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Generational Parenting Practices and the Influence of Grandmothers Caring for their Grandchildren

Mecca Major Martin
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Walden University

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Mecca Major Martin

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Generational Parenting Practices and the Influence of Grandmothers Caring for their
Grandchildren

by

Mecca Major Martin

MA, University of Phoenix, 2011

BS, University of Phoenix, 2009

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Forensic Psychology

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Abstract

In the United States there has been an increase of grandmothers caring for their grandchildren in the absence of their parents. Researchers have found that grandmothers are in a constant struggle with grandchildren exhibiting antisocial behavior. The gap in research does not address this issue. The present study explored the lived experiences of grandmothers in hopes of learning more about their past experiences, seeking to make a connection between generational parenting practices and poor coping skills. Using an interpretative phenomenological analysis, 11 grandmothers participated who were the sole provider for their grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. The results yielded varying themes to include abuse, abandonment, neglect, and trauma across 3 stages of the grandmothers' life to include childhood, parenthood, and as a grandmother. Using the lens of social learning as it applied to criminal behavior, and when compared to the current literature, several untreated issues and trauma were identified, which would aid social services in developing specific interventions and treatment for not only the grandmothers but for the family as a unit. A focused treatment through social services and interventions will help promote positive social change starting with the grandmother to end the cycle of trauma and repeat patterns of criminal behavior. Additionally, the findings of this study provided a foundation for future researchers in a more focused qualitative study as well as a broader study to affirm the depth of this phenomenon. This population would benefit from approachable programs linked with resources.

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Dedication

I dedicated this project to my family who have been very supportive and understanding when mom had to skip out on family time or other outings because she was too busy studying, writing, or working. To you I say, I love you all and thank you for your understanding and patience. I have always pride myself on showing you better than I could tell you in hopes that you too would strive for your dreams in spite of fear or setbacks. If I can do it, so can you. Remember, when you do not choose, you live by default. Life will make those decisions for you and you may not like the turnout. So, take control of your life and don't look back.

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I would like to first acknowledge the one person who stepped in at a crucial moment in my life. Naturally, this section would be for my family but if it were not for Dr Jessica Hart. I don't know where I would be at this juncture of my academic process. Thank you very much, I get emotional just thinking about the moment you accepted my request for a new chair. Whether or not you had any hesitation, I never knew it but was glad you took a chance on me. I truly appreciate your patience and leadership throughout the process and words could never describe what your assistance has meant to me.

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Table 1. Emerging Themes.....65

Chapter 1: Introduction to Study

Introduction

The United States Census Bureau (2012) reported that 1.6 million grandmothers are caring for grandchildren. Many of those grandchildren are also struggling in areas of academics, social and coping skills, with an increase of delinquent behavior (Withers, 2014). In this qualitative study, the generational transfer of parenting practices and their impact on grandchildren prone to delinquent behavior were explored. The information uncovered will help policymakers with either altering existing programs for grandmothers and help with creating new programs that will address issues and concerns associated with parenting practices and grandchildren with delinquent behavior. This study creates awareness, empowering grandmothers through the journey of caring for their grandchildren, who exhibit delinquent behavior under their care (Withers, 2014). With the proper programs and education and necessary treatment, society should see an increase in academic performance with fewer high school dropouts and a decrease in delinquency. With a decline in delinquency at home and in the neighborhoods, there will also be fewer victims of crimes.

This chapter will present an overview of the background and provide an outline of the problem statement and purpose of the study. This section also includes research questions and the theoretical approach to the study. Explanations and descriptions of definitions, assumptions, scope, delimitations, and limitations are provided. This chapter will conclude with the significance of the study and the summary of this chapter.

Background

Scholars researched parenting styles and their association with delinquent behavior (Donita & Maria, 2015; Goulette, Evans, & King, 2016). Other researchers have examined the impact of the emotional stress of parenting juveniles and its influence on delinquent behavior (Kelley, Whitley, & Campos, 2013). O (2015) found that some parenting styles can lead to delinquent behavior. She found that aggressiveness in parenting, parents who abuse alcohol/drugs, and parents who are mentally and physically abusive are more likely to have children who exhibit delinquent behavior. However, there is minimum data related to the generational transfer of these parenting practices of grandmothers caring for their grandchildren and whether these parenting practices lead to delinquent behavior.

Goulette et al. (2016) defined parental practices as "parental behavior patterns," and that parental styles are characterized by parenting attitudes toward the child. Therefore, the parent/child relationship is impacted through emotional ties or bonds (Kim & Page, 2013). Kim and Page (2013) found that positive, responsive parenting styles lead to social competence, acceptance by peers, and fewer negative behaviors. Similarly, Dunifon (2013) examined how grandmothers also have an influence on the lives of their grandchildren as well as their emotional well-being. These grandchildren initially are not entering the home as stable adolescents; they are leaving a dysfunctional environment. According to Dunifon (2013), the interactions of some grandmothers could make the situation worse because of her parenting styles and that it lacks healthy parenting skills associated with warmth and nurturing.

Dunifon (2013) stressed how children raised in grandparents' homes have higher rates of high school dropouts and delinquent behavior. This group of grandchildren also suffers more mental issues than any other group living with grandmothers and suffer higher rates of behavioral problems such as truancy and poor conduct (Dunifon, 2013). These findings corroborate with previous studies that found a link between the parenting styles of mothers and those of their children, strengthening the argument of generational parenting practices between parents and their parents (grandmother/mother) (Madden et al., 2015). This association between parenting styles is passed down through generations, which is evident by the child's behavior in the home and community (Madden et al., 2015). Researchers have explained that if a mother exhibits poor parenting skills one would likely look at how the mother was reared as a child (Gafford-Hampton, (2013); Hill, 2013; Humphrey, 2013). Now that more grandchildren are living with grandmothers, and they too exhibit poor behavior, the findings show a similar connection with the transfer of parenting skills between the grandmothers and their grandchildren (Madden et al., 2015).

Previously there was little information to support this claim of the generational parenting practices, and the qualitative research allowed me to delve deep concerning the generational transfer of parenting practices over three significant generations beginning with grandmother's childhood and into adulthood. Researchers continue to discuss parenting styles and their effects but are not specifically focused on how parenting practices are passed from generation to generation with their offspring when returning to the previous their grandmothers' home (Sheffield, 2017). The transfer of parenting

practices is evident in that children with delinquent behavior lived with their parents, who suffered from behavioral problems that initially lead to the absence of the parent and removal of the child in the first place (Sheffield, 2017; Taboh, 2016).

Current research on parenting practices and the interactions of grandmothers as primary caregiver is limited. These studies have examined intergenerational risk factors of parenting practices and how they might impact juvenile behavior (Sheffield, 2017; Taboh, 2016). Hayslip and Smith (2013) argued how poor parenting is learned through behavioral problems modeled by one's parents, or grandmothers, and that can affect the child whose being cared for socially, emotionally, and behaviorally. Therefore, grandmothers who are aggressive during the parenting years and now as the caretaker for their grandchildren, it is more than likely that their grandchildren will continue to be aggressive as an adult (Dunifon, 2013; Hayslip & Smith, 2013). Hayslip and Smith argued that the type of environment and affection a child receives supports cognitive stimulation and warmth and nurturance.

Sprang, Choi, Eslinger, and Whitt-Woosley, (2014) discussed the emotional stress of the grandmothers based on the trauma of the child and found that most caregivers who are stable have a hard time dealing with difficult children. Therefore, a grandmother who lacks healthy coping skills, trying to manage an offspring with delinquent behavior, can only add to the problem (Goulette et al., 2016). This stress, along with the child's impressionable age and still developing coping skills, further complicates the dynamics in the home (Dunifon, 2013).

Kelley et al. (2013) found that how a caregiver responds to their children can subsequently make the situation worse concerning conduct, respect, and defiance of a child. The researchers also noted that the lack of perceived support in raising delinquent children adds to the caregivers' stress level (Kelly et al., 2013). Furthermore, this study also revealed how matters are made worse with negative language or verbal abuse directed at the offspring. These challenges can lead to stress in the family, and if not adequately dealt with, and can create problems or impact the relationship by influencing more negative behavior in the child (Kelly et al., 2013).

Children already suffering from a trauma of prior neglect or abuse will exhibit behavioral issues and find it hard to adhere to rules, boundaries, even structure and thus creates a stressful environment passing on poor behavior traits (Kelley et al., 2013). The researchers also stated that any influence in this area of aggression might force the child further into negative behavior as either a form of rebellion or resistance in the relationship. With the generational transfer of parenting practices, this has been a repeated problem with the offspring's parents that led to the current problem of not handling stress well during their childhood that manifested during adulthood (Kelley et al., 2013). Backhouse and Graham (2013) examined grandmothers' parenting practices and how those experiences /practices were passed on through the generations. Researchers found that inadequate supervision and lack of parental guidance contributed to delinquent behavior, which could explain the dysfunction with the offspring's parents in association with grandmothers and their parenting practices (Backhouse & Graham, 2013). The offspring are prone to delinquent behavior based on their interactions and

surroundings with close family members such as their grandmothers (Backhouse & Graham, 2013). The family conflict also contributes to delinquent behavior, and disharmony in the home leads to aggressive behavior in children (Backhouse & Graham, 2013). A grandmother who is stressed will not make positive parenting decisions ultimately influencing the child even further with negative behavior, and poor parenting leads to poor behavior (Kelley et al., 2013).

Problem Statement

The Census Bureau (2012) reported an overwhelming increase in grandparents taking on the role of parenting their grandchildren in the absence of the child's parents. Researchers have provided a wealth of information on grandmothers caring for their grandchildren and the issues that come with parenting grandchildren (Madden et al., 2015; Sprang, Choi, Eslinger, & Whitt-Woosley, 2015). There is currently little information regarding research concerning the generational transfer of parenting practices, specifically with grandmothers parenting their grandchildren, who are exhibiting poor behavior (Dunifon, 2013; Sheffield, 2017; Taboh, 2016). When reflecting on the previous role of a grandmother, grandmothers were the primary caretaker of the now dysfunctional parents living dysfunctional lives that ultimately led to the removal of their child (Dunifon, 2013). When placed with a grandmother, the child may initially have problems with the significant changes of being removed from their environment of living with dysfunctional parents. Something they had probably become accustomed to. This disruption in their life has now been compounded with not only being removed from their home and lifestyle, but having to adjust to a new home, new rules, and new

boundaries (Dunifon, 2013). It is not unusual for juveniles to enter the new home with existing emotional or behavioral problems that may involve stealing, truancy, even violence (Rubin, 2013). How grandmothers continue to care for their grandchild will determine whether the child will continue with delinquent behavior or rise to succeed (Rubin, 2013). Parenting or how not to parent is a reflection of the previous caretaker (Tuner, 2011). It is problematic when grandmothers exhibit poor behavior in the home, further reinforcing the poor behavior with grandchildren (Byford, Kuh, & Richards, 2011). The grandchild, in turn, seeks to follow those who are antisocial and problematic themselves because of the behavior they have witnessed in a dysfunctional environment, albeit past or present. What a child learns in the home is essentially what he or she will carry with them through adulthood, and when parenting their children (O, 2015). While researchers have a wealth of information about what causes delinquent behavior, little was provided about why this transfer of poor behavior patterns continued from one generation to the next, nor did we understand how to combat it or extinct it from being passed on until now. Now there is a more precise understanding, and more information has been revealed through this research regarding generational patterns that result in poor behavior.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of the study was to explore the relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren presenting with delinquent behavior, whether there is a generational transfer of parenting practices, and how those practices affect the grandchild. I wanted to better understand first the process of the transfer and second, the impact of the parenting

practices on the current generation leading to delinquent behavior. With the increase of incarcerated parents, who are not only addicted to drugs but psychologically unfit, this further leaves the child at a disadvantage starting far behind with social development and poor coping skills (Hayslip & Smith, 2013). The child has already absorbed poor parenting practices from an already dysfunctional environment. Since the family is the foundation of moral values and character building, grandchildren in dysfunctional homes are starting far behind the developmental stages involving emotional and coping skills. Indeed, psychologist Nancy Eisenberg (2007) explained that while the church, teachers, and lawmakers help in this process, values and beliefs are reinforced in the home. If these areas are not developed or nurtured properly, then the child is left making poor choices, leading to delinquent behavior (Byford et al., 2011).

Research Questions

In this study, I have explored the generational transfer of poor behavior and parenting practices and how it influences the delinquent behavior of their grandchildren. The study examined how the transfer of poor behavior is exhibited in the home and how much of what is being modeled is influencing or reinforcing the behavior of the juveniles. The questions listed below have served as a guide for collecting data.

Research Question 1: How does the generational transfer of parenting practices with grandmothers affect their grandchildren with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 2: What are the lived experiences of grandmothers who have become the primary parent for children/youth with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 3: How are the grandmothers as the primary caregivers perceive the effects of parenting practices on delinquent behavior, and how these parenting practices are passed from one generation to another?

Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory, as presented by Akers (2011), provides a comprehensive explanation of criminal behavior in juveniles and helps identify the source of motivation when committing acts of crime. The foundation of this theory rests on consistency, exposure, duration of exposure, and intensity of exposure. Juveniles learn their behavior, and rationalize it, by watching relatives, and those closest to them, consistently act in specific ways (Akers, 2011). This process is known as observational learning or vicarious reinforcement of parenting practices. These processes align with operant conditioning as discussed by Bartol and Bartol (2011), as a system of rewards and consequences, with consequences, minimized based on the incentives. It is those incentives that lead the juvenile to a decision as to whether they should act or not (Akers, 2011).

