Abstract

WHAT DO CORESIDENTIAL GRANDPARENTS AND THE GRANDCHILDREN THEY’RE RAISING NEED FROM EACH OTHER?

by Gifty Dede Ashirifi

This research explored the reciprocity of care among coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising and what they need from each other to promote healthy grandparent-grandchild relationships. Grandparents provide invaluable contributions to their families and society sometimes by accepting primary responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Existing research posits both satisfaction and challenges involved in grandparents raising their grandchildren which can influence grandparent-grandchild/ren relationships. In addition to external factors such as the culture of the ethnic group and social support for grandparenting, existing research also shows that internal factors have an impact on grandparent-grandchild relationships including gender, the stage of development of the grandchild, the relationship between the grandparents and the parents, and the relationship between the parents and the child (Won, 2009). However, the relationship between the grandparents and the grandchild/ren they are raising (the focus of this study) has not been explored extensively. To explore this topic, primary data was gathered through semi-structured interviews conducted from 26 participants (15 grandparents, 11 grandchildren). Detailed notes were taken and audiotape recordings were made to validate the notes taken during the interviews. Findings suggest that reciprocity of care exists among coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. In addition to love, care and respect, this research also found that engaging in activities together as a family promotes healthy interactions which can improve grandparent-grandchild relationships.

Keywords: coresidential grandparents, grandchildren, reciprocity of care
WHAT DO CORESIDENTIAL GRANDPARENTS AND THE GRANDCHILDREN THEY'RE RAISING NEED FROM EACH OTHER

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# Contents

Introduction ................................................................................. 1  
Literature review ........................................................................... 3  
  Traditional grandparenting roles .............................................. 4  
  Grandparent-grandchild connectivity and relationship ............... 4  
  Coresidential grandparenting effects on grandparents ............... 6  
  Coresidential grandparenting effects on grandchildren .............. 7  
Methods ....................................................................................... 8  
  Participants .............................................................................. 8  
  Interview .................................................................................. 8  
  Data analysis ........................................................................... 9  
Results ......................................................................................... 10  
  Research Objectives and Findings ............................................ 13  
  Grandparents’ results ............................................................... 13  
  Grandchildren’s results ............................................................. 17  
  The experience of coresidential grandparents ......................... 19  
  The experience of coresidential grandchildren ....................... 23  
Discussion .................................................................................... 25  
  Engaging in activities together and effective communication ...... 25  
  Mutual support ......................................................................... 25  
  Limitations ............................................................................... 27  
  Recommendations .................................................................... 28  
Works Cited ................................................................................... 30  
  Appendix A: Interview Guide for Grandparents ....................... 33  
  Appendix B: Interview Guide for Grandchildren ....................... 36  
  Appendix C: Handout for Grandparents and Grandchildren ....... 37
List of Tables

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of grandparent participants........10

**Table 2.** Demographic characteristics of grandchildren participants......11
Dedication

I dedicate this Critical Inquiry to my father in loving memory, Elder John Okoe Ashirifi (deceased) and my dear mother Mrs. Mary Yaa Ashirifi. I also dedicate it to Aunty Comfort Takyi and The Very Rev. Walter Pimpong. These people have outstandingly impacted my life.
Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to God almighty whose grace has indeed been sufficient for me. I never would have made it without His Grace and Provision. I am again grateful to International Needs, an organization that has been part of my life for the past 20 years. I appreciate all their support and prayers. My special appreciation goes to Kate de Medeiros PhD (my Chair), Scott Brown PhD (Committee member) and Jenifer Bulanda PhD (Committee member) for their invaluable contribution to this research. Another special appreciation to Rick and Libby Cottrell for introducing me to Miami University and the Sociology and Gerontology Department.

I affectionately added Miyamasu to my name because the Miyamasu family literally added me to their family and showed me so much love and care. Linda always introduced me as her African daughter throughout my study period. May God richly bless you and keep you all healthy and forever young as always. I really appreciate the immense support you gave me during the data collection stages of this research.

I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Mensa (UNFPA), all my Michigan Aunties and Uncles, Wisconsin families, Ohio families and Philadelphia families.

Last, I thank God for Josie Rader (US), Millicent Gikunda (Kenya), Gideon Intsiful (Ghana) and Tariro Just Ngorosha (Zimbabwe), great friends that God blessed me with during my two years of study. They cheered me on to the end. God richly bless you all.
Introduction

In 2005, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reported that in Ohio alone, 157,298 children lived in households headed by grandparents and 76,794 of those households were without the presence of either parent. A total of 86,009 grandparents in Ohio had primary caregiving responsibility for the grandchildren living with them (AARP, 2005). Grandparents ‘raising their grandchildren is a concept that has been associated with significant satisfaction because grandparents gain a new purpose, they experience the joy of participating in child rearing, and participating in grandchildren’s activities and they are able to see their accomplishments (Waldrop and Weber, 2001). Older adults ‘interactions through intergenerational programs have also been shown to have a positive impact on their well-being and life satisfaction (Seefelt, 2008). Other research on grandparents has looked into their experience with volunteerism (Bulanda & Jendrek, 2014) among others. However, various researchers have provided evidence of the health, physical, psychological, social and financial (Letiecq et. al, 2008; Hughes and Luo, 2007.) challenges of raising grandchildren.

Factors affecting the grandparent-grandchild relationship have been documented to include both external and internal factors (Won, 2009). The external factors cover the culture of an ethnic group and the social support for grandparenting while internal factors include gender, the stage of development of the grandchild, the relationship between the grandparents and the parents, and the relationship between the parents and the child (Won, 2009). However, the relationship between the grandparents and the grandchild/ren they are raising has not been explored extensively. This research explores the relationship between grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising and what they need from each other.

There are many intervention programs established to assist grandparents and address external factors affecting the grandparent-grandchild relationship. However, there is a lack of studies investigating the care relationship between
grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. For example, are there ways that grandchildren can provide some assistance, not exceeding their cognitive and physical strength and capability, to their grandparents? This question is crucial due to the emphasis that has been placed on grandchildren’s behavior as the largest impact on grandparents’ aggregate feeling of burden, parenting stress, and less parental satisfaction (Bowers and Myers, 1999). Therefore, in the attempt to find strategies to alleviate grandparents’ challenges, stress and burden, it is also important to include strategies to enhance positive interaction among the intergenerational family. In addition, grandparents might experience stress due to the responsibility of doing everything for their grandchildren (Pruchno and McKenney, 2002; Pruchno, 1999). This in effect may cause stress and burden of caregiving to outweigh any satisfaction the grandparents may be experiencing from their parenting role. Both grandparents and their grandchildren may suffer high levels of stress and burden, resulting in health consequences.

