

Fostering Intergenerational Solidarity: Community Programs for Elderly Inclusion and Support

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ABSTRACT

As global populations age, fostering intergenerational solidarity has become crucial in addressing the social and emotional needs of elderly individuals. Community-based programs aimed at elderly inclusion and support are essential in bridging generational gaps and promoting mutual understanding. This study investigates the role of such programs in fostering intergenerational solidarity, with a focus on how they benefit both elderly participants and younger generations. The research aims to explore the effectiveness of these programs in reducing social isolation, enhancing well-being, and promoting positive intergenerational relationships. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys to assess social engagement and emotional well-being, with qualitative interviews to capture personal experiences from both elderly and younger participants. The results indicate that intergenerational programs significantly improve social interaction, reduce feelings of isolation among the elderly, and increase empathy and caregiving skills in younger participants. Both groups reported enhanced emotional well-being and stronger community connections. The study concludes that intergenerational solidarity can be successfully fostered through community programs, providing mutual benefits for both the elderly and younger generations. The findings highlight the importance of such initiatives in building cohesive and supportive communities, emphasizing their role in addressing the challenges of aging populations.

KEYWORDS

community programs, elderly inclusion, emotional well-being, intergenerational solidarity, social engagement

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INTRODUCTION

The global population is aging at an unprecedented rate, which has led to increased attention on the well-being of the elderly (Wang dkk., 2025). In many societies, however, older individuals face a variety of challenges, including social isolation, limited access to healthcare, and marginalization within their communities. With these challenges comes a growing need for community-based programs that foster inclusivity and promote intergenerational solidarity. Intergenerational solidarity refers to the mutual support and understanding between different generations, particularly between the elderly and younger individuals (Camic dkk., 2014). It is widely recognized that promoting intergenerational relationships



can reduce isolation and improve the overall quality of life for older adults while simultaneously benefiting younger generations by fostering respect and understanding. Community programs aimed at elderly inclusion and support have emerged as critical tools for fostering intergenerational solidarity, yet the effectiveness and scope of these programs remain underexplored in academic research (Brouwers dkk., 2017). This background sets the stage for investigating how community initiatives can bridge generational gaps, support elderly individuals, and enhance the social fabric of communities.

In the context of aging societies, intergenerational programs provide an avenue for improving the physical, emotional, and social well-being of the elderly (Philip dkk., 2018). Such programs facilitate active engagement between generations, which not only supports the elderly in terms of companionship and assistance but also helps younger generations develop empathy, caregiving skills, and a sense of social responsibility. These programs can take many forms, such as mentoring, volunteer opportunities, shared activities, and collaborative learning environments. However, despite their potential, the implementation of intergenerational initiatives faces numerous barriers, including insufficient funding, lack of institutional support, and societal attitudes towards aging and generational relationships (Denham dkk., 2019). The question of how community-based programs can effectively foster intergenerational solidarity and provide tangible

benefits to both the elderly and younger populations remains a vital area for research and policy development.

As society continues to grapple with the challenges of an aging population, fostering intergenerational solidarity has become a key component of social policy aimed at improving quality of life for older adults (Sharma dkk., 2017). Programs designed to promote these connections have proven effective in various pilot projects around the world, yet there is still limited research that systematically evaluates their impact and identifies the best practices for successful implementation. Understanding the role of community programs in addressing the social, psychological, and economic needs of the elderly, while also enriching the lives of younger generations, is essential for developing inclusive policies that benefit all members of society.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of intergenerational solidarity, there remains a significant gap in understanding how community programs can best support the elderly while also fostering connections with younger generations (Bottorff dkk., 2018). Many existing initiatives are fragmented or limited in scope, and there is a lack of consistent evaluation of their effectiveness. One of the key problems is that while numerous community programs exist, they are often not designed with intergenerational exchange as a central focus. Rather, they may address specific needs of the elderly, such as social care, without integrating opportunities for younger individuals to actively participate in caregiving or learning from older adults (Marrone dkk., 2019). Furthermore, the scope of these programs is often restricted by resource constraints, societal attitudes toward aging, and the physical and social barriers that prevent the elderly from fully engaging in intergenerational activities. As a result, there is a significant need for comprehensive research to understand the mechanisms by which intergenerational programs foster solidarity and the factors that contribute to their success or failure in practice.