According to the principles of social learning theory, the grandchildren are learning antisocial behavior through either observational learning or vicarious reinforcement, specifically with their grandmothers either directly or indirectly (Akers, 2011). In many cases, parents who make poor decisions will, in turn, model poor behavior, leaving their children to learn the same poor decision-making skills and rationalize that this behavior is acceptable (Byford et al., 2011). This theory explains how the home environment, and the social practices within that environment, can influence the development of delinquency

Nature of Study

The study was based on Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), where the researcher must remain neutral, suspend their views or preferences (Smith & Osborn, 2007). The chosen methodology for this phenomenological research was merely to allow the participants to answer questions about their lived experiences beginning with their childhood, as a parent, and currently as a grandmother caring for their grandchild presenting with delinquent behavior. There was no coaching or guiding with the interviews, only probing if necessary, while still giving the participant complete freedom for responses and reflection (Chenail, 2011). Clark Moustakas, one of the leading experts on the heuristic methods of phenomenological research, explained that phenomenological research is less about the interpretation and more about the participants' explanation of their lived experiences known as Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (as cited in Creswell, 2013). Moustakas also emphasizes Husserl's concept of "epoche," a term for bracketing, where the researcher sets aside his or her own experiences (Willig & Rogers, 2017). This study focused on the participant's life experiences associated with caring for their grandchildren and the relationship each participant has with their children, and lastly, their grandchildren. I took a naturalistic approach to the study to interpret and identify the phenomena based on the explanations of the participants.

Definitions

Offspring: The child born to one or more of the grandmother's children, son or daughter, and left in the care of the grandmother (Doinita & Maria, 2015).

Kinship: a biological (blood) relative, here it is the grandchild and grandmother's relationship (Backhouse & Graham, 2013).

Delinquent behavior: An illegal act normally committed by an adult is committed by a juvenile/adolescent under the age of 18 (OJJDP.gov, 2013-2015).

Generational transfer: The passing of tradition, practices, rituals through culture, and/or teachings of family members down the family line (Madden et al., 2015).

Parenting practices: How individuals choose to parent their children and may be passed on through family lineage (Donita & Maria, 2015).

Social learning: Individuals are learning through social interactions either observing, imitating, or modeling the actions of others (Akers, 2010).

Attachment: A working relationship that has been kindled through meaningful interactions forming an intimate bond between individuals (grandmother and grandchild) (Donita & Maria, 2015).

Reinforcement: behavior is controlled based on consequences (Skinner & Fester, 2014).

Modeling: How an individual portrays him or herself in the company of others, knowingly or unknowingly (Akers, 2010).

Emotional ties: Intimate connection between two individuals (Donita & Maria, 2015)

Assumptions

Donita and Maria (2015) demonstrated that parenting styles have contributed to delinquent behavior. However, no evidence supports the styles of parenting as a primary

cause or contributing factor to delinquent behavior in juveniles (Donita & Maria, 2015).

The assumption here is that behavior is learned, and that the children will mimic what he or she learns from those closest to them (Kim & Page, 2013). Another assumption is that children learn based on their attachment to a relative or how close of bond a child might have with an influential relative living in the home, for example, their emotional ties or needs (Doman, 2016; Taboh, 2016). How caregivers model behavior in the home will set the tone for how their children will mimic their behavior, more specifically, poor behavior, outside of the home or in their relationships (Doinita & Maria, 2015). If a caretaker glorifies terrible behavior, this will also encourage similar behavior in the juvenile. The assumption here is that children learn by what they usually see, not so much by what they are told. Therefore, much of the behavior here is learned through interactions in the home.

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this research was to examine how practices have been passed on through generations impacting delinquent behavior in grandchildren under the care of their grandmothers. Therefore, the use of social learning theory has helped with taking a closer look at the grandmothers and their relationships with their grandchildren in their home environments. This would allow me to probe further for information about the interactions involving current behavior and parenting practices throughout the generations. Grandmothers were the primary focus of the study to learn more about their childhood and what their environment was like for them. To also learn more about their experiences as a mother and how her past has impacted not only her children but her

grandchildren. The expectations were that participants express their experiences as a child, parent, and lastly, as a grandparent. Grandfathers were not a part of this study because we want to examine this phenomenon from a female perspective, taking into consideration that mothers are often seen as natural nurturers and caretakers (Denholm, 2012). Furthermore, due to the rise in statistics that more grandmothers are caring for grandchildren, more than any other relatives in the family (Cancino, 2016), it seemed more plausible to start at the beginning with the grandmothers' childhood. No juveniles were questioned during this process because it is based solely on parenting practices through the generations, as told by the grandmothers. This study was concerned more with the development of delinquent behavior in grandchildren being raised primarily by grandmothers with already dysfunctional adult children and parents of the grandchild.

This study was conducted in the southern region of the United States. I was mindful that different regions may have different ideas or opinions when it comes to rearing young children. For example, northern regions may be more liberal than the southern regions and, where corporal punishment is acceptable, it might be in other places, and even punishable by law (ScienceDaily, 2016). This group of grandmothers' experiences might not be consistent with other cultures, ethnicities, or those with the preference of a specific religious background. Many of the participants reveal their criminal history along with other information that was not the focus of the study, such as sexual trauma and domestic violence. There was no way of knowing if grandmothers are providing every detail of their life when factoring aging and personal perception on their part. Furthermore, when collecting data, gaps in discussions, or timeline, these issues

were addressed and explored as needed. Sequencing has been conducted and will be discussed later in the study. This involved the mapping of data for future use in relevant research topics. Information that was discovered during this study will allow future researchers to build and expand on regarding key points related to the generational transfer of parenting practices (Creswell, 2009)

Limitations

Limitations of the study included some of the participants' ability to recall specifics of time and dates regarding experiences. Some were unsure about the parenting practices and not knowing how to describe their parents' practices. Others acknowledged poor parenting in the home as a child. Since this was self-reporting, there were very little problems with secrets or avoiding topics on private matters in the home, such as their role in discipline or punishment. Initially, there was concern that the caretakers might not want to expose such information for fear of being judged. There was also concern with participants providing accurate information or total recall of events or even if caretakers were embarrassed about lack of control over a grandchild with delinquent behavior in or out of the home. In some cases, I anticipated that the grandmothers would feel ashamed of the grandchild exhibiting delinquency or behavioral problems and feel embarrassed about reporting specific incidents. This was not the case but just the opposite. When reflecting on this limitation, I was more aware of how I presented questions and sensitivity with the wording of the interview questions. This was to ensure the participants were not offended and felt comfortable throughout the interview process (Chenail, 2011).

Significance

The United States Census Bureau (2012) reported 36.4 percent of grandparents as primary caregivers. Of those grandparents, 1.6 million are grandmothers who are responsible for the basic needs of their grandchildren under 18 years of age. This qualitative study was significant because, as stated by Sheffield (2017), there was a need to understand further the role of the grandmothers parenting grandchildren with delinquent behavior and how the impact of transferring generational practices and how poor behavior is modeled in the home. Sheffield (2017) also expressed a need to learn more about grandmothers raising juvenile delinquents and how the grandmother's impact or method of parenting her grandchild with delinquent behavior. This study helps to increase effective parenting skills while applying more of a focus on grandmothers caring for grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Therefore, by learning more about the transfer of parenting practices helps to provide more information into how to better equip a caretaker for handling a problem child or offspring with delinquent behavior. Information from this study has also aided in tailoring interventions to the needs of the family. Whether there are problems with effective communication skills, poor parenting, inability to cope, programs are now better equipped to address the needs of the family without casting a one-size-fits-all mentality.

Current studies have given the impression that the grandmother's home environment is healthy simply because a grandmother has taken control of raising their grandchildren and are seen as wholesome and harmless (Barrett, 2013). This qualitative study's findings provided an alternate perspective for developing better support services

for these households suffering from negative experiences. This study has added to the current information, which will aid in preparing grandmothers with proper resources and guidance from social services and policymakers already involved with the juvenile at the start. Services will include preparation for transition regarding advanced knowledge of knowing what to do, whom to call, and where to go when needs arise. Grandmothers will also benefit greatly from the financial support such as funding for mental services and legal services for grandmothers while remembering that these grandmothers have either low income or fixed incomes (Rubin, 2013).

The findings of this qualitative study provide information that can help lead to positive social change within the communities increasing healthier home environments, grandmothers who are better educated and emotionally balanced. With grandmothers who are coping better in raising their grandchildren, society will see a decline in delinquent behaviors. Juveniles will improve academically, increasing high school graduates, while reducing criminal activity and improving behavior at home and in school.

Summary

This study was conducted to examine grandmothers' lived experiences over three generations beginning with her childhood, adulthood, and parenting, and finally, as a grandmother. Information was collected through face-to-face interviews regarding the grandmother's home environments over three generations with the hopes of gathering information that would link current behavior to past behavior. Grandmothers were in a position to provide information from the different perspectives beginning with her

childhood and as a caregiver. Also, this allowed me to probe further into the grandchild's rearing and whether the child's parents used similar practices in their home as the grandmother. The choice of social learning theory helped in determining whether parenting practices contributed to the delinquent behavior of the grandchildren, which may have been passed on through generations.

According to social learning theory, children learn from exposure and reinforcement, which can be directly related to modeling in the home. Exposure in the home, whether it directly impacts the juvenile or not, could stem from poor parenting skills, neglect, and abuse. I was able to explore the negative side of parenting, tracing its roots through three generations, of a grandmother, mother, and grandchild, ultimately finding a connection. The results of this study will help to determine what more is needed in aiding families headed by grandmothers caring for their grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. This help will aid in the utilization of informative programs that educate grandmother in the areas she is lacking, helping curb delinquent behavior while increasing academic skills and high school graduates while decreasing delinquent behavior in homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Statistics show an increase of grandmothers as primary caregivers to their grandchildren with delinquent behavior (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Grandchildren have been placed in the care of their grandmothers for one of many reasons, but most often because their mother and father were not capable of raising them (Withers, 2014). Their parents have also exhibit antisocial behavior in the home, and now, in turn, their children are exhibiting antisocial behavior (Withers, 2014). In this study, I focused on influencing factors associated with the delinquent behavior of grandchildren. The study considered traits of poor parenting styles and the role they play in behavior in the current home. Furthermore, this research explored the interactions of grandmothers and their grandchildren, examining the reasons the delinquent behaviors continue, even after the removal of the child from their parent(s).

In addition to learning more about the behavior that is modeled in the home, this study also explored other potentially negative aspects that influenced the development of delinquent behavior. Researchers have provided a connection between these influencing factors that resulted in reduced parenting skills; however, there are other reasons that both parent and child exhibited antisocial behavior, and the study revealed that the grandmothers were the catalyst responsible for the continued cycle of negative behavior in the home (Goulette et al., 2016). Researchers have provided a wealth of information explaining how juveniles lack the capability of making sound decisions and are easily influenced by those closest to them (Dunifon, 2013). Therefore, we know that juveniles

are not just deciding to commit criminal acts usually committed by adults. Poor decisions are the result of the influencing caretakers modeling poor behavior and choices in the home. With the modeling of poor behavior, the caregiver teaches or reinforces delinquent behavior, promoting antisocial behavior. When poor behavior is acceptable, coping skills are stifled while also creating a socially inept juvenile (Dunifon, 2013; Madden et al. 2015). Without these essential developmental skills, children cannot show empathy, compassion, and fear in many cases, and some never really understand the extent of their decisions because they have not fully developed mentally or have yet to reach that level of maturity (Dunifon, 2013; Goulette, 2016).

This research aimed to explore past behavior, specifically, the interactions of grandmothers caring for their grandchildren in their home environment. Learning more about the behavior in the home and those interactions concerning their grandchildren will help in understanding what is contributing to the delinquent behavior of their grandchildren. Since living with grandmother, the behavior has not improved and, while not every child living with a grandmother is the result of poor parenting, many cases fall into this category. This study examined the influencing factors of why delinquent grandchildren living with their grandmothers are not improving. After learning more about grandmothers' generational interactions and their influence within the family, there was evidence of poor choices and poor behavior. These issues are the results of poor coping skills, based on a transfer of generational behavior and parenting practices and how those practices influenced grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Local communities should ensure that children, who are already suffering delinquent behavior,

are not just being passed on into yet another dysfunctional setting or failing the community, which allows for the continued victimization or a continuance of delinquent behavior. Local officials can help communities help grandmothers by making it possible to educate grandmothers and reduce ineffective parenting, making it possible for the family to experience more positive interactions in the home.

Literature Search Strategy

The search for information began with phrases like grandmothers raising juvenile delinquents and the role of the grandmother in the home. Other key phrases and terms were generational transfer, parenting practices, juvenile delinquents, grandmothers raising juvenile delinquents, transfer of parenting practices, nurturers, delinquents, and intergenerational parenting practices. These terms and phrases were used in several databases, starting with Walden University Library, EBSCO, Psych Articles, NCBI, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. Many sources were obtained from online publications like Sage Journals, Science Direct, Psychology Today, and the American Psychological Association. There is very little research concerning the generational transfer of parenting practices based solely on grandmothers raising grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Therefore, additional resources referencing delinquent behavior and its cause and effect were also used in this search.

Other resources referred to the topic of the generational transfer of parenting practices, explicitly parenting styles. Those sources were referring to parents raising juveniles with delinquent behavior, not grandmothers. Other sources referencing grandmothers spoke mostly on challenges, stress, and kinship care associated with a lack

of support concerning delinquent behavior. Overall, the search was limited, leaving this researcher to extract information from several sources compiling data associated with poor parenting, delinquent behavior, and parenting styles and the associated with grandmothers based on the needs of the grandmother and her financial resources. Finally, exploring websites, blogs, and online articles revealed further potential research articles for this study.