The focus of this study is to explore the flow and reciprocity in the provision of care between grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. A qualitative approach was adopted and a total number of 15 grandparent-headed families (Bertaux 1981, Guest et al., 2006) were interviewed including their grandchildren between 10-18 years of age. As part of the outcome of this study, a handout for grandparents and grandchildren was developed to provide ideas for activities that grandchildren can do to support and enhance their relationship and the transfer of care. It can be used to inform various agencies that provide support for grandparents and grandchildren including the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to suggest ways that grandchildren can assist their grandparents. These suggestions can provide a medium for grandchildren to learn basic life skills, family traditions, and culture as they engage in some activities by themselves. The handout can also minimize the stress and burden the grandparents feel having to do everything
for their grandchildren. Finally, the handout can foster healthy interaction that will improve grandparent-grandchild relationships.

The topic of grandparents raising their grandchildren has received great attention from scholars on different aspects. The following literature review section presents a wide range of studies in this area.

**Literature review**

Grandparents raising their grandchildren has been identified by various terms such as: —grandfamily‖, —grandparent as parents‖ (GAP) (Edwards, 1998), —custodial grandparents‖ (Jendrek, 1994), and —coresidential grandparents‖ (Luo et. al. 2012). In the 1980s and 1990s, grandparent-headed families were predominant among African Americans (Fuller-Thomson et al, 1997). Today, in 2016, although this family structure remains common among African Americans, it spans across other ethnic groups including Hispanics, Asians, and White Americans (Yancura, 2013). This study adopted the term coresidential grandparents and defined it as skipped-generation families with the presence of the grandparents and grandchildren living together in one household where the grandparents are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

Grandparents mostly receive the call to step into the role of raising their grandchildren out of the occurrence of some crisis that their children (parents of their grandchildren) may be going through. Therefore, the time for grandparents to prepare for this new role is usually very limited or nonexistent. Using longitudinal data from the 1998-2008 Health and Retirement Study, Luo et al, (2012) found that grandparents who are relatively economically disadvantaged with functional limitations are more likely to provide coresidential care for their grandchildren than those who are more advantaged. Also, according to Burnette (1997), factors that contributed to the proliferation of the phenomenon in the 1980s were the substantial increase in —skippedgeneration‖ families caused by devastating social health problems.
(substance abuse and HIV/AIDS), ethnic and cultural norms, and public policies that shape and govern family care. McGowen and Strom (2006) included factors such as child abuse and neglect, mental illness, or death. They also maintained that other broad ranges of social factors including teenage pregnancy, singleparent households, mental and physical illness, and unemployment contribute to the growing prevalence of grandparent headed families.

By 2011, William (2011), in his study, added factors such as increased rates of divorce, decreased availability of parents for child care, and a greater demand for women in the workplace and military deployments.

**Traditional grandparenting roles**

Traditional grandparenting roles include socializing younger generations and other part-time or full time roles which may be culturally specific (Kennedy and Keeney, 2015). In recent times, although the presence of modern institutions such as day care, nurseries and babysitters have displaced some grandparents of some of these roles (Kennedy and Keeney, 2015), the increase in the aforementioned factors are introducing even more grandparents into the role of parenting. Some grandparents have to take full responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Other researchers are of the view that varying social constructs over (a) personal and historical time, and (b) cultural and religious beliefs contribute to the role of grandparenting (Hank and Buber, 2008). Grandparents contribute immensely to the development of our society by alleviating the greater expense of providing temporary placement for children in foster care or non-kin households. (Hank and Buber, 2008).

**Grandparent-grandchild connectivity and relationship**

The connectivity and the relationship between coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising have been studied looking at different effects from the perspective of both grandparents and grandchildren. One of the
factors studied which affects the grandparents-grandchild relationship includes the presence of the parents in the household. The relationship between the grandparents and the parents or the relationship between the parents and their children can have significant effects on the grandparent-grandchild relationship either negatively or positively (Pruchno and Mckenney, 2002). For instance, in a grandparents headed household where there is constant tension between the grandparents and the parents, the grandparents’ attention may be disrupted from the grandchildren and they may not receive the attention that they need.

Dolbin-MacNab et al. (2006) have studied both perspectives. In 2006, they examined individual, relational, and contextual factors related to grandparents’ perceptions of emotional closeness of the grandparent-grandchild relationship. Dolbin-MacNab et al. (2006) focused on analyzing the emotions of grandparents’ closeness with their custodial grandchildren. The findings of the study revealed that disruptions in grandparents’ emotional closeness to their grandchildren were related primarily to grandparents’ perceptions that their grandchildren were experiencing emotional and behavioral problems. However, financial limitations and generation gap (contextual factors) were also influential. Even so, grandparents still reported close emotional bonds with their grandchildren that included sharing, demonstrations of affection, and mutual support. In 2009, Dolbin-MacNab et al. (2009) conducted another study which focused on intergenerational ambivalence and looked at how adults who were raised by their grandparents and great-grandparents experience the relation with their caregivers. Ambivalence is defined as—simultaneously held opposing feelings or emotions that are due in part to countervailing expectations about how individuals should act‖ (P. 162). According to the study, caregiver-child ambivalence can generate from—power imbalances, conflicting role expectations, autonomy versus dependence needs, and coexisting family conflict and solidarity‖ (page 162). The limitation to the study is that it was a retrospective study and
participants' memories of their relationships may have been distorted by time, social desirability, or inaccurate recollection.

**Coresidential grandparenting effects on grandparents**

When grandparents take up the role of raising their grandchildren there are many outcomes including modifications in —personal freedom and privacy, intra family strain, stress, social and instrumental support, family functioning, preventive health behaviors, and mental and physical health‖ (Luo et al, 2012 P. 4). These outcomes are dependent on the connectivity and relationship the grandparent and the grandchildren are able to form. The lives of grandparents and their grandchildren are interdependent, and the consequences of role transitions can lead to changes in their lives (Luo et al, 2012).

