LAKI SA LOLO’T LOLA:
Impacts of Grandparents as Primary Caregivers on Child Development
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Introduction

Grandparents tend to have a more vital role in the lives of their grandchildren. Their relationship with their grandchildren has transcends from childhood to adolescence. Through close and meaningful interactions, this connection proves greater influence on their attitudes, behaviors, and perspectives. The highest level of grandparents’ involvement occurs among grandparents raising their grandchildren when parents are absent from the household. Given that this is becoming a common social phenomenon, more research on the impacts of grandparents as primary caregivers and their influence on parenting dynamics is necessary.

Literature Review

Difficulty in handling all their childcare needs is one of the major difficulties many families face these modern times. Over the recent years, the grandparent taking the role as the primary caregiver and parent-figure has emerged. According to Martinez, et. al, the number of elderly men and women involved in the care of their grandchildren is ever-increasing, and playing a role in the upbringing of their grandchildren generates a sense of purpose and youth, as well as providing them with happiness and satisfaction (Martinez, et.al., 2019).

According to research by Buchanan and Rotkirch, grandparents spend an average of more than 8 hours per week caring for their grandchildren, with this commitment typically rising to more than 11 hours per week for those who are most dependent (Buchanan and Rotkirch, 2018). They also contribute financially to their grandchildren's education, including clothing, leisure, and hobbies, as well as pocket money.

Across the world, other factors also come into play like the urbanization that happened in countryside China which left behind to care 60 million Chinese children to their grandparents as their parents live and work away (Buchanan and Rotkirch, 2018). Similarly
in the Philippines, a large number of children were often left behind by their grandparents while their parents pursue jobs and work overseas.

The main of rising grandparental involvement is also rooted in demographic change. Developing countries have experienced growth in the number of their elderly as they now live longer and can offer help to their family. When life expectancy at birth has increased steadily for centuries, life expectancy at the age of 65 started to increase only these recent years. In our current economic situation of working individuals and employed members of the family who are assigned with the financial responsibility to support everyday life, the elderly are now expected to provide financial assistance. While there is no clear evidence that caring for grandchildren has a large impact on grandparents' health and behavior, it might rely on other factors such as household chores and whether caregiving responsibilities are long-term (Martinez, et.al, 2019). This relationship between grandparents and grandchildren occurs in all cultures, although the way it is executed varies. Grandparenting is viewed as a part of holistic child-rearing, especially in engaging them in social activities that result in factors brought about by changes in modern family constellations (Aw, et.al., 2017).

Moreover, it was also acknowledged by several researchers that grandparents’ position and increasing role in the active rearing of their grandchildren may also be due to their children’s incapacity to parent (Zhang, et.al., 2015). Prior research also suggests that apart from parents, other members of the extended family, such as grandparents also influence the children’s behavioral outcomes (Mollegaard & Jaeger, 2015).

Grandparents are considered natural educators and are partially responsible for their grandchildren's social and emotional well-being in the absence of their biological parents (King & Elder, 2015). Grandparents, as custodians, typically pass on their attitudes and belief systems to their grandchildren, providing positive socio-emotional development (Yusuf, 2015). Socio-emotional development is highly significant since it affects an individual's
performance and determines one's adaptive resiliency in difficult situations (Whittenberg, 2015).

Grandparents can influence their grandchildren directly through their interactions with them. Grandparents may also cooperate with parents to enforce parenting rules and keep an eye on their grandchildren's activities (Zhang, et.al., 2015). Grandparents and grandchildren interact directly often when they are in a crisis or require immediate assistance. Grandparents, who frequently serve as guardians and conduct in the same way that parents do, are likely to play the role of "good cop" and be the ones that grandkids turn to in times of moral conflict. In addition, situations when grandparents provide emotional and instrumental support to the parents also lead to positive child outcomes.

Grandparents' involvement reaches its highest when they are given entire responsibility for raising and providing for their grandchildren. Custodial grandparent families are a common term for this situation. The children raised by their grandparents are in an informal arrangement and out of reach of social services. Children are also forced to leave their family home to live with their grandparents for a variety of reasons, including parental abuse and neglect, death, and early age. Among those children who are in contact with their parents, parental involvement in custodial grandparent families is often erratic and inconsistent (Yusuf, 2015).

Grandparents, however, may be the best substitute caregiver when the parents are absent and unavailable to provide care for the children, but the advantages and disadvantages in grandparenting for children's development must be considered to determine how to improve the quality of care and benefit being provided to them. According to Sun & Jiang, as children psychologically mature and their social interaction increases, their awareness of the family dynamics surges as well (Sun & Jiang, 2017).

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**Conclusion**

There are several areas for study on this topic. Data collection is required to learn how grandparent-grandchild relationships change as children get older, the factors that might influence and disrupt these changes, and the implications of these dynamics for the children's well-being. The cost and advantages of parenting grandchildren are also up for debate.

The nurturing skills of grandparents have provided their grandchildren the ability to use their learned skills to positively adapt to difficult and challenging life situations. Their moral compass and guidance become naturally embedded in the socio-economic domain of an individual. The findings of the research materials further attest to the fundamental notion that grandparents who raise their grandchildren are a special socio-economic group that needs admiration and support. The extent to which this responsibility transcends is an interesting lens through which we can frame the dynamics of grandparenting in the holistic development of children. The nurturing skills of grandparents have provided their grandchildren the ability to use their learned skills to positively adapt to difficult and challenging life situations. Their moral compass and guidance become naturally embedded in the socio-economic domain of an individual. The findings of the research materials further attest to the fundamental notion that grandparents who raise their grandchildren are a special socio-economic group that needs admiration and support. The extent to which this responsibility transcends is an interesting lens through which we can frame the dynamics of grandparenting in the holistic development of children.
References