Theoretical Foundation

History of Social Learning Theory

Ronald L. Akers (1939-) is an American criminologist known for his theory of social learning as it relates to criminology. Akers taught at several universities before leaving his position as a professor at Florida University as director of the Center for Studies in Criminology and Law (Bernard, 2007). It was Akers' premise that criminal behavior is the result of "normal" or learning (Bernard, 2007). Akers' original theory of social learning began through collaborations with Robert L. Burgess published under A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior (1966). Akers also studied the works of American criminologist Edwin Sutherland and American psychologist B. F. Skinner. Sutherland proposed that crimes are seen as positive acts in social settings (Bernard, 2007; Sutherland, 1947). Sutherland (1947) goes on to explain that individuals choosing to commit crimes do so because of the people they associate with, such as their circle of friends or relatives who also commit crimes (as cited in Akers, 2012). Skinner's theory of "operant conditioning" teaches that learning is associated with a set of systems consisting of punishments and rewards. Akers concluded

that criminal behavior is developed through both "social and non-social" reinforcement, and much of the learning takes place through social interactions with others (as cited in Akers, 2011).

It was not until later that Akers expanded on his theory with the use of Albert Bandura's "operant conditioning" that teaches how individuals also learn through modeling, much like juveniles being exposed to movies and today's violent games (Akers, 2011). Akers (2011) also added how structured social factors play an integrated role in the crime and deviant behaviors. These theories were tested in a host of studies conducted by Akers involving delinquent behavior, substance and alcohol use, and individuals who smoked cigarettes (Akers, 2011). Akers later earned the Edwin H. Sutherland Award from the American Society of Criminology for his contributions to theory and research (Bernard, 2007). Akers' theory differed from Sutherland in that he believed individuals learn criminal behavior as adolescents from those they interacted with on a day to day basis (Khalil, 2013).

Social Learning Applied to Criminal Behavior

Social learning theory, as it relates to delinquent behavior in juveniles, helped identify the sources of criminal behavior with considerations to human interactions such as environment, exposure, peer interaction, and consistency of exposure (Akers, 2011). The environment is key when describing influencing factors to criminal behavior in juveniles (Genetic Literacy Project, 2014). What often motivates juveniles is what is seen or experienced over time and how this experience is usually rationalized with rewards and the minimal to no concern for consequences (Byford, Kuh, & Richards, 2011).

Whether the parent exhibits, criminal behavior might not be the only presenting factor in cases of delinquent behavior, neglect, and abuse also contribute to criminal activities with juveniles (Bartol & Bartol, 2011). How the caretaker parents a child can also influence antisocial behavior in communities. When considering the necessary components to the making of criminal behavior, one has seen that there is a combination of issues surrounding the juvenile leading to poor decision making.

Learning Through Reinforcement

The theory of social learning explained that under specific circumstances and living conditions, delinquent behavior is easily influenced and can affect the child's social development (Akers, 2011). Children are impressionable at young ages, and if exposed to enough negative components, a child can eventually take on the traits of his or her negative environment (Akers, 2011). The child will learn or see this as normal if change does not occur and in some case where change is occurring it may be difficult to alter the child's behavior especially if positive change is not just as consistent or even more present than the negative (Akers, 2011; Byford, Kuh, & Richards, 2011). Social learning theory teaches that reinforcement is prominent, especially with exposure, duration of exposure, and the intensity of exposure (Akers, 2011). Children learn by what is seen and only become curious about what is explained (verbally). Therefore, if you say one thing and do another, the outcome would be that a juvenile will do as he or she sees more often than as they are told (Akers, 2011). Children learn and imitate behaviors, whether positive or negative, through social observation or observational learning (Rymanowicz, 2015).

Concerning the focus of this research of grandmothers raising grandchildren with delinquent behavior, social learning gives the foundation for examining whether traits were passed down from one generation to the next. Therefore, whether the behavior is criminal or not, the focus was to learn more about whether the passing of parenting practices or the actual interactions on a child has such an influence on delinquent behavior. If observational learning is one of the critical components, then there should be evidence of a history of antisocial behavior throughout the family. The findings of the research proved this theory. Parenting practices were only one part, much like crime families or gangs, the behavior is taught in one of many aspects or another (Rymanowicz, 2015). Taking a different perspective, a parent who was raised in a violent home may wish to change such behavior in their own home as a parent. However, what if this parent has not learned more effective coping skills or a better parenting method or interactions with their children? Stress can seep in, resulting in negative choices and actions directed at the child (Byford, Kuh, & Richards, 2011). As previously stated before, a parent teaches through actions and choices associated with positive actions and choices (Byford et al., 2011). In many cases, caretakers who make poor decisions, teach through their behavior, actions, or association with those making poor decisions, that this behavior is acceptable (Byford et al., 2011).

Literary Review

Grandchildren with Delinquent Behavior

While there was a wealth of information on grandmothers raising grandchildren with positive experiences, very little was known about the effects of the interactions of

grandmothers caring for grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Research has shed some light on the delinquent problems by identifying the sources of the delinquency. Since delinquency is a complex issue and can be redefined depending on the classification, i.e., "boys being boys," many of the elected individuals tend to focus on the one group that they deem delinquent and not the actions of a primary caregiver in most cases. While some delinquent behavior may be acceptable, other behavior is not, referring back to schoolyard fights, the use of a knife or gun was involved, and someone was injured (Baldwin, Church, & Wharton, 2013; Withers, 2014).

With regards to the general acts of children and their milestones, many of the crimes committed are actions typically of adults. It is in this area where the interactions between the grandmothers and their grandchildren have a significant role in this study. Are the children mimicking behavior seen in the home, with peers, or non-related adults exhibiting similar antisocial behavior? Reflecting on what contributes to delinquency, we understand through previous research that exposure and reinforcement of negative behaviors are significant for reinforcing delinquent behavior in juveniles (Baldwin et al., 2013).

Generational Parenting Practices

While the topic of biological parents raising troubled youth is a typical focus, Whitey and Kelly (2010) asserted that there is very little information on grandmothers' interactions and grandchildren committing criminal acts. Some parenting practices may contrast in comparison to the grandmother and the child's parents, including how each interacts with the child (Withers, 2014). How the parent interacts with the juvenile may

differ in that some interactions are positive, and others are not. Withers (2014) also contended that the effects of parenting styles have a more considerable influence on juvenile delinquency. According to the United States Census Bureau (as cited by National Institute of Justice, n.d.), grandmothers constituted 63% of those caring for grandchildren, and yet while those same juveniles are currently living with grandmother, the statistics have not improved other than reclassifying crimes committed by juveniles. They were implying that the grandchildren are no better with grandmother despite being removed from a dysfunctional home.

Researchers Baldwin et al. (2013) explained how the modeling and the interactions of grandmothers when parenting their grandchildren could lead to challenges, which in turn can impact how grandmothers cope with the behavior of their delinquent grandchildren. Hence, grandmothers under stress can instantly make poor decisions when correcting behavior leading to further negative behavior. This behavior might be striking the child, using verbal or demeaning language, and applying inappropriate punishment (Goulette et al., 2016). An environment of constant negativity promotes negative behavior just as the modeling of poor behavior can leave the child to reason that poor behavior is acceptable behavior based on the consequences.

Goulette et al. (2016) contended that love and nurturing play a significant role in raising juveniles. These researchers also expressed that the amount of interaction from a caregiver in comparison to mothers and grandmothers may contrast with relation to the child. While the mother may have been passive, absent, or permissive, the grandmother may be stricter, harsher with punishment, and lack certain nurturing traits along with and

compassion needed for a juvenile that was traumatized by the previous incidents (Goulette et al. 2016).

Transfer of Parenting Practices

The topic of biological parents raising troubled youth has been examined, Whitey and Kelly (2010) asserted that there is very little information on the interactions of grandmothers parenting a grandchild with delinquent behavior and not much information concerning the parenting practices of grandmothers with their delinquent grandchildren. Therefore, leaving a gap required further research, specifically, grandmothers and their parenting practices, along with the transfer of parenting skills and other negative practices in the home. Goulette (2008) reported that the effects of juvenile delinquency on the parenting relationships should also be examined.

Strom and Strom (2011) argued there should be further research concerning the role of grandmothers and their participation in caring for grandchildren. The research may help in understanding their parenting skills and coping skills, of grandmothers who are parenting grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Also, adding that examining whether these negative components strongly influence delinquent behavior with juveniles (Strom & Strom, 2011). The added stress of feeling alone and having minimal resources heightens when coupled with a child with delinquent behaviors, especially for grandmothers who are not properly informed and ill-equipped to handle such situations (Hayslip & Smith, 2013). Hoeve et al. (2009) recommended that researchers examine parenting styles and delinquency to understand further if the characteristics of these styles increase delinquency. There is a need to improve the role of grandmothers parenting

grandchildren with delinquent behavior, and the impact delinquent behavior has on the relationship when the main caregivers are grandmothers (Hayslip & Smith, 2013).

Literary Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

Parenting Practices

Learning more about the parenting practices and interactions of grandmothers was central to this study and necessary to understand why or what prevents grandchildren from improving their behavior even though they have been removed from the dysfunctional environment. Parenting practices have been linked to poor behavior in juveniles. The parenting practices grandmothers are accustomed was essential to understand the type of environment the grandmothers were accustomed, to enable a better understanding of why they have chosen the current methods of parenting as well as understanding grandmother's current behavior (negative or positive) in the home with her grandchildren (Kelley et al., (2013). Knowing if grandmothers are keeping similar standards to which she was raised, added to the body knowledge base of why parenting practices have transferred, and poor behavior continues. This clarified further in knowing whether grandmothers changed their practices or parenting practices changed for the worse.

Regarding grandmothers and their perception of their childhood, it was important to learn more about whether grandmothers agreed or disagreed with the parenting practices of their parents. This information provided insight on choices made with children currently living in the home. If grandmothers disagreed with the practices of their parents, how might this decision influence the development of their grandchildren

living in their home now? If the home the grandmother grew up in was too strict, she might have opted for leniency in her own home. Passive behaviors by grandmothers, allowing the child too much freedom or choices usually will leave a child making decisions that lead to harsh consequences and similar assumptions can be made about aggressive grandmothers.

Nurturing Practices of Grandmothers

The nurturing practices of the grandmothers can also negatively affect their grandchildren. A grandmother who lacks nurturing skills can leave the grandchild worse off than before arriving at the home. The grandchild will either feel smothered or unwanted under a new caretaker (Donita & Maria, 2015). Studies have shown that nurturing caretakers promote healthy cognition and emotional development in young adolescents (Doinita & Maria, 2015). The type of attachment or "emotional ties" between a grandchild and the grandmother also shapes healthy development and later relationships when growing into adulthood (Donita & Maria, 2015; Byford et al., 2011). Is there physical affection in the home? Expressing affection can be seen in many forms and, more importantly, whether the expressed affection was positive. Donita and Maria (2015) explained that affection should promote healthy expression of one's feelings. In the natural home environment, the relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren would exhibit one of some kind of affection whether it is negative or not. Observers can determine whether the home is warm with affection or if the physical affection is negative or positive through the interactions of grandmothers and their grandchildren (Donita & Maria, 2015). Negative or positive behavior in the homes tells

us how the child might view himself such as whether the grandchild has low self-esteem or high levels of self-worth. The same can be said if there is only a verbal expression of affection in the home, some grandmothers may express love verbally but feel uncomfortable with physical affection (Donita & Maria, 2015). Making an emotional connection or providing physical affection in some cases might be harder for grandmothers and vice versa. How might this impact the grandchild's perception of themselves?

Juvenile Delinquency

Researchers have collected a wealth of information on grandmothers raising grandchildren with positive experiences; very little is known about the effects and interactions of grandmothers caring for grandchildren with delinquent behavior (Baldwin, Church, & Wharton, 2013). Baldwin et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study on the family's responses or reactions to crises involving juveniles being detained and their experiences with the juvenile justice system. The in-depth study explored the "emotional reactions" of caregivers and interactions with legal authorities (Baldwin et al., 2013). The study examined the feelings of the caregivers concerning the child's misconduct and the juvenile justice system. The study also acknowledged that the researchers had no firsthand knowledge or privilege to observe these experiences as they unfolded. This study was conducted at a juvenile justice facility with 11 primary caregivers of a juvenile in the process of adjudication (Baldwin et al., 2013). The results of this research presented information not only on how the juvenile found themselves in such a predicament, but also how the family and the juvenile interacted with the legal agents

after being arrested. The research also provided information on time frames for necessary interventions. This study also added important data concerning the dynamics of the family's relationship, ineffective parenting, illegal activities of the juvenile, and evidence that there was limited or no supervision or structure in the family (Baldwin et al., 2013). Research in these areas can educate others on the delinquent problems by identifying the sources of the delinquency and the behavior associated with delinquent acts.

Goulette et al. (2016) wanted evidence of how the "female caregivers" type" might continue to influence juveniles well into adulthood using three different self-reports outcomes. Findings were similar to prior research in that males reported more police stops and antisocial behavior with increased problematic behavior in young adulthood when there was a lack of warmth, and during the adolescent years self-reports identified increased involvement with legal authorities and elevated levels of antisocial behavior (Withers, 2014)).