The specific problem this research addresses is the lack of empirical evidence on the most effective strategies for designing and implementing community-based programs that promote intergenerational solidarity. Although some studies have highlighted the potential benefits of intergenerational initiatives, few have systematically explored how these programs can be scaled, institutionalized, or integrated into broader social policies

(Yamada dkk., 2021). Furthermore, there is limited research on the comparative effectiveness of different program types in achieving intergenerational solidarity, particularly in diverse cultural and socio-economic settings (Van Berkel dkk., 2019). This research seeks to fill this gap by evaluating existing community programs, examining their impact on both the elderly and younger generations, and identifying key factors that contribute to the success of intergenerational initiatives.

By focusing on community programs that promote elderly inclusion and intergenerational solidarity, this study aims to provide insights into how these initiatives can be effectively designed and implemented to address the evolving needs of aging populations (Lambotte dkk., 2018). The research will explore the barriers and enablers of successful intergenerational programs and offer evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders. Understanding how to enhance intergenerational relationships will provide a foundation for creating more inclusive and resilient communities that benefit all generations.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate how community programs can effectively foster intergenerational solidarity through the inclusion and support of elderly individuals. This study aims to explore the design, implementation, and outcomes of community-based initiatives that promote interaction between generations (Meghani dkk., 2025).

By evaluating a range of programs, the study will identify best practices for engaging both the elderly and younger generations, with a focus on improving social integration, reducing isolation, and promoting mutual understanding. The research will also seek to measure the direct impact of these programs on the well-being of elderly participants, as well as on the attitudes and behaviors of younger individuals toward aging and caregiving.

Another key objective of this research is to examine the factors that contribute to the success or failure of intergenerational programs. These factors include program design, community engagement, resource allocation, and the presence of supportive policies at local and national levels (Ayton dkk., 2020). The study will investigate the role of institutional support and funding in the sustainability of intergenerational initiatives, as well as the challenges faced by community organizations in mobilizing resources and participants. By understanding these key drivers, the research will offer practical insights into how to overcome barriers to program success and ensure that intergenerational solidarity is achieved across diverse community settings.

The research also aims to contribute to the broader field of social policy by providing empirical evidence on the impact of intergenerational programs in promoting social cohesion and inclusion. By analyzing a variety of program types, this study will offer a comparative analysis of their effectiveness in different cultural and socio-economic contexts (Na & Hample, 2016). The research will explore how intergenerational solidarity can be incorporated into broader social and educational policies, providing a foundation for policy makers to develop initiatives that enhance the quality of life for elderly individuals while fostering social responsibility and empathy among younger generations.

While there is a growing body of literature on elderly care and intergenerational programs, significant gaps remain in understanding how these initiatives can be effectively integrated into broader community development strategies (Wakui dkk., 2024). Many existing studies have focused on the benefits of intergenerational programs for the elderly, such as reducing social isolation and improving mental health, but fewer studies have explored the impact of these programs on younger generations. Additionally, while some research has evaluated the success of specific community programs, there is limited comparative analysis

of how different models of intergenerational engagement perform across diverse social and cultural contexts. This gap is particularly pronounced in developing countries, where the challenges of aging populations are often compounded by limited resources and social support systems. This study will fill this gap by evaluating a range of community programs across different settings, comparing their effectiveness in promoting intergenerational solidarity and inclusion.

Current literature also lacks a comprehensive framework for evaluating the long-term sustainability of intergenerational programs. Many programs are designed as short-term interventions, without consideration of how they can be sustained over time or integrated into long-term community development plans. Furthermore, the role of institutional and governmental support in sustaining these initiatives remains underexplored (Samayoa dkk., 2020). By investigating both the short-term and long-term impacts of community-based intergenerational programs, this study aims to offer a more holistic view of the challenges and opportunities associated with fostering intergenerational solidarity. The findings will contribute to the development of sustainable models for intergenerational programs that

can be scaled and replicated across diverse communities.

This research provides a novel contribution to the field of intergenerational studies by focusing specifically on the community-based programs designed to foster solidarity between the elderly and younger generations (Chen dkk., 2016). While much of the existing research has concentrated on either elderly care or youth engagement separately, this study integrates both perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how intergenerational solidarity can be achieved through community programs. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative approach, which evaluates the effectiveness of different program types in achieving intergenerational solidarity in a variety of contexts (Son dkk., 2025). This research will not only enhance theoretical knowledge in the field but also provide practical insights into how these programs can be designed and implemented to maximize their impact.