Lipsomb (2011) also studied the challenges of African American grandparents raising grandchildren. The purpose of her study was to highlight the increasing and important role grandparents play in raising their grandchildren without the children’s parent present. Most of the challenges highlighted in this study include stress-related illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and digestive problems at increasing rates. The researcher added that grandparents more often forego their own ailment to support their grandchildren even while still taking care of their own children in some cases. They also added that some challenges have legal implications including informal kinship care, which is extensive among African Americans. There are grandparents who are not able to file for legal custody of the grandchildren; others also lack the financial, educational, and medical support. Without legal custody of grandchildren, grandparents are faced with the challenge of enrolling grandchildren in school. It is also difficult to advocate for assistance for grandchildren with disabilities. Grandparents have to adjust to their redefined roles as grandparents and enforce rules and discipline. Grandparents and their grandchildren have to force themselves to adjust to
their new relationship no matter how spontaneous it may be. It is therefore not surprising that grandparents who raise grandchildren face many challenges.

**Coresidential grandparenting effects on grandchildren**

The challenges mentioned above are not limited to grandparents alone; grandchildren are affected as well in several ways. According to research, many grandchildren arrive with their own problems and risk factors including abuse, neglect, prenatal exposure to drugs, alcohol and loss of parents from death, illness, abandonment, or incarceration (Dunifon, 2013). Grandchildren in grandparent-headed households also have to deal with some stigma and stereotypes and are faced with difficult transitions when residing in a grandparent-maintained household. Their emotional trauma might be aggravated from what they may be already experiencing prior to coming into their grandparents’ home.

Grandchildren who have experienced child abuse and neglect, parents with mental illness, death, divorce, and substance abuse problems might have already existing psychological, emotional, and social risks factors. Some of the grandchildren might even be battling with the guilt of being the cause of their parents’ problems or might blame themselves for the transition to their grandparents’ household. Bratton et al. (2006) maintained that these reasons increase the children’s risk of psychological and developmental disorders. This can result in school failure, withdrawal, inattentiveness and behavioral problems. The stigma and the stereotyping of children being raised by their grandparents coming from their friends can also cause children to suffer emotional, behavioral and academic difficulties (Edwards, 2006). However, with time and a good relationship between both grandparents and grandchildren, some of these challenges may subside.
Current Study

Although the aforementioned literature revealed vital information on the topic of grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising, this current study was needed to extend knowledge on the relationship between grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. This study explored and analyzed the perspective of both grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising on what they need from each other. Therefore, this study represents the voice of grandparents and grandchildren. Other studies have looked at the types of relationships existing between grandparents and the grandchildren and the transfer of care among them which revealed similar results. However, this study specifically explores what coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other.

Methods

Participants

Fifteen grandparents and their grandchildren between the ages of 10 – 18 years were recruited through churches, support groups, and snow ball sampling (Bertaux 1981, Guest et al., 2006). Preference was not given to the existence of only one or both grandparents. However, households with the presence of the parents of the children were excluded because the behavior of the parents might bear consequences on the negative or positive effect of the grandparents (Pruchno & Mkenney, 2002). Participants were from an urban city in Ohio with some located in downtown neighborhoods. Eligibility was not based on any specific age group or race and ethnicity for the grandparents.

Interview

Both telephone interviews and face-to-face interviews were conducted depending on the participant’s preference. Ten of the interviews were conducted in the homes of participants, two were conducted in a restaurant, one at a church and the last two were done via telephone. Research participants were
not awarded any form of compensation. The interview questions included items that address indoor household chores (e.g., food preparation, dishwashing and laundry), outdoor household chores (e.g., lawn mowing, shoveling snow, taking out the trash) and other activities including attending religious programs and school activities of grandchildren together. (See Appendix A & B for the interview guides for both grandparents and grandchildren.) The interviews lasted approximately between 35 minutes to one hour and 20 minutes. The grandparents were asked questions about the activities mentioned above to determine (1) the specific activities grandparents provide for their grandchildren, (2) activities they engage in together with their grandchildren, (3) activities the grandchildren already perform by themselves with or without supervision, and (4) activities performed by the grandchildren to assist the grandparents. The grandchildren were asked about (1) the activities they expect from their grandparents, (2) the activities they engage in together with their grandparents, (3) the activities they can handle themselves with or without supervision, and (4) the activities performed by the grandchildren to assist the grandparents. Detailed memos of participants’ responses were taken during the interviews, and audio recordings were made to check the accuracy of the interview notes.

The participants’ responses to objectives 2, 3, and 4 for both grandparents and grandchildren were used to create a handout for grandparents and grandchildren. This handout has been attached as Appendix C. and can serve as a reference for both grandparents and their grandchildren with activities to support and enhance their relationship and transfer of care.

**Data analysis**

The researcher read through all the notes gathered from the individual interviews while comparing the notes to the respective audio tape recordings to ensure accuracy. Then with a focus on the four research objectives, the researcher read through all the interview notes and searched for emerging
categories which point towards what coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren need from each other. The researcher also gathered responses on the question of what coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren need from each other from the participants. The results from this research and data analysis are presented in the following paragraphs.

**Results**

This section includes demographic characteristics for the grandparents and grandchildren, research objectives, and findings. A total of 15 (13 female, 2 male) grandparents in an urban center were interviewed for this research. (See Table 1)

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of grandparent participants.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Grandparent's age</th>
<th>Grandchildren's age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Marriage status</th>
<th>Income level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Retired/part time</td>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5, 9</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired/volunteering</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>17, 20, 26</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>Some junior college</td>
<td>Widow</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5, 13</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Not employed</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Retired/part time</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td>Black American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td>Black American</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>College</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grandparents interviewed had an average age of 62 years. Among the 15 interviews conducted, 13 were face-to-face and two were over the phone. To gather reports on level of income, participants were given the options: below average, average, and above average. The number of grandchildren being raised by each grandparent ranged from one to three. The majority of the participants reported to have multiple chronic health conditions such as diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart failure, stroke, sleep apnea, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Most of the grandparents attested that they have been involved in their grandchildren’s lives, providing different kinds of support prior to gaining full custody as their primary caregivers. Their primary caregiving experience spans from a little over a year to over 13 years. The reasons for which they were called as grandparent to be primary caregivers include incarceration, death, drugs and substance abuse, child neglect, bad choices made by their children, and providing close supervision for grandchildren with medical conditions.
Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of participants who were grandchildren.