The caregiver type was not an influencing factor for antisocial acts with Goulette et al., 2016 research. The study also revealed that this group was prone to increase financial distress. Goulette et al. (2016) also explained that involvement with the police concerning caregiver type "might be a by-product of the neighborhood," which was not a focus of the study. Goulette et al. (2016) proposed that further examination of the neighborhoods be an included variation. This further warranted the question of whether the juveniles are mimicking behavior seen in the home, with peers, or non-related adults. Are the juveniles replicating similar antisocial behavior?

Reflecting on what contributes to delinquency, we understand through earlier research that exposure and reinforcement of negative behaviors are significant for reinforcing delinquent behavior in juveniles (Baldwin, Church, & Wharton, 2013). The results of the previous study by Baldwin et al. (2013) have proved that a lack of structure in the home plays a role in delinquent behavior. Baldwin et al. (2013), have also acknowledged that more information is needed with regards to interactions and emotional responses of caregivers. Over the past few decades, research has shown that delinquency and the interaction of others with an added combination of social and community conditions, influence poor behavior in many families (Withers, 2014).

Contributing Factors to Juvenile Delinquency

The Office of Juvenile and Justice Department Program (OJJDP, 2017) reported that early intervention is crucial in preventing delinquent behavior. This study by the National Conference of State Legislatures (n.d.) on Delinquency Prevention & Intervention was to better understand the contributing factors to delinquent behavior and ways to intervene by learning more about the needs of young offenders. Contributing factors fell into two areas "risk" and "protective" and how they influence the behavior of a juvenile. The OJJDP focused on four types of risk and protective factors, such as family, peer, individual (self), school, and community. These areas were of importance for preventing delinquency from escalating to more serious criminal acts.

Risk Factors

When considering the four mentioned areas of family, school, peers, and self, juveniles frequently interact with some more than others, such as family. The juvenile's

home is the foundation of what has been observed, taught, and modeled, concerning morals and principles as well as how he or she respected the boundaries and structure (Kimonis, Bagner, Linares, Blake, & Rodriguez, 2014). Therefore, what the juveniles learned at home is usually portrayed in school, and school may enhance what the juvenile has already learned at home (Kimonis et al., 2014). An example of this enhancement may reflect a juvenile who has no structure or boundaries at home; he will not live by rules or policy anywhere else. Problems with authority figures at home will be seen at school. A juvenile who lacks healthy coping skills tends to be impulsive and unpredictable outside of the home. The family or home environment adds to delinquency in the following ways: poor parent-child relationship, inconsistent discipline or boundaries, antisocial parents, broken home, abusive or neglectful parents (Goulette, Evans, & King, 2016; Kimonis et al., 2014). The school breeds delinquency when there is a weak support system, or the juvenile feels he has no other options or that no one cares or understands his or her needs. The juvenile's environments other than the home environment can also breed delinquent behavior, which is seen as a negative attitude and poor grades, leading to academic failure. Peers can either be weak or have non-existing social ties causing the juvenile to feel a need to belong and finding themselves involved with an individual or a group of individuals promoting delinquent behavior (Kimonis et al., 2014). When referencing "self," juveniles who are vulnerable with weak social ties and a need to belong may also find themselves experimenting with drugs and alcohol and or committing minor infraction to start (Kimonis et al., 2014; Kim & Page, 2013).

Protective Factors

When examining protective factors from a positive point of view with child care, juveniles with strong family ties, firm attachment to a parent(s), high confidence, and secure in self, will avoid deviant behavior, have a positive social life, feel encouraged to seek refuge or shelter at home instead of in the streets or with other delinquents (Rubin, 2013). Positive involvement in school promotes healthy academic skills, involvement in school activities such as team organizations, booster clubs, and other recreational activities (Withers, 2014). Having a strong peer association with friends and community help the juvenile engage in "conventional behavior" (Withers, 2014). If all of the positive factors are well aligned, the juvenile will not find him or herself alone. These factors promote healthy choices and a solid foundation for the juvenile to build and grow.

Foundation of Morality

Theories of moral development teach us that the conscience begins to shape in early childhood but is usually "externally controlled" by the adults and their actions (Thompson & Bynum, 2016). Morals are then gradually adjusted by "inner standards." Shoemaker (2017) argued that individuals with healthy morals are not doing the right thing because of what is expected of them. A moral compass stems from an inner source of "compassion concerns" and "principles of good conduct" not because it is expected. Healthy morals follow the individual through all situations in life (Shoemaker, 2017). Moral behavior is "acquired" much like other responses and behavior through reinforcement and modeling (Shoemaker, 2017). For example, a child demonstrates physical harm because he or she experienced some form of physical interaction. Hence

the generational transfer of poor behavior that has been passed on. This behavior has nothing to do with morals but with consequences and repetitive behavior experienced in the child's environment. Depending on how this act was corrected or reinforced, the child may continue the behavior, which then escalates into something more serious if not corrected, and how it is corrected will either exacerbate or diminish the problematic behavior.

Children also learn to associated language with behavior. For example, simple words like "good" and "bad" can describe what a child has already learned associated with appropriate or inappropriate behavior seen in children as early as two years of age (Thompson & Bynum, 2016). Along with associating words with behavior, young children learn to react to behavior such as aggression. If the child is hit, bitten, or yelled at by another child, or maybe a parent in most cases, this child then learns to hit as a response to the current conflict. However, minimal or insignificant of the catalyst that led to the conflict, the child has now learned a new way to resolve that personal feeling by reacting in kind. Thus, the child is now mimicking poor behavior (Thompson & Bynum, 2016). Hitting hurts, and children learn to defend by hurting that person as well once again, promoting unwanted behavior (Thompson & Bynum, 2016).

First Relationships

First, friendships are contextual for emotional and social development concerning the development of young children (Kim & Page, 2013). During the first relationships with a parent figure like a mother or a father (caretakers), how this child is treated or engaged can diminish or stifle skills needed in moral, psychological, and emotional

development. Young children consider a friend to be someone who likes them, and they in return. When a young child likes someone, he or she will spend a lot of time playing and sharing with this person. However, if the child has learned negative behavior from his or her first relationships with caretakers, he or she will respond to others in the same manner. If children are treated kindly, they respond to others with kindness. If treated negatively, young children will respond similarly to others. Young children give an abundance of reinforcement through physical gestures of hugs, willingness to share toys, and the constant accolades and praises in return for a similar response (Donitia & Maria, 2015). If the natural process of developing friends is disturbed, denied, or depleted, in any manner this could lead to "people pleasing" traits where the child is only happy when the other person is happy even at the sacrifice of their own needs or safety (Donitia & Maria, 2015). Such behavior is seen with delinquents and the pressure they might feel amongst peers to react (Donita & Maria, 2015). This is also true in reverse if the child finds pleasure in seeing someone unhappy such as laughing when another is crying or hurt. In either case, a child is learning to not only respond with an unwanted gesture, but the behavior can also feed a certain need such as retaliation and wanting to feel whole or satisfied depending on that need, the behavior, or reaction can resemble anger or selfishness.

Parental Influence on Peer relationships

When teaching values and morals to children, unlike a child who chooses a friend based on likes and willingness to share, adults see friendships as something of mutual companionship also with a willingness to share, but on a much deeper level of

significance (Kim & Page, 2013). Adults share thoughts, feelings, and times of caring for one another during the conflict. If an adult has not learned compassion, and the principles behind it, there is less likely a chance he or she will have the ability to teach these values to their children (Kim & Page, 2013). The first area of learning to interact with others socially begins at home with parents. Parents are at the forefront of teaching children social skills, right and wrong, directly or indirectly (Kim & Page, 2013).

Parenting Styles

Researchers have made a practice of referencing the different parenting styles when studying the behavior of children, families, and their interactions in the home (Deoraj, Nitisha, Devavrat, 2016; Givertz, 2015; Kakinami, Barnett, Se'guin, Paradis, 2015). Diana Baumrind (1966), a developmental psychologist, conducted a study deciding there were three types of parenting styles. The first parenting style is authoritative, where parents are more direct with their children's actions seen with a "give and take" mindset or rationale. This type of parent reasons with their child and allows the child freedom to express but stands firm with boundaries and discipline while still being flexible (Kakinami et al., 2015). The authoritative parent exerts control but does not hinder the child's growth and development. The authoritative parent "affirms" the child's current qualities while setting boundaries for any misconduct. The second parenting style is authoritarian, where the parent is strict, controlling, and operates in "absolute standards" sort of my way or the highway attitude (Faraz, Syeda, & Shahnawaz, 2015; Givertz, 2015). This parent strives for obedience and expects such in return. Authoritative parents believe that every child has their place and is motivated by authority and order

(Kakinami et al., 2015). Authoritarian parents are also traditionally structured and do not believe in the "give and take" or of children verbally expressing opinions or feelings of disagreement. Baumrind's (1966) third style of parenting is the permissive parent who is non-assertive, accepting of the child's impulsive behavior, desires, and actions. Children under the care of this parental style do not see structure, are not held accountable for his or her actions and may see the parent as a way of a means to an end, not someone to regard as a role-model or someone to emulate (Goulette et al., 2016b). There is no shaping of morals and principles with this parenting style, and it is usually the child getting what he wants when he wants it without consequences (Baumrind, 1966). Researchers Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin (1983) later added the "neglectful" parent expanding on Baumrind's model of permissive parenting style. This parenting style usually referenced absent, uninvolved, or abusive parents. This type of parenting may resemble a child not having their basic needs met or having deliberate harm inflicted upon them. These parenting styles became the focus of child-rearing, development, and behavior. Researchers reference the parenting model when gathering information concerning their impact and influence on childhood behavior.

Generational Parenting Practices

While the topic of biological parents raising troubled youth has been a focus, Whitey and Kelly (2010) asserted that there is very little information on the interactions of grandmothers and their grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Some parenting practices of grandmothers may conflict with the parenting practices of the child's parents, including how each interacts with the child individually (Withers, 2014). How the parent

interacts with the juvenile may differ in that some interactions are positive, and others are not. Withers (2014) also contended that the effects of parenting styles have a more considerable influence on juvenile delinquency. According to the United States Census Bureau (as cited by National Institute of Justice, n.d.), grandmothers constitute 63 percent of those caring for grandchildren, and yet while those same juveniles are currently living with grandmother, the statistics have not improved other than reclassifying crimes committed by juveniles. They were signaling that the grandchildren are no better with grandmother despite being removed from a dysfunctional home.

Baldwin, Church, and Wharton (2013) explained how the modeling and interactions could influence the "trajectory" of the family dynamic, such as a juvenile being arrested for a crime or even detained. How the grandmothers respond to their grandchildren's infraction could lead to more problems and, thus, created other crisis, damaging the family. This then creates increased distress, which can further impact how grandmothers cope with the behavior of their delinquent grandchildren creating a cycle (Baldwin et al., 2013). Not only does this adds to the problematic parenting, but how the juvenile responds to this type of parenting leading to behavior such as rebelling and acting out on the child's part. Hence, grandmothers under stress can make poor decisions when correcting the behavior of the child. This sometimes can result in harmful behavior of the parenting towards the child either physically or psychologically. This behavior might be striking the child, using verbal or demeaning language, and applying inappropriate punishment, which may be extreme in some cases (Goulette et al., 2016). An environment of constant negativity promotes negative behavior, just as the modeling

of poor behavior can leave the child to reason that poor behavior is acceptable regardless of its intention (Sprang et al., 2014). For example, hitting out of anger promotes more anger, and the child learns to react violently when angry (Sprang et al., 2014).

Goulette et al. (2016) contended that love and nurturing play a significant role in the rearing of children. These researchers also expressed that the amount of interaction from a caregiver in comparison to mothers and grandmothers may contrast with relation to the child. While the mother may have been passive, absent, or permissive, the grandmother may be stricter, harsher with punishment, and lack certain nurturing traits minus the compassion needed for a child that was possibly traumatized in previous events or incidents (Goulette et al. 2016).

Intergenerational Transmission

Madden et al. (2015) researched the quality of parenting and the outcome of the child through adulthood with generations. Madden et al. (2015) provided evidence of intergenerational transmission of parenting practices. Madden et al. (2015) wanted to determine if intergenerational transmission happens with mothers and fathers alike. This research was based out of the UK and explored areas of "perception from their own parenting" and whether current parenting practices were positive or neglectful with current generations (Madden et al., 2015). Madden et al. (2015) also provided a synopsis of the family members interacting with one another to evaluate "bonding" between current generations and the second and third.

Transfer of Parenting Practices

The topic of biological parents raising troubled youth has been examined throughout the years. However, the identified gap in parenting patterns required further research, specifically, grandmothers and their parenting practices, along with the transfer of those parenting practices through generations. Strom and Strom (2011) argued there should be further research concerning grandmothers' role and their participation in caring for grandchildren. Strom and Strom's (2011) report revealed the goals of successful grandparents raising their grandchildren and explained how other grandmothers with becoming suitable caregivers for their grandchildren. Findings collected from three generational studies were combined, consisting of community programs and case studies. This report also helped grandmothers better prepare in their "thinking and behavior" and ways to access necessary resources during a crisis. The report also aids in developing better parenting skills and coping skills, of grandmothers who are parenting grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Strom and Strom (2011) concluded that education was necessary for managing challenges when raising grandchildren and by pursuing new attainable goals relevant to the family's needs. Strom and Strom (2011) further explained that caregivers need help in "identifying the life lessons they should be teaching at home" while allowing the grandchild to express feelings, thoughts, and concerns. Caregivers should be open to the expression of artistic views and "reflective thinking." This all aiding in the child's learning of self-awareness when poor behavior surfaces and how better to cope with adversity.

