individuals' views on intergenerational income flow and their own

cognition of income comparison, the main direction of this investigation is determined.

4.1 The Analysis of Parents' Help to Their Children

4.1.1 The Help Parents Provide to Their Children's Development

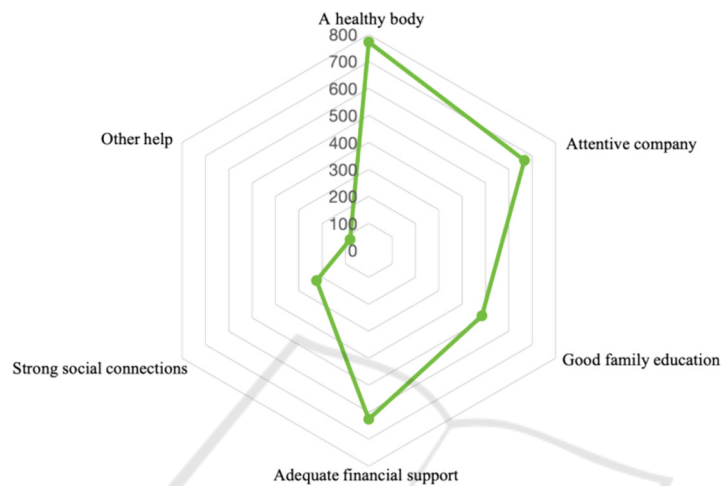


Figure 1: Parents' assistance in the development of their children (Photo/Picture credit: Original).

First of all, the article surveyed the help provided by parents in the growth of their children, as shown in Figure 1. Among the surveyed people, the help received from parents comes from many aspects, including economic, educational, spiritual, physical, and other aspects, and is not limited to financial support, which shows that in today's society, parents take into account the cultivation of their children in

many aspects. At all levels of the survey, almost all respondents agreed that they get good health from their parents, while more than half of respondents acknowledged that they get good company, adequate financial support and good family education.

4.1.2 Parents' Help with Their Children's Education

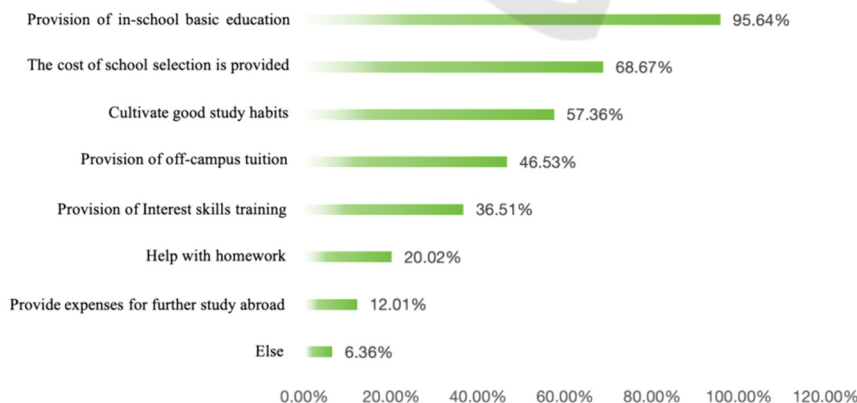


Figure 1: Parents' help with their children's education (Photo/Picture credit: Original).

Secondly, the research team made statistics on the help provided by parents in the child's education. As shown in Figure 2, almost all of the respondents'

parents provide for their basic education in school, which is consistent with our cognition. In addition, more than half of the respondents, 68.67% and

57.36%, pay for school choice and cultivate their children's good study habits, respectively. At the same time, 46.53% of the respondents said that their parents would provide the expenses for after-school tutoring classes. Therefore, the cultivation of their children is profound and multi-faceted.

4.2 Individuals' Views on Intergenerational Income Flows

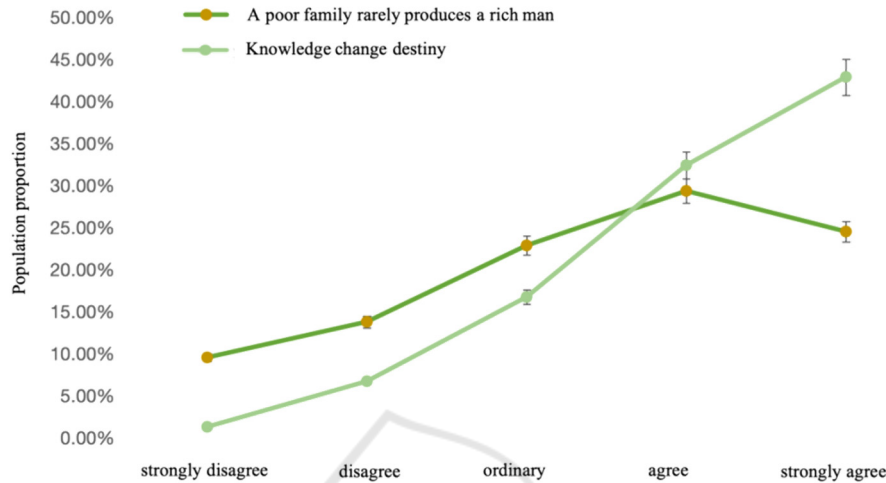


Figure 2: Individuals' views on intergenerational income flows (Photo/Picture credit: Original).