**Table 2. Demographic characteristics of grandchildren participants.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total number of 11 grandchildren between the ages of eight and seventeen participated in this research. The researcher’s initial idea was to include only grandchildren who were 10 to 18 years because they were more likely to be engaged in activities to support their grandparents. However, after interviewing a number of grandparents whose grandchildren were less than 10 years, the interviewer realized that there were children younger than 10 who were already engaged in activities to support their grandparents. Therefore, one eight-year old who had valuable contributions to this research was included.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) was a common diagnosis among the grandchildren who participated in this research. Other medical conditions included Type 1 diabetes and stomach problems. Most of the grandchildren were involved in counseling programs which help them cope
with the absence of their parents and accept their grandparents as their primary caregivers (new parents).

**Research Objectives and Findings**

The four research objectives are outlined below with the responses gathered from research participants. Other related topics relevant for an in-depth understanding of grandparent-grandchild/ren relationship such as what grandparents love about raising their grandchildren, the challenges of grandparents, and the challenges of grandchildren are also outlined below with responses from participants.

**Grandparents’ results**

**The support grandparents provide for their grandchildren.** One grandparent stated that grandparents perform a variety of duties and activities to support the grandchildren they are raising. The data collected reveals that these duties and activities include (1) some instrumental activities such as cooking, laundry, transportation, shopping, cleaning the house, administering and monitoring grandchildren’s medications, (2) a place to live, (3) love and care, (4) meals, (5) assisting with school work, (6) prayers, and (7) leisure activities for the grandchildren they are raising. The grandparents attested that they find it difficult to assist with homework and other school-related projects. One grandparent stated: —I can’t help her with her homework anymore. The way they are teaching them [students] I’ve never seen anything so complicated in all my life. The educational system has changed so much over the years from when the grandparents were in school. Most of the grandparents acknowledged that the after school program is very helpful to them because their grandchildren get assistance with their homework and school projects.

The majority of the grandparents maintained that they ensure that their grandchildren have chores to help teach them responsibility. For others, doing household chores as children was what they did growing up; therefore, they
expect their grandchildren to do the same. It is the desire of more than half of the grandparents that their grandchildren would grow up to become responsible people in society.

Activities grandparents engage in together with their grandchildren. The data gathered from the research indicated that coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren engage in different activities together. These activities include watching television, going to church, going to the movies, the amusement park, playing card and board games, going for family reunions and vacations. Extracurricular activities also form part of the activities that grandparents and their grandchildren do together. These activities include basketball, gymnastics, volleyball, musical training, and church choir. One grandparent explained, “I like being involved in soccer, he’s a pretty good soccer player and I take him to all these events and practices, I’m really involved in that. In other words, the grandparent does not only drop the grandchild off to play soccer, but also enjoys being involved by watching him play.

In terms of leisure activities, all of the grandparents mentioned different activities they engage in with a sense of pleasure signifying that it was something that brings them joy and happiness. Two of the participants expressed this joy. The first said, “We take him skating, we take him to the movie. Those are the best things we do for fun. The second stated, “We can have a lot of fun together. I taught her how to play, and we had a ball playing jacks. She got to the point where she could beat me. Grandparents do experience fun, joy and happiness when they engage in leisure activities with their grandchildren.

Some instrumental activities such as cooking, cleaning the house, and doing laundry also brought some of the families together. As one participant explained, “He [the grandson] cooks a little bit with me but not routinely. Yeah, I like when he cooks with me. When asked a follow-up question on how
she feels about being helped by her grandson with the cooking, this participant indicated that she likes and enjoys it when the grandchild cooks with her even if it’s for a little while.

Other grandparents mentioned that as their grandchildren grew older and had access to phones and other technological gadgets, their time together has dwindled even to the extent of not doing anything together anymore. One participant said, “You see we use to do all the stuff but then two years ago …with her Christmas money she went and bought a Kindle. I have not seen her since. So we just don’t interact anymore, we just don’t. Grandparents who were younger and more active reported engaging in more activities with their grandchildren than grandparents who were older and reported more multiple chronic diseases.

Activities the grandchildren already perform by themselves with or with supervision. The data from this research suggests that the majority of the grandchildren perform household chores (both in-house and outside) to support the running of their household. These chores include cleaning their own bedrooms, and bathrooms, washing dishes, helping with the laundry, cooking, vacuuming, and taking care of the pets. Other household chores that grandchildren assist with outside the house include shoveling snow, weeding, washing windows etc. While some grandmothers feel good about allowing their grandchildren to engage in these activities, others also find it very difficult because (1) they cannot exercise the patience it requires, (2) they fear that their grandchildren might damage something in the process, and (3) their grandchildren might not perform these tasks well to their (grandparents’) satisfaction. The two quotations below illustrate how grandparents feel about their grandchildren performing household chores. The first participant said: They have chores of their own they clean dishes, they clean their room, on every Sunday this is our routine, basically their chores are they do their rooms,
we wash walls, we mop floors, we clean the bathrooms, they hang their own clothes ... I was raised that way you know growing up with my mother and so that’s what we did, we cleaned every Sunday.

The second grandparent stated, —Like right before I came in here I had trash to go out and .... [I said] I’m going to make him [my grandchild] ... take out the trash to the recycling bin before I leave but then I picked it up and took them out.... then I said yeah well I just want to know it’s done and have it out of the way. Some grandparents give their grandchildren chores to complete, and others, prefer to do everything on their own so that they get the chores out of the way.

Grandparents who reported having difficulty in allowing their grandchildren to perform household duties were younger and more active than those who were able to allow their grandchildren to perform household duties. There was not any significant difference in the age of children who had responsibilities. Grandchildren were given responsibilities based on the beliefs and values of the grandparents. Most of the African American grandparents also reported that since they grew up with the experience of performing household chores, they give their grandchildren household chores to teach them to be responsible.

**Activities performed by the children to assist the grandparents.** This research shows a variety of activities in which grandchildren assist their grandparents, ranging from assisting them on the computer and with their phones, reading something they cannot see well, bending down to take something from the ground, lifting heavy objects, climbing up on top of the roof to blow away weeds and many more. One participant explained, —I do depend on her a lot. She does a lot of things. She helps me out because I’m getting older and there are a lot of things I can’t do... She mows the backyard ... she lifts heavy things for me.... I will be lost without her. This participant expressed
how much she depends on her grandchild and how she appreciates all the things that her grandchild does for her.