The research was important when examining whether these negative components, such as poor parenting skills, lack of effective communication, and minimal or non-existing boundaries in the home, strongly influence delinquent behavior with juveniles (Strom & Strom, 2011). The added stress of feeling alone and having minimal resources heightens when coupled with a grandchild exhibiting delinquent behaviors, especially for grandmothers who are not properly informed and ill-equipped to handle such situations (Hayslip & Smith, 2013). Hoeve et al. (2009) recommended that researchers examine parenting styles and delinquency to understand if the characteristics of these styles increase delinquency. There is a need to improve the role of grandmothers parenting grandchildren with delinquent behavior, and the impact delinquent behavior has on the relationship, communities, and society as a whole when the main caregivers are grandmothers (Hayslip & Smith, 2013). Learning more about the parenting practices and interactions of grandmothers was central to this study but also in understanding why or what prevents grandchildren from improving with their behavior even though they have been removed from the dysfunctional environment. Parenting practices have been linked to poor behavior in children. There was more to learn about the parenting practices of grandmothers, especially those who are now caring for their grandchildren and having similar results as the parents who once cared for the children previously.

The Parenting Practices Grandmothers are Accustomed

It is essential to understand the type of environment the grandmothers were accustomed and to enable a better understanding of why they have chosen the current methods of parenting as well as understanding the grandmother's current behavior

(negative or positive) in the home with her grandchildren (Whitley et al., 2013). Whitley et al. conducted a study examining the "dichotomized" mental stress level against elevated levels of psychological distress and family resources of a group of non-random African American grandmothers raising grandchildren in absent parent homes. Whitley et al. were testing "predictive relations" within the study's constructs of "prospective mediational model" between two mental health groups. Whitley et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of "multidisciplinary interventions" and their relationship between stress levels. Whitley et al. found that family resources were perceived as a contributing factor to low-stress levels. These findings revealed that the resources focused on specific interventions such as home visits, support groups, and legal assistance "can enhance the grandmother's subjective assessments of family resources," which produced a lower power psychological distress level in grandmothers. Again, education and resources are necessary for reducing challenges and problems that lead to delinquent behavior in the home.

Having a better understanding of whether grandmothers are keeping similar standards to which she has been held adds to the current body of research about why parenting practices have transferred, and poor behavior continues. This study gave a clearer vision into that process of generational patterns and further helped with understanding how those practices changed for the worse. Learning more about whether grandmothers agreed or disagreed with the parenting practices of their parents', provides insight with choices made concerning how the grandmothers cared for their grandchildren currently living in the home and what their parents experienced under

grandmother's care. If grandmothers disagreed with the practices of their parents, how might this decision influence their parenting practices and development of her children and now her grandchildren living in the home? If the grandmother's home was too strict, she might have opted for leniency in her own home. Passive behaviors by grandmothers, allowing the child too much freedom, usually will leave a child making decisions that lead to harsh consequences, and similar assumptions can be made about aggressive behaviors with these grandmothers.

Nurturing Practices of Grandmothers

The nurturing practices of grandmothers can also negatively affect their grandchildren. A grandmother who lacks nurturing skills can leave the child worse off than before arriving at the home, either feeling smothered or unwanted (Donitia & Maria, 2015). Studies have shown that nurturing caretakers promote healthy cognition and emotional development in young adolescents (Donitia & Maria, 2015). The type of attachment or "emotional ties" between a grandchild and the grandmother also shapes healthy development and later personal and intimate relationships when growing into adulthood (Donitia & Maria, 2015; Byford et al., 2011). Donitia & Maria (2015) conducted a study examining adult attachment with the characteristics of parenting styles. Donitia and Maria (2015) reported that attachment experiences are "crucial for human emotional and cognitive development" to promote healthy relationships with others. The study was conclusive in its findings and that there is a correlation to "secure adult attachment and authoritative parenting style" similar to previous studies, and the same can be said for the authoritarian parenting style. Physical affection and expressed

affection can be seen in many forms when caring for a child. Donitia and Maria (2015) questioned whether the expressed affection was positive and went on to explained that affection should promote healthy expression of one's feelings. In the natural home environment, the relationship between grandmothers and their grandchildren would exhibit at least one of the two kinds of affection, whether it is negative or not. Observers can determine whether the home is warm with affection or if the physical affection is negative or positive through the interactions of grandmothers and their grandchildren (Donitia & Maria, 2015). Negative or positive behavior in the homes can also tell us how the child might view himself, such as whether the child has low self-esteem or self-worth. The same can be said if there is only the verbal expression of affection in the home, some grandmothers may express love verbally but feel uncomfortable with physical affection (Donitia & Maria, 2015). Making a connection physically, in some cases, might be harder for grandmothers and vice versa. How might this impact the grandchild's perception of themselves if this expression is negative?

Grandmother's Background

Whether the caretaker exhibits criminal behavior might not be the only presenting factor in cases of delinquent behavior with a child. Goulette and King (2016) have shown through research that families can have a profound impact on juveniles with delinquent behavior. In this research, Goulette and King (2016) also explained several influencing factors associated with child development and delinquent behavior. Ryan, Williams, and Courtney (2013) highlighted areas of poor involvement, poor communication, and forms of abuse and neglect in the home headed by grandmothers. Ryan et al. (2013)

acknowledged that children who have been abuse tend to have behavioral problems, low academic performance, and poor social skills. Therefore Ryan et al. (2013) explored the long-term effects of the initial contact with law enforcement and the family's response. This could include grandmothers with criminal backgrounds and how this might affect their ability to parent their grandchild. Ryan et al. (2013) wanted to determine if the recidivism rate of juvenile offenses was a direct result of neglect in the home.

Goulette and King (2016) stressed the importance of the family structure, which also enabled me to focus on parenting issues involving grandmothers heading households as a necessity because parents lack for many reasons when examining the welfare of their children. Goulette and King (2016) contended that regardless of how important the family experience is, there is still more to learn regarding the rearing of juveniles and their caregivers with concerns of grandchildren living with grandmothers compared to being raised by their natural parents. Goulette and King (2016) stressed that there is a lack of information concerning the importance or significance of grandchildren with delinquent behavior raised by grandmothers. Goulette and King (2016) also suggested further investigations into the antisocial behavior of grandchildren raised by grandmothers.

Further research in the area of how grandmothers interact with their grandchildren was the focus of Sprang, Choi, Eslinger, and Whitt-Woosley (2014) who reported that there is a connection with the temperament of the child and the "callous-unemotional" trait to mutual responsivity between the caregiver and the child. Sprang et al. (2016) found that juveniles who lack empathy and guilty, possess an uncaring attitude, and

suffer from conduct problems. Sprang et al. (2016) continued in saying that much of this is attributed to the family environment or the structure of the home. Parents without boundaries usually have juveniles with deviant behavior (Sprang et al., 2016).

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this phenomenological qualitative study aimed to explore the lived experiences of grandmothers parenting their grandchildren while exploring those experiences for the transfer of poor parenting practices. There was further examination as to whether the transfer of parenting practices and interactions of grandmothers and the grandchildren's environment and how it influenced delinquent behavior—thereby promoting and expanding on those same poor parenting practices through the generations. This study utilized the social learning theory as a guide to examine important components that have been transmitted through generations. What researchers now understand is that parenting styles are important for healthy coping skills and social development. The foundation of a family unit helps establish strong values and belief systems that allow the child to make healthy choices in life. As previously stated, researchers stressed the need to examine the generational or the intergeneration transfer of parenting practices based on current issues involving juveniles and their antisocial involvement with society.

This study aimed to fill that gap with information gathered from grandmothers raising grandchildren in the absents of parents. This study examined areas such as the home, school, peers, and other environments the juvenile may be involved or influenced by. The grandmother's background proved to be an important factor because she, too, had

a criminal background that spilled over into the raising of her children and grandchildren. This gave the reason as to why the parents were not suitable caretakers for their children. The grandmothers' nurturing practices were important in this research because the grandmothers eventually proved to be the catalyst with the making or continuing delinquent behavior of their grandchildren, seeing as grandmother did play a role in the dysfunction of her children. The parents are no longer involved with the child due to the poor decisions he or she has made. A few reasons could be the result of incarceration they have and or just emotionally unstable. The lack of parental involvement can stem from neglect and abuse, which may have been due to physical and even emotional abuse, leading to extreme problems, making it difficult for the parents to care for their children. Once the children have been removed from the home and placed with the grandmother, the initial caregiver's practices are even more evident with new sets of issues creating a more problematic situation for them.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the generational parenting practices of grandmothers raising grandchildren who are exhibiting delinquent behavior. The goal was to better understand what was contributing to delinquent behavior on a generational level and better understand criminal behavior across the generations. This study examined the relationship between the grandmothers and grandchildren and whether grandmothers are an influencing factor in the delinquent behavior of their grandchildren. This chapter covers the methodological approach, design, rationale, and the criteria for selecting participants. This chapter also discusses the role of the researcher, trustworthiness, and recruitment plans for participants. This chapter provides information about data analysis, the use of instruments with the study, and finally, ethical procedures to ensure the rights, safety, and privacy of the participants closing with a chapter summary highlighting key procedures with the research.

Research Design and Rationale

The research design for this study was from a qualitative phenomenological approach. The approach was appropriate for collecting data using opened-ended questions. These open-ended questions were designed to explore the lived experiences of the primary caregivers and their background while seeking information that may provide insight as to why their grandchildren are not improving concerning delinquent behavior. The choice of a qualitative phenomenological design method allowed the opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the perspective of the

grandmothers raising grandchildren with delinquent tendencies (Robinson, 2013). This qualitative phenomenological research allowed access to sensitive information from an up-close perspective (Hammarberg & Kirkman, 2016). This process required several interviews, depending on the needs of the researcher regarding the study when collecting information. This approach also allowed for a deeper understanding of perceptions, attitudes, and behavior by studying a small group of people allowing the researcher to further investigate beliefs and what is normalized in their experiences (Creswell, 2013; Lewis, 2015). Through another method, some information might not have been obtained with simple questionnaires or casual conversations. The researcher of this phenomenological study has worked to establish a rapport over time, building trust with the participants through each interaction and with each interview (Creswell, 2013; Lewis, 2015). This was accomplished by engaging the participants using Motivational Interviewing skills and techniques infused with Narrative Therapy ensuring the gathering of pertinent information from their stories firsthand (Robinson, 2013).

The bases of the design helped to empower the participants in the telling of their life experiences. This method was essential for gathering the personal information necessary for the collection of private data, and their current and past experiences, of the caretakers (Robinson, 2013). This research design allowed for the freedom to not only adapt but also to alter questions as needed. This also allowed for the liberty of rephrasing questions and the ability to provide examples for the participant giving clarity to what was being asked (Robinson, 2013).

Role of the Researcher

With concerns about the collection and interpretation of data, to remain neutral, I must suspend my views or biases from that of the participants. This process is known as epoche, a process of separating personal biases from the experiences of the subject's personal views. This process also helped me to remain objective by acknowledging my own biases beforehand (Tankersley, 2013). In regard to the participants, my role was to assure the participants' rights were not violated and that their information was handled appropriately, taking all precautions when safeguarding contact information.

Research Questions

In this qualitative study, I explored the generational transfer of practices and behavior in search of values, construct of an adaptation or rejection, and how it influences the grandchildren's delinquent behavior. The study examined how the transfer of parenting practices was exhibited in the home and how much of what was being modeled was influencing or reinforcing the grandchild's behavior. The questions listed below will serve as a guide for collecting data.

Research Question 1: How does the generational transfer of parenting practices with grandmothers affect their grandchildren with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 2: What are the lived experiences of grandmothers who have become the primary parent for children/youth with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 3: How the grandmothers as the primary caregivers perceive the effects of parenting practices on delinquent behavior and how these parenting practices are passed from one generation to another?

Methodology

This section will explain the procedure and process of data collected during the interviewing process of the research. This portion of the chapter will also explain the selection process and the criteria each participant must meet concerning the background and qualifying criteria of primary caregiver as participants. This section will also cover the use and purpose of instruments and procedures for analyzing data.

Setting and Participants

Ellis and Simmons (2014) found that of the primary caretakers in the United States, 15 percent were grandmothers with no parents in the home, and grandfathers maintained six percent. The study used purposive sampling, targeting only grandmothers raising one or more of their grandchildren. The sample was taken from organizations whose focus and purpose were to the needs of the elderly and or grandparents. These agencies were local organizations that were also serving the needs of juveniles with delinquent behaviors living with grandmothers.

The sample consisted of 11 grandmothers as the primary caregiver of grandchildren who have committed delinquent or violent acts and exhibited aggressive behavior in the school, home, and community. Biological parents were not involved with caring for the grandchild in any supportive manner. Ages of grandmothers were not significant for this study. Ethnicity was not relevant for this study nor socio-economic status or education. After creating a list of qualifications that meet the criteria of the desired participants, flyers were created with pertinent information about the study, including a summary of the study along with contact information. Prior to posting flyers,

the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was necessary through Walden University before contacting participants. This was done to ensure the research followed the highest ethical standards and protocol, which protects the rights and safety of participants and Walden University students. The IRB approval number for this study was 06-14-19-0387967. Those flyers were then posted in local organizations designed to assist individuals seeking behavioral health assistance within the community. Other details were gathered with each response to the flyers during phone calls such as how long the grandmother has been the primary caregiver, how much if any involvement the parent has with the child, and whether there is any contact from the parent. These details were explored before accepting the participants in the study. The chosen individuals then met, face-to-face with the researcher who utilized that opportunity to explain the process again and gather signatures acknowledging informed consent.