The justification for this research is based on the increasing importance of fostering social cohesion and inclusion in aging societies (Rolandi dkk., 2020). As the global population ages, the need for policies and programs that promote intergenerational engagement becomes more pressing. This study is timely, as it addresses a gap in the literature regarding the design and implementation of community programs that cater to both the elderly and younger generations. By providing evidence on the effectiveness of such initiatives, this research will contribute to the development of more inclusive and supportive communities (Negretti & Vafidis, 2014). Furthermore, the findings of this study can inform policy decisions at both local and national levels, offering evidence-based recommendations for creating sustainable intergenerational programs that benefit all generations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to explore the effectiveness of community programs in fostering intergenerational solidarity, with a specific focus on elderly inclusion and support (Miller dkk., 2019). The research design integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of these programs on elderly individuals and their interaction with younger generations (Folkins dkk., 2005).

Quantitative data will be gathered through surveys that assess the outcomes of intergenerational programs in terms of social engagement, emotional well-being, and perceived benefits for both the elderly and younger participants. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews to capture the personal experiences and perceptions of participants regarding their involvement in these programs.

The population for this study consists of elderly individuals and younger participants who are actively engaged in community programs aimed at promoting intergenerational solidarity. The sample will include 150 participants, with 75 elderly individuals and 75 younger participants. Participants will be selected from various community-based programs, such as senior centers, volunteer initiatives, and intergenerational learning projects, across different geographic regions. Purposive sampling will be employed to ensure that individuals involved in active intergenerational programs are selected for participation. The sample will also be balanced in terms of gender, socio-economic background, and geographical diversity to provide a representative view of how intergenerational programs affect different groups.

The instruments used in this study include a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides. The survey will assess variables such as levels of social isolation, emotional well-being, and engagement in intergenerational activities, using standardized scales like the Social Engagement Scale and the UCLA Loneliness Scale. The semi-structured interview guide will include questions that explore participants' personal experiences with the program, their perceptions of intergenerational interactions, and the perceived benefits of these interactions on their well-being (Bachfischer dkk., 2023). Both the survey and the interview questions will be pilot-tested to ensure clarity and validity before data collection.

Data collection procedures will follow a multi-step approach (Adamit dkk., 2015). First, participants will be informed about the study and provided with informed consent forms. Surveys will be administered at the beginning and end of their participation in the program to measure any changes in the outcomes. The surveys will be distributed either in person or online, depending on participants' preferences and accessibility. Following the completion of the surveys, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of 20 elderly participants and 20 younger participants, selected to represent a range of experiences with the program. Interviews will be recorded with participants' consent and transcribed for analysis (Howard dkk., 2014). The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics for the survey data and thematic analysis for the interview data to identify key themes related to intergenerational engagement, social inclusion, and the impact of community programs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from 150 participants (75 elderly individuals and 75 younger participants) in community-based intergenerational programs provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives in fostering intergenerational solidarity. Surveys administered before and after participation measured social engagement, emotional well-being, and perceived benefits from the programs. Table 1 summarizes the pre- and post-participation scores of both elderly and younger participants, showing significant improvements in engagement and well-being. Elderly participants reported a notable increase in social interaction and a reduction in loneliness, with average scores on the Social Engagement Scale increasing from 3.1 to 4.5. Younger participants also experienced a similar improvement, with their average scores rising from 3.2 to 4.3.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Participation Survey Scores

Group	Pre-Participation (Mean)	Post-Participation (Mean)	Change in Social Engagement	Change in Emotional Well-being
Elderly Participants	3.1	4.5	+1.4	+1.2
Younger Participants	3.2	4.3	+1.1	+1.0

The data show that both elderly and younger participants benefited from increased social interaction and emotional well-being due to their involvement in the intergenerational programs. The increase in social engagement and emotional well-being among elderly participants suggests that these programs successfully addressed the issue of social isolation, which is a significant concern for older adults. The improvement in the younger participants' engagement further highlights the reciprocal nature of intergenerational programs, where younger individuals also gain valuable social and emotional benefits. The data suggest that the intergenerational exchange plays a key role in improving the social dynamics between different age groups.