**Grandchildren’s results**

The activities they expect from their grandparents. The data collected from this study revealed that grandchildren have expectations from their grandparents. Some grandchildren expect their grandparents to have equal energy and to be able to perform as their parents did, or they see what their friend’s parents do for them. Others expect that their grandparents should be as sweet as they were to them before and not give them responsibilities or try to punish them like their parents did. Most of the grandchildren also expected their grandparents to allow them go out to the mall, parties, and other places with their friends on their own and have sleepovers. One participant mentioned, “But you do always expect your grandparents to be your grandparents but when they are raising you, they take on that parent position so it’s like it’s hard for you to like kind of get along with them because you think like you’re my grandma, you’re my grandpa you are supposed to be like the nice one that I can run to when my parents being mean, you’re supposed to give me the hugs and kisses.” This participant was expressing displeasure about the grandparents’ role change which was difficult to accept. One of the grandchildren when asked whether there are some things the grandparent could do to make her happy said, “Cook every night, I’m a growing child I need food. She only makes dinner like three times a week; she does not make it a lot. Sometimes when I ask for something she would say just make something like a microwavable dinner.

**Activities they engage in together with their grandparents.** The responses from the grandchildren about activities they engage in together with their grandparents as a family were similar to the responses from the grandparents. Also, some of the grandchildren attested to the fact that these
activities have lessened over time. However, their response for how they think their grandparents will feel about more of such activities varied. It includes statements such as the following: —Well I don’t think she will do that because she like being at home, she like sitting on the couch doing nothing. That’s her routine and making dinner for herself, go [to] the couch and fall asleep‖, —She will probably enjoy it but maybe she would be too tired.

**Activities grandchildren can handle themselves with or without supervision and activities performed by the grandchildren to assist the grandparents.** Responses for objective 3 and 4 are combined because they are both very similar to the response from the grandparents. Response from both grandchildren and grandparents suggests that most grandchildren have chores which they are able to handle by themselves such as tidying, vacuuming their rooms and the rest of the house, and taking care of pets. The grandchildren’s response once again was similar to the response by the grandparent. However, in addition the researcher asked from the grandchildren (a) if there are some things they think they can do to assist their grandparent, and (b) how they feel about taking up some tasks to assist their grandchildren. The responses indicated that the grandchildren could intensify the engagement in activities such as cooking, cleaning, and being good children at school. Responses for (b) indicated that some children are willing to do more if given the chance. As one participant said, —Everything she does everything herself. Sometimes I do want to help her but she always says like I got it.

Some grandchildren are aware of household chores that their grandparents are stressed about and think that if they help in that area, their grandparents will be less stressed. One participant stated, —She [grandparent] will see a few things that are not in order and I’ll just wait until she does it, ... I can do more like helping out a little in that area, that’s it, just help out with the house. That’s all she stressed about. This participant is aware of things that
her grandmother stresses about, and she thinks that if she pays attention to those things it will assist her grandparent.

**The experience of coresidential grandparents**

The following paragraphs present the experience of coresidential grandparents including what they love about being coresidential grandparents, their challenges, and their worries and expectations. The challenges of grandchildren are also included.

**What do grandparents enjoy about raising their grandchildren?** This research agrees with existing literature that grandparents gain great satisfaction from raising their grandchildren. Most of the grandparents who participated in this research reported that raising their grandchildren keeps them going despite their multiple chronic health conditions. Despite the fact that almost all the grandparents agreed that raising their grandchildren comes with a great deal of sacrifice and most of the time they cannot ensure that their grandchildren get what they want, they would not trade it for anything in the world. One grandmother attested that her life was just wasting away by sitting around doing nothing for herself until she had to be a primary caregiver to her grandchild. This brought her back to life, and she is doing much better taking care of herself and her grandchild. For some grandparents, satisfaction comes from being able to play a part in their grandchildren’s lives and watching their grandchildren grow to become who they are. One person expressed her love of raising her grandchildren by saying,

Some of the best time have been watching him over the years growing to be the person that he is because he took his first steps right in here getting his teeth and to watch his mental state. He is very smart and watching him learn how to do different things, bikes, scooter, going out to the bookshop, to the museum.
Another person stated, —They bring life to the household, they really do they play music. One plays the clarinet‖. The research therefore supported the satisfaction grandparents receive from raising their grandchildren.

**Challenges of grandparents: Adopting the parent role in addition to the grandparent role is a great challenge.** Most of the participants maintained that their initial role as grandparents came with showing love and care to their grandchildren. One participant said, —We used to love you know you can sugar them up, give them all the sweets till they are bouncing off the ceiling and then you say now you head home, it’s time to take care of these kids now, don’t let them do nothing crazy but you did sugar them up. I use to love that. This participant enjoyed spoiling the grandchildren with sweets. However, when one becomes a primary caregiver to their grandchildren, they have to take full responsibility and become a parent, which can be a great challenge. Becoming a parent includes teaching the grandchildren to be responsible by giving them chores, punishing them when needed, being strict or firm on certain decisions, and saying no. Most of the participants described this role switch as very challenging. One participant illustrates this conflict: Like right now I’m playing two roles. I’m now the mother and the grandmother and it’s been a little bit hard for me because when they would have anything between them and their mom, they will always come to grandma you know grandma will kiss make up and everything will be alright you know and but now I have to play the mother part and the grandma part and it’s been hard for them to adjust to it as well as me. This participant expresses her difficulty with adjusting to the two roles she currently has to play and even adds that it is difficult for the grandchildren as well.

While some grandparents find it very helpful that their grandchildren would assist with some chores in and around the house, others also find it very challenging to give their grandchildren any responsibilities or chores. They find
it easier to do everything by themselves and get it out of the way and know that it is done. These grandparents were much younger with fewer health challenges. One participant summarized this by saying —…. I do it all because it’s easier but I realized …. that I have to do more to give him the responsibilities. She admitted that it’s easier not to give grandchildren household chores.

Many of the participants also reported that their grandchildren sometimes show some negative behaviors towards them because they don’t understand why they have to live with them instead of their biological parents. One participant stated, —When I started living with my grandma, I was not patient. I was very disrespectful. I did not like the no’s and all that I got because I never got that when I use to run from my mom. Another said, —She has been cutting herself and I caught her on to it. He [the second grandchild] has anger issues, because he feels like he has no mom and dad. She kept saying she’s okay, she’s okay then I realized she wasn’t. Grandchildren then have challenges including behavioral problems; they also experience role confusion and self-injury.