As is shown in Figure 3, more than 75% of the people surveyed agree with the idea that knowledge can change their fate, while only 8% disagree with it. It can be seen that with the development of The Times, more than enough people have felt the power of knowledge and the influence on their fate. The number of people who agree with the view that a poor family rarely produces a good son is nearly 54%,

more than half, only 23% of the people have a pessimistic attitude towards the current era, and think that a person's success is relatively closely related to their birth.

4.3 The Cognition of One's Income

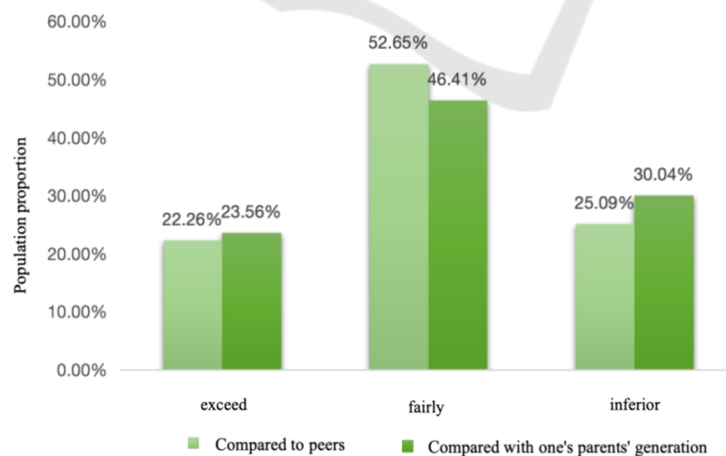


Figure 3: Individual's own income comparison cognition (Photo/Picture credit: Original).

As can be seen from Figure 4, about half of the people think that their income is similar to that of their parents and peers, and about 25% of the people think

that they are above or below the level of their peers. Currently, 24% of people think their income is higher than that of their parents' generation, 30% think it is

lower than that of their parents' generation, and 46% of people think their income is the same as that of their parents' generation. Their parents are still the breadwinner of their families, and they are gradually bearing the burden of family income. The income of the whole society is also at a relatively healthy and stable level.

5 ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCING FACTORS OF CHILD INCOME BASED ON MULTIPLE LINEAR REGRESSION MODEL

Through descriptive statistics, it has a certain understanding and cognition of the CS of intergenerational mobility in today's society. In order to better study the mechanism of intergenerational income mobility, it first analyzes the influencing factors of children's income, and select a OLS model to carry out multiple linear regression of children's income.

5.1 Model Selection

In the regression prediction of child income, the logarithm of child income is selected as the dependent variable, and the dependent variable is calculated by logarithmic processing of Q8, which is the quantitative data. Therefore, the multiple linear regression model is selected to analyze various factors affecting the child income.

5.2 Variable Setting

In this model construction, six indicators such as "personal basic information", "parents' basic information", "education concept", "CS view", "income comparison" and "family help" are selected for measurement, and 21 characteristics, including age, gender, and educational background, are broken down into these six indications, which are set as x_1, x_2, \dots, x_{21} as independent variables that may affect children's income.

5.3 Model Construction

When multiple linear regression is carried out, the complete multicollinearity problem of the data will be detected automatically, and the output results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: OLS regression results

Variables	Child income pair value
Father's income pair value	0.25*** (0.018)
Maternal income pair value	0.15** (0.013)
Children's years of schooling	0.031*** (0.010)
Sex	-0.139*** (0.021)
Age	0.191*** (0.048)
Whether reading	0.468*** (0.085)
Health status	0.030* (0.012)
Household registration status	0.021 (0.032)
Father's years of education	0.100** (0.013)
Years of schooling for mothers	0.008*** (0.016)
Real estate per capita	0.229*** (0.040)
Human capital input	0.394*** (0.056)
The degree to which families value education	0.239*** (0.047)
Perceptions of intergenerational mobility	0.143 (0.197)
Perceptions of one's own income	0.179 (0.211)
Degree of subjective perception of family help	0.012 * (0.114)
Constant term	4.093*** (0.693)
Observed value	849
R^2	0.798

Note: "****", "***", and "**" indicate significant at 1%, 5%, and 10% significance levels, respectively; () inside is clustering standard error.