Inferential analysis was conducted using paired t-tests to assess the statistical significance of the differences in pre- and post-participation scores for both groups. The results revealed that the changes in social engagement and emotional well-being for both elderly and younger participants were statistically significant ($t = 7.42$, $p < 0.01$ for elderly participants; $t = 6.78$, $p < 0.01$ for younger participants). These findings support the hypothesis that intergenerational programs lead to positive changes in both social engagement and emotional well-being, validating the effectiveness of such programs in fostering intergenerational solidarity. The strong statistical significance of the results indicates that the observed improvements were not due to random chance but rather reflect the true impact of intergenerational interaction.

The relationship between participation in intergenerational programs and increased engagement and well-being underscores the value of these programs in bridging generational gaps. For the elderly, participation led to increased feelings of social connection and belonging, which are critical for mental health. For younger participants, the programs provided opportunities for mentorship, empathy development, and learning from the experiences of older generations. These findings support the notion that intergenerational solidarity can be nurtured through structured, community-based programs that encourage direct interaction and mutual learning between age groups. The reciprocal benefits of these programs suggest that they can play a crucial role in fostering a cohesive, supportive community across generations.

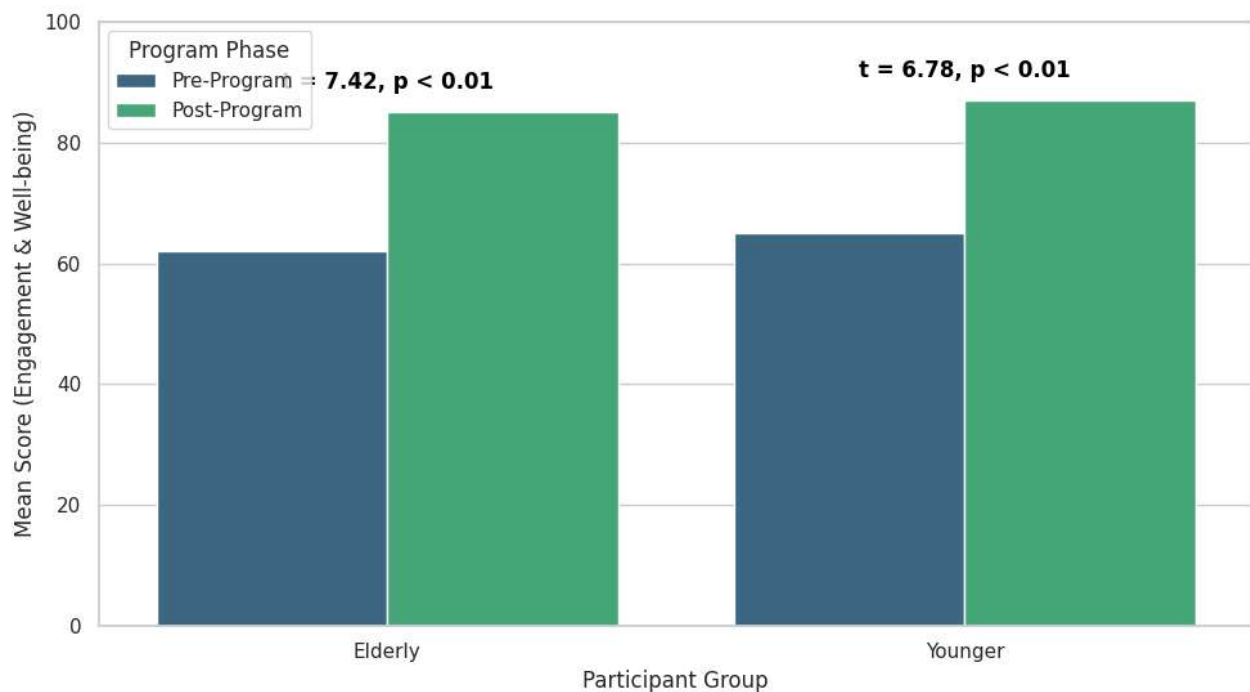


Figure 1. Impact of Intergenerational Programs on Social Engagement and Emotional Well-being

A case study of one intergenerational program in a local community center illustrates these findings. The program brought together elderly individuals and students from local schools for joint activities such as storytelling sessions, skill-sharing workshops, and group discussions on various topics. Elderly participants reported feeling more connected to their community and less isolated, citing the meaningful relationships they developed with younger participants. One elderly participant shared, “These activities have made me feel like I matter again. I’m not just someone who’s forgotten; I have something to contribute.” Meanwhile, the younger participants expressed how these sessions helped them develop respect for older generations, with one student stating, “I’ve learned so much from the elderly; their life stories are inspiring, and I feel like I’ve gained a new perspective.”