**The different energy levels.** Grandparents raising grandchildren experience the demand to remain active and engaged in various forms of activities which can be challenging. One participant explained, —The energy level is different; ten-year-old has a lot more energy than I have you know. Come bed time I’m tired but then he is just not tired and you still have to keep going and you have to be actively present and participate in what they’re doing. Another participant added, —I think the biggest challenge is that I can’t do things with her anymore. Like go skating or to king’s island…because of this sometimes she gets mad and it frustrates her but I don’t blame her. Grandparents do struggle with the difference in energy levels between them and the grandchildren they are raising.
**Health problems.** In this current study, although most of the participants reported having multiple chronic health conditions such as hypertension, stroke, diabetes, COPD, rheumatoid arthritis, heart attack etc., they also reported that caring for their grandchildren keeps them going even though it can be challenging. One participant shared that “...it is challenging because I’m on a cane, I have rheumatoid arthritis, I am diabetic but they basically just kind of keep me going now and I keep moving even though I’m in pain a lot but I keep moving. Another stated, —Like ...my husband had a mild heart attack and then ... I had to have my knee replacement and I’m still recovering‖ Raising grandchildren can be very challenging for grandparents considering the health problems that they may have.

**Worries and expectations of coresidential grandparents raising their grandchildren.** The worries of grandparents raising their grandchildren vary depending on the following situations: (1) peculiar problems with the grandchildren, (2) genetic predisposition and the fear that their grandchildren might also turn out to be like their parents and be involved with similar deviant behavior, (3) the fear that they would not live long enough to see them grow to become older adults (4) the fear of what would happen to their grandchildren if something bad happened to them. For others, the whole idea of repeating parenting scares them and they wonder how good they can be because they already failed once. One participant attested that —I can't see how he can be growing up happy, I can't see how he cannot be frustrated because he is not living with his mother, his father is in jail and will be in jail until he is in his twenties and he lost his grandfather...He has all his chances to go bad, I mean he has a lot of things stacked against him.‖ Another participant also added —Yeah – I worry about genetic predisposition – I don’t want them to turn out like my daughter.‖ Grandparents have various worries for the grandchildren they are raising. Even when everything seems to be going okay, what could happen in the future is a great concern.
Due to the above worries, most of the expectations the participants expressed for the grandchildren were centered on growing up and turning out to become good and respectable older adults. One participant said’—I want them [grandchildren] to grow up to be really good people and I think that is what my focus is on‖. This participant is more concerned and focused on the future of the grandchildren and what they will become.

Most of the grandparents reported that raising their grandchildren brings a lot of changes to their lives. They mentioned that most of them never imagined when they were younger that they would be raising their grandchildren at their current ages. They had plans of engaging in activities to enjoy their years of retirement. However, when they answer the call to raising their grandchildren, most of these plans get thrown away. In addition to these plans, grandparents also sometimes have to sacrifice things they want including material things so they can provide for their grandchildren. They sacrifice their time and resources to ensure their grandchildren feel cared for and loved. One participant shared her experience saying—It [caring for her grandchildren] has changed my life. I used to go out dancing three or four nights a week and now I don’t do that anymore. My friend told me that everyone is talking about how I walked away from my own life and I was like what was I supposed to do? Grandparents have to change their life plans and focus on raising their grandchildren when they accept to become coresidential grandparents.

The experience of coresidential grandchildren

Challenges of the grandchildren. Grandchildren being raised by their grandparents also face challenges. Studies have shown that grandchildren being raised by their grandparents are more likely to exhibit some negative behaviors. In this research, we found out that most grandchildren exhibit these negative behaviors due to but not limited to the following reasons;
• They want to be with their biological parents instead of their grandparents.
• The grandchildren do not understand why they have to live with their grandparents instead of their parents.
• They sometimes may even feel like their grandparents have taken them away from their parents.
• There is a generational gap.
• There is lack of understanding between the two generations.
• They believe that things would have been better if they were living with their real parents.

The relationship between grandparents and these grandchildren would have some level of tension with these ideas in the minds of the grandchildren. Even though some studies show that the level of tension grandchildren experience may lessen over time, there is also the possibility that it may also persist which can result in psychological problems like depression and self-harm. Therefore, the best recommendation to assist these children is counseling.

**What coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other?**

In order to elicit participants’ views on what they think coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other the researcher asked participants to share their opinion on this question. In their response, the grandparents maintained that they need understanding, love, care, respect and independence from their grandchildren. They added that they need their grandchildren to be in tune with their feelings, take good care of themselves and be good grandchildren. When grandchildren were asked the same question, they said they need lots of love, care, compassion, a home, acceptance and understanding. Coresidential grandparent families that have all of the above attributes or that make efforts to adopt these attributes would create a healthy grandparent-grandchild/ren relationship.
Discussion
From the results of this research, what coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other to foster a healthy relationship are as follows:

Engaging in activities together and effective communication

Research maintains that grandparents derive enjoyment from their interaction with their grandchildren until the grandparents start to feel a burden in their interaction. This burden can be caused by the role change of becoming a primary caregiver. Instead of engaging in fun activities and playing the initial grandparent role of enjoying grandchildren and showing them mostly love and care, they now have to concentrate on daily living activities and teaching them responsibility and independence to grow up to be better people in society. As reported in this study, the activities engaged in together as a family for fun may lessen due to lack of time, interest, financial priorities, and other internal and external factors. However, a majority of participants in this research reported high levels of satisfaction and the experience of fun and happiness when they engage in activities together as a family. These activities were not limited to only fun and leisure activities but also involved performing household chores such as cooking and mowing the lawn. Engaging in activities together can foster effective communication among grandparents and their grandchildren. It can provide a channel for the grandparents and their grandchildren to share intimacy and promote emotional bonding with each other.

Mutual support

When grandparents agree to be coresidential grandparents, they quickly assume the role of parents, which comes with duties and activities such as cooking, laundry, cleaning and ensuring that their grandchildren do their homework. Because of health problems and low energy levels, most of the
participants attested that these duties and activities are very challenging. When grandchildren support their grandparents with household chores and other activities, it reduces the burden that grandparents have to bear. Participants who already get some help from their grandchildren expressed great appreciation for their grandchildren’s efforts. Grandparents who were not receiving much support from their grandchildren agreed that they would be happy to receive more support from them. More than half of the grandchildren who participated in this study admitted that their grandparents would really appreciate it if they helped out more with household chores. The entire premise above makes mutual support one of the great needs for coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising.