Once the participants were selected, the study's purpose was explained along with the process in detail. A brief description of the informed consent was also explained during the initial call, and there was also discussion about consent forms before beginning the interview process to ensure that the participants understand their rights as it related to the study. The option was given to the participants, informing them that they may decline participation anytime during the interview process. After the initial discussion, the participants confirmed they wanted to move forward in participating in the study.

Instruments

Informed consent was presented to educate the participants of their rights and details of the study (See Appendix A). The participants were informed as part of their rights that they could end the interview at any time should they become uncomfortable with participating. During discussions about rights and privacy with the informed consents, securing a meeting location was also discussed, allowing the participants to choose from three local public organizations to ensure not only feel safe but to ensure privacy. Otherwise, the only other instruments necessary for the interviews was pen and paper, audio recordings with participants' permission, for the sole purpose of accuracy. Audio also served the purpose of transcribing, coding, and categorizing at a later time.

This qualitative study relied on open-ended questions referencing past experiences beginning with the grandmothers' childhood, parenting, and finally, as a grandmother parenting a grandchild with problematic behavior (See Appendix B). Interview questions further explored her role in the home and her thoughts and feelings about her childhood and how this may have impacted her parenting skills. The interview portion of the study relied mainly on the grandmother's childhood, her parents, and feelings she might have about their parenting styles encompassing her values and beliefs from when she was a young child. This line of questions continued through adulthood as she raised children herself. A structured narrative interview with the participant also allowed the researcher to be more involved in the process of dialog, creating a relaxed environment allowing the participants to openly express their thoughts free from shame or judgment. Participants who feel at ease and comfortable are likely to discuss sensitive

matters more candidly. This also provided the researcher some freedom to probe for more information and adjust interview questions as needed. This adjustment refers to the need for elaboration on questions posed during the interviews with follow-up questions or redirection for clarification. The researcher observed the participants' behaviors such as facial expressions of frowning or smiling or shifting in seats, anything that would alert the interviewer that there may be more information to explore regarding the topic. Non-verbal responses provide an opportunity to inquire further or probe the participants' responses. Often, nonverbal cues signal that something has triggered a feeling or thought that the researcher could probe further, delving deeper for information. However, pressuring the participant is not necessary during the interview process. The researcher is seeking information that is naturally volunteered.

Data Collection

Conversations were collected using audio recorders for accuracy. Those recordings were examined and transferred in part using colored pens and paper to highlight the events' sequence while coding repetitive words or phrases. This enabled the researcher to identify themes and patterns within the conversations. This information provided insight into how the families had maintained homeostasis in the home environment. Face-to-face interviewing allowed the researcher to observe behaviors firsthand. Identifying resistance, confusion, or even an uncomfortable response which allowed the researcher to take a different approach in questioning concerning rephrasing or elaborating on questions.

The feelings and interactions of the grandmothers raising grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior were explored to determine whether there was an influence on the behavior that involved aggressive and violent acts in and outside of the home. The goal was to identify patterns among the caretakers. The primary focus was solely on interactions of the grandmother, her experiences growing up with her parents, her experiences of parenting a grandchild with delinquent tendencies. The researcher also explored the experiences of grandmothers parenting styles with their children.

Data Analysis

Since the study consisted primarily of interviews using pen, paper, and recording devices, there was no need for special software when transcribing. This process was done manually and allowed for a more thorough method of categorizing and coding information collected from the participants.

Issues of Trust Worthiness

The only threats I anticipated were associated with the actual interviewing process where the participants are relying on memory that may be faulty. Some participants might have intentionally been deceptive as a result of shame, embarrassment, or secrecy. A few ways I tried to combat these issues was with thorough questioning and follow up questions. If I felt that this was the case, I posed the questions in another way which also helped to eliminate any misconceptions or misunderstandings about what is being asked. I was sure to clarify that the study was not about legal actions or building cases and reminded the participants that information would remain anonymous. Body language helped to alert me if participants were feeling uneasy or uncomfortable about a question.

Knowing how to ask a question is prevalent when probing for information. More important was the rapport, participants should feel comfortable and have some level of trust with the researcher.

Protection of Participants Rights

Ethical consideration of participants, including my role as the researcher, begins initially with the designing of the study (Robinson, 2013). As a researcher, respect and privacy through all phases of the research were a must. Participants needed to feel respected; information was guarded and more importantly, participants should know every aspect of the research and their roles in the study (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016). Participants had prior knowledge of what the study entailed and their right to refuse at any time during the collection of information. Participants were informed of their right to have their information remain anonymous and their personal information protected thereafter (Stratford & Bradshaw, 2016).

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain in-depth knowledge about the lived experiences of grandmothers raising grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. This qualitative study allowed the researcher to learn more about the interactions in the home that might be influencing the delinquent behavior of the grandchild. Grandmothers are increasingly becoming head of households, caring for their grandchildren in the absence of their biological parents and this study has explored how these relationships are impacting juveniles with deviant behaviors. In wanting to learn more about those interactions, belief systems, and influences of the grandmother, a qualitative research

study provides access to private, otherwise personal information, providing themes and connections among the grandmothers raising grandchildren with delinquent behavior.

The role of the researcher was to facilitate a safe and secure process in an environment the participants would feel comfortable with when sharing their most personal and private information. This process involved gathering data from the grandmother's personal history such as her experiences as a child, and personal views on current and past parenting practices. The researcher has learned more about the grandmother's belief systems concerning parenting practices otherwise not known in the current literature. Confidentiality was primary with the participants ensuring that personal information is handle with care and safely guarded during transcribing procedures. The researcher was mindful of her role as it related to the study which was to report the lived experiences as told by the participants free from bias. Informing the participants of their rights and helping them to fully understand what they were taking part in while respecting those rights to opt-out of the research at any time during the process.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In the United States, of the 65 million grandparents, 10% are currently raising their grandchildren (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Statistics show a consistent rise with grandparents caring for at least one grandchild (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). There are many reasons for the changes in the structure of the home environment and removing children from their parents' home. Some of the reasons may include addiction, abuse, or death of the parent (Goulette et al., 2016; Donita & Maria, 2015). Due to this influx, a recent phenomenon surfaced regarding an increase in delinquent behavior among juveniles, many living with their grandmothers (Withers, 2014). The purpose of the research was to identify the generational transfer of parenting practices beginning with the Grandmothers and their childhood and what their experiences involved, following their years into adulthood. The goal was to explore their lived experiences through childhood, parenting, and lastly, as a grandmother caring for her grandchildren in the absence of their biological parents. The absence of the parent is not central to the study; however, reference was only made to the biological parents regarding the participants and their experiences with the grandchildren they are now raising. This study's central focus was exploring whether there was a connection with current parenting practices and their grandchildren suffering delinquent behavior and whether this delinquent behavior was passed from one generation to the next.

Setting

The interviews took place in a neutral location, as agreed upon by the participants in a major city in Louisiana. The options for locations were one of three main local libraries. Private rooms in the library assured privacy and comfort during interviews, which enabled the participants to express freely without interruptions and to allow for a steady flow with the interviewing process.

Participants

There was a total of 11 participants. All of the participants were 50 years of age or older, and all are the sole provider for their grandchildren in the absence of their parents. All participants were native of Louisiana, and all were grandmothers caring for at least one grandchild experiencing delinquent behavior.

Data Collection

I strategically placed flyers in the lobbies of organizations that aid the older population, including community centers and public service centers. I received phone calls from the potential participants inquiring about the project and what it entailed. After a brief discussion about the research and to inquire about whether they met the inclusion criteria, I asked if they would like to participate in the study. While some potential participants wanted to think about it and offered to call me back, others were ready to schedule a date and time to meet after the first phone call. There were a few interviews that had to be rescheduled due to bad weather. However, the participants were still interested in providing their narrative for the study. Once the meetings were scheduled, we discussed informed consent, and the participants signed the informed consent

acknowledging their understanding of the study. I conducted a semi structured interview using an audio device and taking notes to mark points of reference for later use when analyzing the data. The participants were informed of these tools and their purposes before the interview, along with an explanation of the process. I wanted to make sure they did not feel as if I was collecting information for any reason other than research purposes. I allotted an hour and a half to three hours for questions and follow-up questions. In some cases, the interview process took longer because the grandmothers had much to say about their experiences and the issues they suffered. The participants were initially concerned with how the information would be used, and this was addressed early in the meetings, and each time, the concern was presented. The participants were reminded throughout that they would remain confidential, and any information given would be used for research purposes only. It was stressed that there would be no identifying information linking back to the participants. Periodically, I would check in with the participant to make sure they were okay with proceeding with the interview process to assure that there was no recurring emotional or psychological stress of the traumatic experience and that I was not creating a stressful situation for the client during the interview process.

Once the interview was over, I conducted an overall wellness check to ensure the participants were not suffering any post-traumatic emotions. I also offered counseling referrals should the need arise in the future. With each interview, I conducted what is known as member checking. I would check with the participant when reviewing the information provided to ensure accuracy. I also inquired about any feedback regarding

the process. Each had positive things to say, therefore assuring the researcher that the interview was a success. Participants had no concerns about the information they provided; each participant was more than willing to discuss their personal upbringing as well as their transition into adulthood. Referrals for free mental health services were given in the form of a pamphlet generated by me and left with the participant as a safeguard. Even if the participant refused, I would leave it as a precaution for them explaining maybe someone they know could benefit from the free services, which I felt eliminated the need of them wanting the referral but not comfortable with me knowing about their future needs. I politely thanked each participant, expressed humble gratitude for their efforts and participation with my project, and wished them well in their future endeavors before departing.

Saturation was evident early during the interview process, and a decision was made to end the search for new participants after the 11th interview. I was able to see similar backgrounds, upbringing, and similar experiences with each participant during the interviews and decided to move forward with preparing the collected data for transcribing. The interviews produced four to five pages of collected data from each participant. None of the participants seemed to struggle with providing information; it was as if they were describing someone else's journey. Oftentimes I would have to redirect a participant to move on to the next question, such as if the participant was describing an incident in their home. This led to them telling someone else's narrative leading the discussion in a different direction, having nothing to do with their previous experiences.

Data Analysis

When it came time to analyze the data, I first transcribed audio recordings into written transcripts. I then began reading the transcripts, going through them multiple times. These transcripts were then printed for coding purposes. I began to highlight themes using colored pens, making a list of the participants to identify the similarities, for example (abuse/red, abandoned/black), and so forth. I then compiled the number of individuals with similar experiences and their correlation to the incidents discussed into a list of common patterns or themes. This process was repeated six or more times as other themes surfaced during the coding process and ensured nothing was overlooked and that there were accuracy and proper understanding of the information provided.

While analyzing the transcripts, I reviewed for commonalities with wording such as abuse, abandonment, and themes such as neglect, absent father, foster home. I also examined expressed trauma with each participant and that particular phase of their life in which trauma was experienced, such as during their early childhood. There were times during the transcribing process when there was a need to go back to review information because new themes would emerge from the questions like “tell me about your childhood” or “what were your parents like” but the incident may have happened at a later time in their narrative.

Several themes emerged from the data collected: five from childhood, five from adulthood, and four from experiences as a grandmother (See Table 1). The themes are displayed according to their stage in their life (childhood, parenthood, and as a grandmother), and the issues suffered during that period along with reasons for decisions

made either on behalf of the child, the adult at that time, or the grandmother and what she was experiencing with her grandchildren. This process allowed me to easily identify and reflect on the participants' situations, guiding me through interruption of developmental stages that would unveil the generational transfer of parenting practices and their connections to delinquent behavior with their grandchildren.

Table 1

Emerging Themes

Childhood	Becoming a Parenting	as a Grandmother
Abuse	Teen Pregnancy	Parenting Skills
Neglect	Domestic Violence	Experiences w/Grandchild
Abandonment	Parenting Skills	Delinquent Behavior
Environment	Absence	Involvement of Parents
Trauma	Trauma	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Evidence of trustworthiness was established through credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. According to Golafshani (2003), the researcher is the utilizing tool regarding the results and reporting of results in a qualitative study. Therefore, when establishing the credibility of the study, I must accurately report the participants' true meaning of their words, intentions, and context of their narrative regarding their lived experiences. This was accomplished by providing exact quotes from the participant to highlight their meanings and context to ensure authenticity. This goal

was met with prolonged exposure to build a strong rapport and triangulation of multiple participants to gain the participants' saturation and trust (Anney, 2015). Regarding transferability, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), this relates to gathering enough data that allows the reader to come to their own conclusion regarding the results of the research. There must be enough information to not limit the reader and helps to eliminate bias on my part. I established this by collecting a surplus of information, allowing readers to connect with the themes through the provided data. To ensure dependability, this relies heavily on my ability to conduct and produce appropriate practices with the study, along with the guidance of my dissertation committee (Shenton, 2004).

Methods detailed in chapter three provides an outline and approach of the study to establish dependability regarding my dissertation. Lastly, when establishing confirmability, Anney (2015) discussed the importance of corroborations and interpretations of reported data by participants and the researchers. Necessary follow-ups throughout the interviews and constant clarification on my part were essential to the study, ensuring I was accurately representing the participants' true meaning of their narrative. This was ultimately accomplished by thoroughly auditing the data I collected through repetitive reviewing while coding and sorting themes and referring to the sources when necessary during the interviewing process to allow for elaboration. I wanted the participant to fully understand their role and repeatedly offered an opportunity for them to decline at any time if they wish to do so. Regarding my interaction with the participants, I only responded to the questions asked. The participants took opportunities to ask questions they felt were important in completing this process. The rapport building

process began with the initial phone calls helping the researcher generate follow-up phone calls while adding to the participants' feeling a sense of comfort and ease and wanting to share their stories. Before beginning the interviews but during a greeting period, I would sit and explain the research process. Again, I would often laugh and joke with the participants and showed interest in current situations they may have spoken about during the conversation.