5.4 Model Test

For *OLS* regression models, the homoscedasticity hypothesis $Var(\mu_i) = \sigma_\mu^2$ ($i = 1, 2, \dots, n$) which

$$t = \frac{\hat{\beta}_j - \beta_j}{Se(\hat{\beta}_j)} = \frac{\hat{\beta}_j - \beta_j}{\sqrt{\sigma_u^2 c}} = \frac{\hat{\beta}_j - \beta_j}{\sqrt{\sigma_u^2 (XX)^{-1}_{jj}}} \quad (j = 0, 1, 2, \dots, k) \quad (2)$$

Contains the common σ_u^2 variance of the random error terms. If heteroscedasticity is present and the t statistic is still calculated according to the formula used in the case of homoscedasticity, the t statistic will be distorted, thus invalidating the t test. In short, heteroscedasticity affects whether the inference is valid and will reduce the efficiency of the estimation, so it tests the heteroscedasticity of the regression model.

The difference between the two can be used to quantify conditional heteroscedasticity because under conditional homoscedasticity, the robust standard error is reduced to the common standard error. Examining if the robust standard error and the ordinary standard error are comparable is the informal approach. This concept is the foundation of the White test, which White first presented in 1980.

White test has the advantage of testing any form of heteroscedasticity and is widely applicable. Therefore, White test is carried out on the established multiple linear regression model, and the output is as follows: $chi2(149) = 150.00$, $Prob = 0.4616$. The null hypothesis is that the disturbance term does not exist heteroscedasticity, because the P value is greater than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, there is no evidence that the disturbance term exists heteroscedasticity, that is, it is considered that there is no heteroscedasticity.

Multicollinearity diagnosis can be based on the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). A common guideline is that if $VIF > 10$, the regression equation is considered to have severe multicollinearity. By using Stata or other econometric software, if the results show $VIF < 10$, it generally concludes that the model does not exhibit serious multicollinearity.

5.5 Analysis of Results

The model's independent variables all pass the significance test, suggesting that each of them influences the dependent variable. Meanwhile, when the regression coefficient of the independent B_i variable is greater than 0, it indicates that it has a

positive effect on the dependent variable, and vice versa. According to the obtained *Stata* regression results, the following conclusions can be drawn:

In contrast to the distribution of intergenerational income elasticity between 0.3 and 0.5 in earlier studies, the estimated results of the parental income pair value and the individual income pair value are significantly positive at the 1% level, with intergenerational income elasticity values of 0.15 and 0.25, respectively. The possible reasons are as follows: The data selected in this paper are all current data, which may lead to the possibility of downward bias in the results. Therefore, the intergenerational income elasticity obtained in this paper is relatively small.

The regression coefficient of gender on individual income is significantly negative, indicating that women are in a relatively weaker position than men in the labor market, and therefore may be in a lower income level than men. This is consistent with the reality, which is also one of the urgent problems to be solved.

Personal income rises with age and with increasing academic degrees, according to the regression results of age and years of schooling, which are statistically positive at the 1% significance level. Family education and support are crucial for the rise of personal income, as seen by the significantly positive regression results of family emphasis on education and family assistance to individual income at the significant levels of 1% and 10%, respectively.

The regression coefficients of personal income on health, education, and per capita household property are significantly positive. The reasons may be as follows: First, having a healthy body can more effectively exert the value created by the body in the work, and thus obtain higher personal income. At the same time, parents can reduce the expenditure on medical care for their children, to reduce the degree of dependence of children on their parents; Secondly, in the case of non-schooling, individuals can replace more valuable work experience and income through the opportunity cost of non-schooling, to reduce their dependence on parents.

6 CONCLUSION

The data analysis of the comprehensive questionnaire survey shows that there are discussions about intergenerational mobility on the Internet, and most of them hold a positive attitude towards future development after rational thinking about the social status quo. At the same time, the help provided by parents in the growth, education and employment of their children cannot be ignored. To better study the mechanism of intergenerational income flow, the research team first conducted a regression analysis on the influencing factors of child income, and found that parental income, gender, age, years of education, health level, whether they are studying or not, and real estate per capita of the family have significant effects on child income.

Regression analysis shows that among education parameters, the number of years of education has a substantial positive effect on children's income. Applying the model of intergenerational income, it is necessary to strengthen the investment of public education resources, especially public education resources. And promote the dynamic balance of high-quality education resources, so as to improve the level of intergenerational income mobility of the whole society.

From the above analysis, we have reason to believe that higher education needs to further strengthen the adaptation to the market, that is, to explore the market demand with The Times. For example, strengthen technical training and practical courses, to improve the quality of technical ability.

According to the results of the moderated mediation model, the intergenerational income elasticity of families with good educational ideas is lower. Adhere to the good family education concept, cultivate more excellent children. "Strict" as the first, seize the children's learning critical period; Cultivate independent consciousness, so that children do not have dependent thoughts; Pay attention to children's growth, communicate with them more, guide children correctly; Home and school contact, maintain consistency, support together.

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