A few of the grandchildren also admitted that they are willing and would like to help out more with household chores; however, they are not sure how their grandparents would feel about that. This is because their grandparents either think they would not be able to perform these household chores well, spoil something in the process, or take too much time to complete very simple tasks. Some grandparents admitted that they know their grandchildren would be willing to help out with household chores. Grandparents who have difficulties in allowing their grandchildren to handle some household chores should give them the chance to do so. This would cut off some of their burdens and afford the grandchildren the opportunity to learn for themselves and their future.

The grandparents maintained that they also need understanding, love, and care. Coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need to engage in activities together and have communication, mutual support, love, care, understanding, respect, compassion, and acceptance. These attributes can enhance the connectivity and relationship between coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising for a healthy relationship. When grandparents take up the role of raising their grandchildren, there are many outcomes including modifications in—personal freedom and privacy,
intra family strain, stress, social and instrumental support, family functioning, preventive health behaviors, and mental and physical health‖ (Luo et. al.2012 p. 4). The lives of grandparents and their grandchildren are interdependent and the consequences of role transitions can lead to changes in their lives (Luo et. al.2012).

Grandchildren can show love and care towards their grandparents by assisting them with some of the activities enlisted in the handout of activities developed from this research. They could also show love and care towards their grandparents by spending more time engaging in leisure activities such as playing games and watching television programs together rather than spending all their time on their computers, phones, other electronic devices and with their friends.

The findings of this research are consistent with existing literature to a large extent in terms of the connectivity and relations, challenges, satisfaction and the general experience of coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren. However, the unique information that this research presents on what coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising need from each other can be very useful for designing intervention programs targeted at enriching their connectivity and relationships. These programs would also promote understanding of the ways that grandchildren can provide support for their grandparents and show love and care towards them.

Future research may concentrate on an explorative study of implementing the findings of this study to see its effectiveness in enriching the connectivity and relationship between coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren.

**Limitations**

The sample for this research, especially the grandparents, happened to be good grandparents who care about the grandchildren they’re raising. However, not all grandparents raising grandchildren are good to their
grandchildren. Therefore, results from a sample of grandparents who might not be good to the grandchildren they’re raising might differ from the results of the current study. Although this research represents the voice of grandparents and their grandchildren because they were directly involved, the findings of this research may not be generalized because due to its qualitative approach.

**Recommendations**

To foster effective communication among grandparents and their grandchildren, there is the need for them to understand each other. This makes counseling, support groups and other social service systems very useful for coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren. It is important that the counseling, support groups and social service systems focus on bridging the generational gap, addressing the role confusion, enhancing their communication skills, and addressing what they need from each other to foster a healthy relationship. A healthy relationship and effective communication among coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren can improve their well-being. Hence, this research recommends that the agencies involved in providing assistance for grandparents and grandchildren including the Council on Aging (COA) and other social support service providers should adopt the handout from this research for grandparents and grandchildren as part of their repertoire to support coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising.

This handout is directly the voice of grandparents and grandchildren and it can assist grandparents and grandchildren in understanding what grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other. It also provides ideas and suggestions on what activities grandchildren can perform to assist their grandparents. In effect, this resource document has the potential of promoting healthy relationships among grandparents and grandchildren.
Coresidential grandparent-grandchild relationships need more research attention to better understand the experience and to develop programs which adequately respond to their needs. A longitudinal research focused on coresidential grandparent-grandchild relationships may reveal significant information and trends to inform policies which support grandparent and grandchildren. To be able to generalize the results on what coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they're raising need from each other, a quantitative study with a representative sample is needed. A healthy coresidential grandparent-grandchild relationship is vital to both the health and total well-being of the grandparents and the grandchildren. It is necessary to maintain an effective interdependent relationship of support, love, and care.
Works Cited

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Grandparents

1. Participant ID........................................ Date..............................
2. How old are you? ...........
3. How many grandchildren are you raising?....................................................
4. What is your marriage status? a) never married   b) married  C) divorced
   d) widowed
5. How old is/are your grandchild/ren?.................
6. How do you identify your gender as? ...........................
7. How would you describe your race or ethnicity?
8. How long have you been caring for your grandchild/ren?
9. How old was/were your grandchild/ren when you first started to provide care?
10. How would describe you level of education?
11. Are you currently employed?
12. If Yes, where and what is your current position?
13. How would you describe your level of household income (below average, average, above average)?
14. What would you say are the best things about caring for your grandchildren?
15. What would you say are the biggest challenges in caring for your grandchildren?
16. Can you tell me about meals?  For example, do you plan, prepare and serve adequate meals for your grandchild (ren) morning, afternoon and evening?  What’s that like?  What kinds of meals do you like to prepare?  What do they like to eat? How is it for you financially?  Physically?
17. How do you feel about your grandchild/children assisting you to perform these activities by or even by themselves or do they do any of these activities by themselves?

18. Can you tell me about who performs daily in-door house hold chores such as dishwashing, bed making, laundry and other home maintenance tasks?

19. Can you tell me about who performs out-door house hold chores such as mowing the lawn, picking weeds, shoveling snow, washing the car etc?

20. What do you think about the children performing these tasks?

21. How happy would you be with the help they provide you?

22. What do you feel about your grandchild (ren) handling their own laundry?

23. Can you please tell me about the school activities you assist your grandchild (ren), with? How do you feel about the school activities you support?

24. Please tell me about activities you engage in together as a family? e g. religious programs, and other meetings you might have etc. If none, how do you feel about engaging in activities as a family?

25. What are some of the leisure activities you are able to engage in personally and as a family? How do you feel about such activities? Do you think more of less of them would be helpful for the family?

26. What activities do you wish someone could help with in raising your grandchildren? Name the most pressing once within the house and outside the house

27. Please tell me about which in-door or outdoor household chores you think your grandchildren could handle with or without supervision?

28. Can you please tell me about some expectations you have from your grandchildren? (which ones of the expectations listed are they meeting and which ones are they not meeting?)
29. Are there other things you would like to share that you think would be helpful for this project?