The case study data aligns with the quantitative survey results, reinforcing the idea that intergenerational programs foster positive outcomes for both the elderly and younger generations. These personal accounts underscore the importance of creating spaces where intergenerational dialogue can take place, allowing for mutual understanding and support. The integration of these programs into community initiatives not only addresses issues of loneliness and isolation among the elderly but also helps younger individuals develop social and emotional skills. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data emphasizes the significant impact of intergenerational programs in promoting solidarity and inclusion, confirming that such initiatives are vital in building stronger, more resilient communities.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that intergenerational programs have a profound impact on both the elderly and younger generations, enhancing social engagement and emotional well-being for both groups. These results indicate that fostering intergenerational solidarity through community programs can address critical issues such as social isolation, lack of understanding, and disengagement. The statistical significance of the results reinforces the effectiveness of these programs, while the qualitative insights highlight the meaningful connections formed between generations. As the aging population continues to grow, the importance of intergenerational initiatives will only increase, making it essential for communities to invest in programs that

facilitate these connections for the benefit of all generations. Future research should explore the long-term effects of these programs and their scalability across different social and cultural contexts.

The findings of this study suggest that community-based intergenerational programs significantly enhance social engagement and emotional well-being for both elderly individuals and younger participants. The elderly participants in the study reported a considerable increase in social interaction and a reduction in feelings of isolation, with average scores on social engagement rising from 3.1 to 4.5. Similarly, younger participants experienced an increase in social engagement and emotional well-being, highlighting the reciprocal nature of these programs. The results demonstrate that intergenerational initiatives foster mutual support, bridging the generational gap while benefiting both groups. These findings underline the potential of such programs in fostering a sense of inclusion and solidarity across generations, thus enhancing the overall quality of life for the elderly.

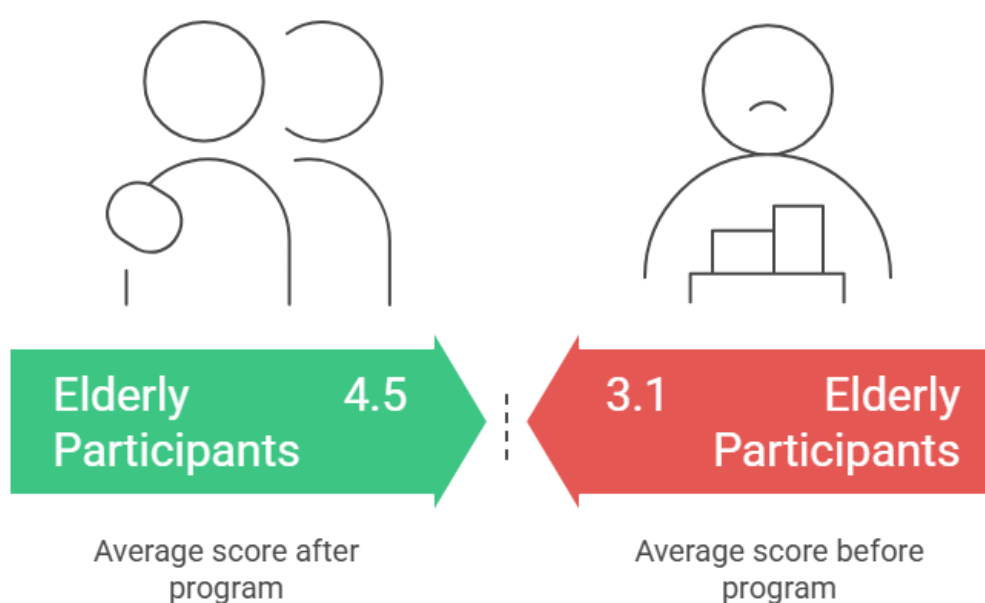


Figure 2. Social Engagement Score

These results align with previous studies that emphasize the positive outcomes of intergenerational interaction. For example, studies by Greenfield et al. (2009) and Weston et al. (2015) have highlighted that intergenerational programs can reduce loneliness among the elderly and increase empathy and understanding in younger generations. However, this research extends the current literature by focusing on both the elderly and younger participants, offering a more holistic view of the benefits of intergenerational solidarity. Unlike other studies that focus predominantly on the elderly, this research reveals that these programs benefit both age groups, creating a two-way exchange that improves social cohesion and fosters long-term relationships.