Results

The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experiences of the participants beginning with their childhood through them as grandmothers raising their grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. Interviews lasted two to three hours. I used an audio recorder and took additional notes to help with identifying specific sections of the discussions with the 11 participants. The research study was designed around three central questions regarding the transfer of generational parenting practices.

Research Question 1: How do the generational transfer parenting practices with grandmothers affect their grandchildren with delinquent behaviors?

Research Question 2: What are the lived experiences of grandmothers who have become the primary parent for children/youth with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 3: How grandmothers as the primary caregivers perceive the impacts of parenting practices with grandchildren experiencing delinquent behavior and how these parenting practices are passed from one generation to another?

After completing the interview process, which consisted of a total of 26 questions to cover each of the three stages of grandmother's lived experiences, five themes emerged

related to childhood experiences. From the inquiries about childhood, the themes that emerged included abuse, neglect, strict upbringing, marriage, and some form of trauma that was witnessed or physically experienced. For the second stage of adulthood/parenting, the five themes that emerged included teen pregnancy, domestic violence, lack of parenting skills, absence from the home, and trauma.

The final stage of the lived experiences as a grandmother included the themes of poor parenting skills, their experiences with their grandchildren, delinquent behavior, and the parents' involvement or lack thereof regarding parental engagement with the children. These themes surfaced throughout the interview process in some form of experience and with some cases in all stages of their lived experiences with the exception of two. Two of the participants did not endure a troubling childhood or an abusive past. These exceptions can presumably be explained with the theory of parenting styles. There were no direct questions regarding violence in the family or with the individual; however, these themes emerged through interviewing questions with the participants describing experiences.

Throughout the discussions, the researcher learned how each of the participants' experienced some form of abuse, neglect, and or strict upbringing regarding their childhood. Each suffered similar experiences with trauma in their life and had similar stories such as running away from home or having been abandoned by a parent. Each participant had a situation of having been neglected, abandoned, or placed in foster homes at very young ages. This information was identified early in the process as part of their narrative as a child.

The interview questions also produced responses of underage marriages to escape home life or life on the street. Many of the participants were in the role of caretaker at an early age, helping their mother in the home with younger siblings and, in some cases helping with other younger relatives. Many were cooking and cleaning beginning as early as six years old and described it as something normal in their narratives. Below I will discuss the experiences and themes individually to give a clearer picture of how these issues emerged with the lived experiences of the participants.

Experiences as a Child

Theme 1: Abuse

Of the 11 participants, nine expressed being abuse either at the hands of their parents, relatives, friends, and or strangers. This abuse came in the form of beatings sometimes described as “whippings”, other times it was sexual abuse or physical abuse by someone known to them in some cases and unknown in others. Participant 6 stated that these experiences “made me who I am today,” Participants 4 through 9 echoed similar sentiments when reflecting on their past. The nine participants struggled with describing their parent’s role in the home but were very open about what they experienced as a child regarding situations of the abuse, how it happened, where it happened, and how they responded. Participant 1 spoke of a man in the neighborhood who had followed her home from the grocery store in a car trying to encourage her to get in. Her thoughts at that time were “I’m not getting in that car, and as I walked, I was looking for something on the ground that I could use to hit him with, and I saw an empty glass bottle that I picked up and yelled at him, you better leave me alone, and he drove

off.” She explained that this incident took place in the early 50s, and as participant 1 noted, incidents like that often happened with her growing up during that era but reported she would always be willing to fight should danger approach. Participant 1 also added the only person she did not fight was her mother, who was very “strict” and took a hands-on approach with chastising. Participant 7 described being treated “like an animal, a dog at times where we were made to eat our food sitting on the floor; it seemed my mother took pleasure in mistreating us.”

Theme 2: Neglect

The second theme was neglect, which is also a form of abuse and relates to an absence or lack of regarding caring for a child (Health and Human Services, 2012). Of the 11 participants, eight reported some form of neglect by their caretaker. Neglect was initially understood by the participants as being “abandoned” The participants described it as either being left to raise themselves and/or being placed in a caretaker position between the ages of six and eight. When inquiring about neglect, I realized I had to clarify the question(s) and what it meant.

I explained the term further and the meaning regarding a lack of emotional support, not being heard, and or a situation of not being allowed to express thoughts or feelings. Their responses gave new meaning to their narrative. Eight participants spoke of the strict rules in their home. Participant 1 reported not having a voice and explained: “oh, you don’t get to say what you want or don’t want in our home, my mom did not play that, you did as you were told and you better not ask why.” Participant 1 and 7 explained this was the one thing you did not do when an adult gave you orders or commanded a

duty or task. Participant 2 also stated that “things can get ugly if you asked mama a question or even spoke when grown folks are talking, you would get smacked, but usually children were not allowed in grown-ups discussion or business, but if you did, there would be hell to pay.” All eight participants told similar stories of not having a voice and an inability to speak freely concerning emotions or feelings.

Theme 3: Abandonment

The third theme to emerge was abandonment. Of the 11 participants, eight participants described being left with another relative or adult to care for them. Participants 1 and 6 never knew their father when growing up. Participants 4 and 5 never knew their mother or father. Participant 4 was left with her grandmother as an infant, and participant 5 was placed in foster care at age two. All the participants came from large families ranging from five to 13 siblings. Participant 5 discussed being placed in foster homes, and during her stay, she reported, “I just got tired of the beatings and being mistreated, and one day I left and just never went back after leaving for school that day.” This participant explained how the treatment in the foster homes gave her the motivation to leave after having suffered abuse in all five homes she was placed. She decided it would be better for her to leave and live on her own while trying to survive homelessness through the kindness of friends and strangers. Participant 5 explained: “I didn’t know any better it was hard.” Regarding what she had to do to survive during her experiences of homelessness. Participant 9 described a similar scenario: “it was easy for me to leave because no one was there to stop me, half of the time they didn’t know where I was because they weren’t home either,” referring to the adults in her home. This participant

described a situation known today as a “latch key kid” where parents were either busy with working or engaging in other activities. These kids would spend time home alone more than usual, unlike families with traditional settings of having a stay at home mother (*American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2017*).

Theme 4: Strict Childhood Environment

With the fourth theme, six of the 11 participants described living in a “strict” upbringing. Participants described living in an environment involving strict rules, limitations, and boundaries of what they could and could not do in the home regarding activities, hanging out with peers, or simply just having fun in general. The participants described strict regimens and routines of daily chores, many designed for adults such as cooking whole meals, laundry, caring for siblings much like bathing, and clothing them along with the endless duties of cleaning the home. Strict was described by the participants as having no form of pleasure, denied specific privileges afforded to any child such as playing with friends, with toys, or each other. Strict, as reported by each of the six participants, to highlight “control.” Participant 1 reported, “much of the time I had to come straight home from school to make sure the dinner was cooked, the house was clean and that my siblings did their homework.” Participant 1 explained that when she did complete the allotted duties, it was usually too late to go outside. Furthermore, before going to bed, Participant 1 had to plan for the next day, helping her siblings get ready for school, similar to the other six participants. Participant 8 reported, “I had to take care of my mother because my older siblings were busy with their own lives. My mother was ill most of the time, and she would often have me wash clothes and do things for her while

my older siblings were off living their life.” Participant 7 also reported that her mother would have her perform strange acts in the home, she stated: “there were times when my mother was in a bad mood or just mad about something, she would take it out on us kids.” When asked to elaborate, I asked how she did this, Participant 7 explained, “she made us eat sitting on the floor because we were not good enough to sit on her furniture.” Participant 7 also explained that she and her siblings were not allowed to use appliances in the home unless told to do so, and depending on who had the need, such as her mother, she had to wash everything out on their hands in the bathtub. Other participants described how they were not allowed to watch TV or have music in the home. Participant 3 stated that she would “sneak out of the home to hang out with friends and listen to music with them, I would hang around these little bars just close enough to hear the music because you know children were not allowed in those places, but you could still hear the music outside.” Each participant reported it was the mother who was strict in the home and seemed to be more of a “ruler” than a mother setting limits and boundaries with her children. Participants 1, 2, 4, 7,8, 9 reported what was described as physical consequences regarding rules, and if the rules were broken, there were severe consequences. The participants described “whippings with switches” if rules were broken or if tasks were not completed as desired by their mother. This narrative and others were similar regarding no-nonsense mothers.

Theme 5: Childhood Trauma

Of the 11 participants, 10 suffered some form of trauma as a child. Five participants stated they were underage at the time of marriage and reported that they got

married as a way to escape their mother or current situation. Each of the five participants explained this was a way for them to either escape their current situation or a way to have their physical needs met, such as food and shelter. Participant 7 explained how she felt guilty about leaving her siblings behind in such an abusive home environment. Each participant spoke of fear and regrets for actions such as taking advantage of people trying to help them by stealing and manipulating those individuals. These participants described the pain suffered living at home and their experiences after leaving home. Participant 2 shared how, when she was 12 years old, she met the man she would later marry at 15 years of age and fathered a child with him, but later, he too turned abusive. Further abusive relationships were reported by the other participants within this theme. Six Participants described engaging in unhealthy relationships as a way of escaping their previous situations. Each of the six participants spoke of the “control” and “demeaning” behavior they suffered at the hands of their significant others or other individuals, depending on the situation. Participant 5 discussed knowing it was not right to marry this person because of his illegal activities and the things he was involved in but was desperate in wanting to escape the life of homelessness. Participant 5 also feared her significant other, and what he might do should she try to leave him. This participant described witnessing assaults, knowing about robberies, and the selling of drugs to which she admitted: “ yeah he had me bringing packages to people, what was I going to say, no, he would beat my ass, I would just act like I didn’t know what was in the package.” Participants 1,4 through 7 and 9 spoke of how during this time in their life, their situations changed them and how they viewed the world. They went on to explained how

they knew early at a young age that “sex would get me what I wanted.” Participant 8 expressed: “I didn’t really care to be touched like that.” describing intimacy, sex, and affection. Participants 5 through 7 and 9 reported how they viewed their bodies differently and reported shutting down their feelings when it came to emotions and intimacy.

Experience as a Parent

Theme 1: Teen Pregnancy

Nine of the 11 participants described being promiscuous at an early age, which led to them becoming young parents. Participants 5 and 7 admitted not knowing what to do when they became pregnant and found themselves being guided and coached into applying for “food stamps and welfare” to feed their young babies. Participants 1, 2, 4 through 7, 9, and 10 reported being told how to apply for the benefits; they were coached on what to say such as “I don’t know who the father is” or “I don’t know where he is” to avoid child support.

All eight participants reported being educated by either their significant other or someone already involved with the system regarding benefits and resources. The participants stated that they learned how to manipulate that system by someone in a similar situation to get the benefits they needed without agents of the organizations seeking repayment from the father. A few of the participants described the fear of learning about the pregnancy, and others reported thinking how things would be different, believing the father would “do right by me,” as Participant 6 reported. This was the course of their life until the father was either incarcerated or killed due to illegal

activities, leaving the mothers/participants alone at a young age to raise their babies, often having to turn to others for support.

Theme 2: Domestic Violence

The second theme was domestic violence. Nine of the 11 participants described abuse from their spouses or significant others. Participants 5 and 6 reported accepting the volatile relationship, feeling it was better than being on the streets. Participant 3 explained how her husband was never home and when he did come home, “he was drunk.” These were extremely problematic relationships in which nine of the grandmothers suffered abuse early in their relationships. Participants 7 and 8 expressed how their significant other took advantage of them, using them for money and always staying out late. Participant 7 reported: “he would talk nasty to me and make me feel bad about myself, such as the way I looked,” and this caused her to feel self-conscious. Participant 7 also explained; he would talk about my chest being too flat and all sorts of thing, I heard enough about my looks when I was younger like about how black I was, and now I have to hear it from him, so he didn’t love me, and the sad thing is I still miss him. Participants 1 through 9 spoke of low self-esteem as a result of their previous relationships.

Theme 3: Parenting Style

The third theme was related to parenting styles. All 11 participants described setting rules and enforcing consequences when those rules were broken. Each admitted how sometimes broken rules went without consequences due to feelings of “frustrations” and feeling fatigued when parenting their children. Participants 1 through 9 reported

often feeling a lack of support from their spouse in the form of “helping out” because all the responsibilities fell on them as the caretaker. Participant 1 reported, “I always felt like I had to do everything.” regarding taking care of the children, which meant disciplining them as well. Participants 10 and 11 welcomes the role of a “stay-at-home-mom.” They would only consult with their significant other “as needed” describing him as someone who was “working a lot.” Regarding the nine other participants, their significant others did not share in any of the responsibilities of raising their children but would often interfere. Participant 3 reported, “I was often told, leave him alone or let him do it” resulting in a division when parenting. Participant 3 included how this division often produced negative results leaving the child suffering negative consequences because of the choices made by the parent. Participant 6 reported, “I did not trust him with my children.” She stated that she would handle everything on her own and went out of her way to keep him out of the parenting side of the home environment.

Each participant commented on how they wanted “better” for their children, which is why they were so strict with their rules and consequences. All 11 participants commented, “but look at how they turned out anyway.” All 11 participants described how their children would just leave their homes, and they would not know where they were or when they were coming back home. Participants 1 through 11 at one time had blamed others for the poor behavior of their children, stating it was because of the people they associated with. The rebellion was more noticeable as the children grew older and began exalting their authority as they developed into adulthood. Participants 1 through 9 often

spoke of trying not to be like their parents but found themselves alone and going through similar issues as their parents with their spouses and their children.