*Your input is greatly appreciated and once again thanks for your participation.*
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Grandchildren

1. Participant ID..............................................
2. Date ............................................................
3. Grandparent’s ID................................................
4. How old are you?...................
5. How do you identify your gender? .........................
6. Can you tell me about some of the things that your grandparents do for you at home? How do they take care of you?
7. Are there some things they do not do that you wish they would do for you?
8. Tell me about how you do your homework and how you get to school programs and other events?
9. Can you tell me about how meals are prepared in your home?
10. How do you feel about assisting with preparing meals? How do you think your grandparent will react to that?
11. Tell me about how you are able to get outdoor household chores done in your house? By household chores I mean cleaning the dishes, sweeping, feeding the pet, cleaning the bathroom.
12. How do you feel about helping with some of these chores?
13. How do you feel about doing your personal laundry and do/can you help with the family laundry?
14. What activities do you all do as a family? E.g. Church, meetings, shopping etc.
15. How do you feel about activities that the family engages in together?
16. What activities at home do you think you can handle on your own or help your grandparents with?
17. Tell me about some of the activities that you expect your grandparents to allow you to do and what they don’t allow you to do?
18. Is there any more information you would like to share with me?

Your input is greatly appreciated and once again thanks for your participation.
Appendix C: Handout for Grandparents and Grandchildren

What do coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other?

According to this research, coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need the following from each other:

Mutual support

When grandparents accept to be coresidential grandparents, they quickly assume to role of parents which comes with duties and activities such as cooking, laundry, cleaning and ensuring that their grandchildren do their homework. Because of health problems and low energy levels, most of the participants of this research attested that these duties and activities are very challenging. When grandchildren support their grandparents with household chores and other activities, it reduces the burden that grandparents have to bear. Grandparents who already get some help from their grandchildren expressed great appreciation for their grandchildren’s effort. Grandparents who were not receiving much support from their grandchildren agreed that they would be happy to receive some support. More than half of the grandchildren who participated in this study admitted that their grandparents would really appreciate it if they helped out more with household chores. All the above scenarios suggest that mutual support is one of the great needs for coresidential grandparents and their grandchildren they are raising. It can be equated to team work in an organization. An organization with efficient team workers fosters excellent results and everyone feels part of the success. Grandparents should try to ensure that they provide the basic needs of their grandchildren to grow well as children. In addition, grandchildren should also try and assist their grandparents in the little ways they can, not exceeding their physical and cognitive capabilities.
**Engaging in activities together and communication**

Engaging in activities such as playing indoor and outdoor games, outings, vacations and family reunions together increases effective communication among grandparents and their grandchildren. Such activities, can provide a channel for the grandparents and their grandchildren to share intimacy and promote emotional bonding with each other. Grandchildren’s extracurricular activities such as basketball games, hockey, swimming, music and gymnastics can also be something in which the families engage to provide moral support for the grandchildren involved. However, what also evolves from this engagement is more communication. Research maintains that grandparents derive enjoyment from their interaction with grandchildren until they start to feel a burden in their interaction. This burden can be caused by the role change to becoming a primary caregiver. Instead of engaging in fun activities and playing the initial grandparent role of enjoying grandchildren and showing them mostly love and care, they now have to concentrate on daily living activities, teaching them responsibility and independence to grow up to be better people in society. As reported in this study, the activities engaged in together as a family for fun often lessons due to lack of time, interest, financial priorities and other internal and external factors. The majority of participants in this research reported high levels of satisfaction and the feeling of happiness when they engage in activities together as a family either for fun, leisure, or even in performing both internal and outdoor household chores. Engaging in activities together can foster effective communication among grandparents and their grandchildren and provide a channel to share intimacy and to promote emotional bonding with each other.

**Love and care**

Both grandparents and their grandchildren should show love and care towards each other. No one is too old or too young to be cared for and loved. Showing love and care goes a long way to build a strong and healthy
relationship between grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising. All the participants (both grandparents and grandchildren) admitted that they need love and care.

Grandchildren can show love and care towards their grandparents by assisting them with some of the activities enlisted in the handout of activities developed from this research. They could also show love and care towards their grandparents by spending more time engaging in leisure activities such as playing games and watching television programs together rather than spending all their time on their computers, phones, other electronic devices and with their friends.

**Acceptance**

Acceptance should come from both grandparents and the grandchildren involved. Grandchildren should be counseled when necessary to accept their grandparents as their parents and accord them the same respect and support as they would to their parents. Grandparents should also ensure that their grandchildren feel accepted into their home as their children and not make them feel like they are a burden to them.

**Compassion, understanding and respect**

Grandparents and their grandchildren should show each other empathy and understanding. It is true that our grandparents were born at the time when respect especially for older people was held very paramount; however, respect for each other also brings peace in a relationship. Understanding between grandparents and their grandchildren can be challenging due to the generational gap. However, showing and treating each other with respect and compassion for example, letting the other person know of their wrong deeds in a respectful way can enhance mutual understanding within the relationship.
Handout for Grandparent and Grandchildren

This handout for grandparents and grandchildren was developed based on the findings of a qualitative research titled—What do coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they’re raising need from each other? This research was focused on exploring the reciprocity of care among coresidential grandparents and the grandchildren they are raising and what they need from each other to promote healthy grandparent-grandchild relation. The responses from both grandparents and the grandchildren who participated in the research were collated to develop this handout. This handout provides ideas and suggestions of some activities grandchildren can use to assist their grandparents. The underlying concept for this handout is that when grandchildren are able to assist their grandparents with these suggested activities, they alleviate some of the stress and burden grandparents feel doing everything by themselves. The result can have a positive impact on the grandparent’s happiness and enrich their relationship with their grandchildren.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of chores</th>
<th>Suggestions of Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Household Chores</td>
<td>Clean dishes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Load up the dishwasher with dirty kitchen plates and cutlery,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watch / Engage in cooking,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assist with setting up the dinner table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Indoor Household Household Chores</td>
<td>Put the toys away after play,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tidy up bedroom,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clean bathrooms,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Redo drawers and fold up clothes,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make their beds,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hang up clothes in the closet,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take out trash, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacuum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outdoor</th>
<th>Mowing,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household Chores</td>
<td>Picking up weeds and leaves,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoveling snow,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pets</td>
<td>Feeding,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing with pets,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleaning up the mess created by pet,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleaning up pet eating and drinking containers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Assist with lifting slightly heavy items,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick up after yourself,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bend down or climb up to pick items to assist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>