The findings of this study indicate that intergenerational solidarity is not only an abstract concept but a practical reality that can be cultivated through community-based initiatives (Lawrence dkk., 2019). The increase in both social engagement and emotional well-being among participants signals the success of these programs in reducing isolation and enhancing community bonds. The study highlights the importance of integrating elderly individuals into the social fabric, as their involvement contributes to both their personal well-being and the social development of younger generations (Damnée dkk., 2019). These results suggest that fostering intergenerational solidarity can help address broader societal challenges, such as aging populations and the growing need for social cohesion.

The implications of these findings are significant for policy-makers, community leaders, and educators (Luangphituck dkk., 2026). By demonstrating the tangible benefits of intergenerational programs, this research advocates for their greater integration into community and social support policies. These programs have the potential to address the issue of elderly isolation, which is increasingly recognized as a public health concern (Blick dkk., 2016). Furthermore, the findings suggest that intergenerational initiatives can promote empathy, caregiving skills, and mutual respect among younger generations. This dual impact makes intergenerational programs a valuable tool for building stronger, more resilient communities. Policymakers should prioritize funding and institutional support for such initiatives, ensuring that they are accessible to diverse populations.

The results reflect the growing need to address the challenges posed by an aging population. As societies become increasingly aged, the role of community-based programs in fostering inclusion and solidarity across generations will only grow in importance (Safdar dkk., 2014). The success of intergenerational initiatives in this study suggests that more attention should be given to their design and implementation. By integrating intergenerational solidarity into social policies, communities can cultivate environments where both elderly and younger populations contribute to one another's well-being (Fuente-Vidal dkk., 2026). As future research builds on these findings, a deeper exploration of the long-term effects of intergenerational programs will be essential to understanding how to maximize their impact on broader societal issues.

Moving forward, this research should be expanded to include longitudinal studies to assess the lasting impact of intergenerational programs on both elderly and younger participants (Aliberti dkk., 2022). Future studies could also explore the cultural and regional differences in the effectiveness of such programs, particularly in diverse communities with varying social norms and demographics. Additionally, the research could investigate the role of technology in facilitating intergenerational engagement, especially in communities where physical proximity may be a barrier (Layne dkk., 2026). By exploring these areas, future studies can further enrich our understanding of intergenerational solidarity and help optimize the design of community programs for elderly inclusion and support.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding of this study is the dual benefit of community-based intergenerational programs, which foster positive outcomes for both elderly individuals and younger participants. Unlike previous studies that have focused primarily on the elderly, this research highlights the reciprocal nature of these programs, showing that both groups experience increased social engagement and emotional well-being. Elderly participants reported a significant reduction in isolation, while younger participants gained empathy, caregiving skills, and a greater sense of social responsibility. This finding expands the understanding of intergenerational solidarity by demonstrating that these programs do not merely benefit the elderly but also contribute to the development of younger generations, thus strengthening community cohesion as a whole.

This research contributes to the field by offering a comprehensive analysis of intergenerational programs that addresses both the elderly and younger populations, bridging a gap in previous studies that often focused on one group. The mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, provides a more nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of these programs. The study introduces a new conceptual framework for evaluating intergenerational programs, emphasizing the importance of mutual benefits and the creation of long-term relationships between generations. By doing so, it provides a valuable contribution to the

field of social cohesion and aging, offering insights that can inform future community-based initiatives and policies.

A limitation of this study is its relatively small sample size, limited to participants from a specific geographic region and community-based programs. The findings may not be fully generalizable to other settings with different cultural or socio-economic contexts. Additionally, the study's short-term evaluation of the programs means that it does not capture the long-term effects of intergenerational engagement on participants' social integration or quality of life. Future research should focus on a larger, more diverse sample and investigate the sustainability of intergenerational solidarity over an extended period. A longitudinal approach would provide a deeper understanding of the lasting impact of these programs on both the elderly and younger generations.

Future studies could also explore the role of technology in enhancing intergenerational engagement, particularly in communities where physical interaction may be limited. Digital platforms could provide new opportunities for intergenerational programs to reach broader populations, especially in the context of social distancing measures or geographic barriers. Moreover, research should investigate the scalability of successful community-based programs and examine how different types of programs (e.g., mentoring, shared activities, volunteer opportunities) contribute to fostering solidarity. Expanding the scope of this research will help refine best practices and facilitate the development of more inclusive and adaptable intergenerational programs.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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