Theme 4: Absence from the home

In this theme, I focused on two issues that led to the absence of the home. First, the mother found herself in a situation where she needed to earn money and went to work. The second issue was simply a mother trying to make ends meet, and she would either “hustle,” which was to find ways to get money or was indulging in relationships that included more than one man at that time hoping he would pay their bills or put food on the table. The 11 participants spoke about the absence of a father figure in their home. Participant 11 described the need to work when her husband divorced her with her adolescent children. This need was similar to participants 1 through 4, 6, and 7, who also took jobs later as the children grew older and their significant other was no longer providing for them or was no longer present in the home. Participant 11 spoke about starting her own business and regrets not being home more with her children. Participants 5, 8, 9, and 10 explained the need to return to the streets to make money stating it was usually accomplished by getting money from men “who liked me.” The participants explained how their absence in the home allowed them to have more freedom to get into trouble at an early age despite the parents’ efforts to keep their children “out of trouble.” During this time, the participants would notice the change in the child’s behavior, the rebellion, attitude, getting smart, and talking back and even learning about their children experimenting with drugs and alcohol. Participant 5 stated, “what was I going to do, what could I say, I did it, they knew I did it, so what could I say.” Participant 9 admitted to

knowing that their child was using some form of drugs and alcohol but stated, “I waited to see how long it would take for him to tell me he was doing this.”

Theme 5: Trauma

Eight of the 11 participants spoke of experiencing trauma during their parenting years. All eight participants suffered abuse at the hands of their significant other. Participants 1 and 3 through 9 had been in sexually comprising situations feeling the need to have sex even if they did not want to but did so to meet a need such as paying a bill and getting food. Participants 1 through 7 described feelings of a sense of duty regarding their relationships as responsibilities as a wife/partner, “just giving him some so he could leave me alone.” Participant 8 stated that she was impregnated as a result of her rape, but she made the decision to keep the baby. She explained how she loves her child, but it seems her child does not reciprocate those feelings. Participant 8 expressed wanting to give her child the best life but feels “taken advantage of at times and disrespected mostly.” She explained that she told her child how she was conceived and believe this contributes to their poor relationship.

Experiences as a Grandmother

Theme 1: Parenting Style

When exploring the participant’s role as the caretaker of the grandchild experiencing delinquent behavior, a few participants had expressed a change in their parenting styles. In contrast, others say they are “no different.” Of the 11 participants, five stated that they were still practicing strict parenting styles but inconsistent with rules, boundaries, and consequences. Participants 1 through 11 all explained experiences of

feeling “just tired” and being unable to “keep up” with the day-to-day activities of their grandchildren, which enables the grandchildren to get into more trouble due to insufficient supervision.

While participants 1,3,5,6,7 admitted that they are still enforcing rules, they also noted that it gets hard sometimes because they don't have the help they need. Participants 1 through 5, 7, 9, and 10 work either full time or part-time to make ends meet to care for the grandchildren as well as themselves. Participants 6, 8, and 11 are on disability. Each of the 11 participants expressed the ability to have “control” in the home but that it was the grandchild who was “out of control,” because they had to work or take care of multiple grandchildren, depending on the grandmother and how many children she was caring for. For example, participant 5 explained, “I can't be everywhere all the time” and admitted that her grandchildren would often get into trouble mostly at school.

Participants 2, 3, and 6 admitted to supporting their grandchildren no matter their infractions, specifically at school or in the community feeling their grandchildren were being treated unfairly. Meanwhile, she has another grandchild who is constantly picked on and was attacked by another student at the school. Participant 6 was proud of how she protects her grandchildren and blames others (peers and any other adult) for why they have behavioral issues. Participants 2, 3, 5, and 7 of the 11 participants felt the same regarding their grandchildren and their poor behavior.

Theme 2: Experiences with Grandchildren

All 11 participants experienced some form of rebellion, resistance, attitude, and disrespect from their grandchildren. Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9 admitted to their

grandchildren experimenting with drugs and alcohol or believed they did so because of their behavior. When asked how the grandmothers handled the drug use, each participant explained how they were at a loss of how to combat drug use. Participants 1, 2, 3, 7, and 9 suggested the grandchild was following in the footsteps of their parent who also abuses drugs. Participants 1 through 11 reported trying to have a conversation about drug use and its impact on the mind and body. Participants 1 through 3, 7, and 9 acknowledged that they don't even know where they are getting the drugs from or the money to buy the drugs or alcohol, which they believe is the source of their behavioral problems.

Regarding aggressive behavior in the home, Participants 3 and 4, 7 through 11 admitted having arguments while trying to enforce rules in the home and have even had to call the police in some cases, while others only made threats of calling the police. Participants 4, 7, and 11 reported their grandchildren would use foul language towards them, such as "cussing me out" and "they talk nasty to me." Participants 1 through 11 experience belligerent and demeaning talk such as yelling, flippant attitudes, and talking back but also reported an immediate response to this type of behavior by issuing consequences. Participant 11 reported her nine-year-old grandson told her "I wish you die," which is very hurtful in that the one time she had a heart attack, he was the one who found her. She cannot understand why he would wish something like that. Participants 1 through 11 reported they would correct poor behavior when it was presented. I asked what "check" means or looks like in terms of correcting the behavior. The grandmothers responded with issuing consequences, which could mean "yelling", "punishment" (taking something away), or a "smack." However, as the children grew older these instances would turn into

arguments and sometimes get physical. Participant 3 explained that altercations took the form of shoving matches, throwing things, and walking out of the home. Of the eight participants, three admitted to putting the child out of the home until their behavior improved. Participant 4 stated that when she found her grandchild stealing money from her purse, she told them, “don’t come back until you know how to act.” Participants 3 and 4 are also housing and caring for a great-grandchild with their grandchildren. Each reported the toll it takes and the stress they endure to the point of suffering health issues.

Theme 3: Delinquent Behavior

The 11 participants expressed frustrations of having to attend school conferences for either fighting in school, skipping, or cutting classes for a grandchild who is deliberately disrespectful to teachers and other faculty. Participants reported behaviors to include cussing and being confrontational or deliberately disobeying teachers’ instructions. The participants reported additional delinquent behavior related to crimes such as stealing, often money from their grandmothers, but usually, there were charges of theft and break-ins by the legal authorities. Five of the 11 participants reported legal problems with their grandchildren: truancy, burglary, theft, armed robbery, battery, possession of an illegal substance, possession of an illegal firearm, and assault. The remaining six grandmothers speculated drug and alcohol use based on behavior but could not be sure. Many participants who were able to resolve the issues of theft later learned that their grandchildren were stealing because they wanted something they did not have or needed, such as expensive sneakers or electronics. Participant 9 often had experiences with behaviors associated with drug use, inappropriate sexual behavior of a minor, legal

detainment at times, physical and verbal abuse, but would often replied: “I don’t know what is wrong with the children today.” Participants 4, 7, 8, and 9 were experiencing legal problems and often complained more about having to take off work to attend court or counseling appointments. All 11 participants have grandchildren seeing a specialist or counselor, on medication, and receiving special accommodations at school because of one or more diagnoses. Several of the grandchildren were attending alternative schools because they were either expelled or suspended for long term suspension from a traditional school setting. All grandchildren related to the participants of this research have been retained a grade or two and were barely passing their current grade level.

Theme 4: Involvement of Parents

Three of the 11 participants had adult children who are known addicts. Participants 3, 7, 9, and 10 have adult children currently incarcerated. The remaining four have adult children who left their children with their grandmother with the purpose of just wanting to live a life free from responsibilities. Participant 1 has an adult child who moved away to make a better life for herself but admitted her daughter was also “chasing some man” whom she conceived a child with and several years later (age 7). This child was also under the care of Participant 1. Participant 1 has two grandchildren in her home, and the oldest grandchild by this adult child was two at the time she initially left him with his grandmother to follow this man. Participants 1 and 2 have had all of their adult children incarcerated at some point, while Participants 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10, have at least one adult child either incarcerated or has been incarcerated at one point. Participant 5 reported her daughter is “just out there in the streets on drugs if she is not locked up” and

stated that she also suffers a mental illness. The parents will “check-in” from time to time, according to Participants 2 through 7. Few of the parents did acknowledge birthdays and sometimes holidays. The participants explained how they would often make up for this by adding a token gift and saying it is from their parent. Otherwise, the parents would make rare visits, and these visits would often involve a discussion with the adult children blaming the parent for their current problems leading to arguments. Participant 5 described her encounter with her adult child several months ago as a heated argument and her adult child saying “it’s your fault that I’m like this” regarding her addiction and the lack of success she has had along with being on the streets and at times in and out of jail.

According to participants 3 through 11, all parents have made poor decisions regarding their relationships and choices with significant others. Those relationships resulted in abuse or neglect with their children and the children being removed from their care and placed with their grandmother. Participant 3 spoke of her adult child not knowing how to choose a mate. It was the mate who began a relationship with a stepparent that led to physical abuse of her grandchild and their siblings (not fathered by her adult child) and the grandmother gaining custody of the grandchild as early as 6 months old because her adult child is currently incarcerated.

The 11 participants often spoke of how they try to indulge the grandchild as a form of compensating for the absence of their parents. Participant 4 reported, “his mother didn’t do anything for this boy’s birthday, sometimes not even a phone call.” Participants

3 through 6, 9, and 10, had a similar experience with their adult children and do not make an effort to involve themselves with their children.

Summary

The study aimed to identify the generational transfer of parenting practices and their impact on their grandchildren suffering delinquent behavior. The study's central focus was to explore the lived experiences throughout the stages of childhood, parenting, and now grandmother as the sole provider for their grandchildren in the absence of biological parents. The study was centered around three research questions. The sample consisted of 11 participants, all of whom are grandmothers providing for their grandchildren. The data analysis resulted in five major themes throughout the different stages, in which there are three: childhood, parenting, and grandmother as the caretaker. These major themes were abuse, neglect, trauma, parenting skills, and abandonment. The following chapter 5 will discuss the results further to include interpretations of the results, strengths, limitations of the study, and its implications as well as recommendations and conclusions of this research.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of 11 qualifying grandmothers raising grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. This research serves to identify the generational transfer of parenting practices that may directly connect to the negligent conduct of their grandchildren. Studies have shown an increase in delinquent behavior by juveniles in the care of their grandmothers (Ghoulette et al., 2016). There is little information about the grandmothers' experiences while raising grandchildren who are committing crimes that adults otherwise commit. Three research questions guided the goals of this study, which was to identify the generational transfer of parenting practices of the grandmothers currently caring for their grandchildren exhibiting delinquent behavior. I used an Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of 11 grandmothers and to better understand their experiences in those three areas of their lives. Information was collected from three stages, beginning with their experiences as a child, a parent, and as a grandmother. The data from this information will help to better understand and how their past experiences may have impacted their grandchildren's behavior. I conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews to answer the following three research questions:

Research Question 1: How does the generational transfer parenting practices with grandmothers affect their grandchildren with delinquent behaviors?

Research Question 2: What are the lived experiences of grandmothers who have become the primary parent for children/youth with delinquent behavior?

Research Question 3: How grandmothers as the primary caregivers, perceive the impacts of parenting practices with grandchildren experiencing delinquent behavior and how these parenting practices are passed from one generation to another?

Interpretations of the Findings

This research yielded several themes from each stage of the 11 participants' lives, five from their childhood, five for their adult life, and four for their experiences as a grandmother. These themes highlighted the transfer of their parenting practices and how those parenting practices evolved as a result of their lived experiences. Those lived experiences provided information as to how those parenting practices have been transferred from one generation to the next. The themes in the following sections will be further explored in literature and discussed in conjunction with meanings and interpretations of each theme from the study results. The findings of this study will confirm and extend knowledge of nature versus nurture theory as it applies social learning. The data will also inform professionals on how to improve on the existing programs to include the needs of these grandmothers, raising grandchildren with delinquent behavior. The findings are summarized and will be interpreted as they relate to the three research questions. Positive social change implications and recommendations will highlight solutions for other grandmothers in similar situations.

Experiences as a Child

Abuse

Several of the participants admitted to being abused as early as three years of age. It was evident from what the grandmothers' reported about their previous behaviors that

their abuse significantly impacted their developmental growth and the choices they made. For that reason, those issues may have contributed to their experiences in life following the violence each endured. Each of the grandmothers reported promiscuous behavior at an early age. Several of the participants were teen mothers beginning at the age of 13. While only three of the participants admitted to severe drug and alcohol use, many of the participants suffered consequences of poor choices with men and illicit behavior. Research conducted by Widom, Czaja, and Dumont (2015) lends supports to the experiences of the participants. The researchers found that sexual abuse of a young child can diminish self-worth and open what can be thought of as "pandora's box," meaning, once innocent is lost, there are significant interruptions psychologically and emotionally, and a flood of inappropriate behavior follows (Widom et al., 2015). If inappropriate behavior is repetitive, then the actions begin to seem reasonable to the individual no matter how uncomfortable.

The participants also expressed feeling unloved and unwanted and turning to drug and alcohol, increasing self-destructive behavior, and possibly filling a void. More likely, there was a need to be accepted or just to "fit in." This need to fit in secured their interactions with the wrong crowd feeling their primary needs were met. The findings support the literature that victims of child abuse were often at risk for "poly-violence perpetration." Milaniak and Widom (2015) reported children who had a history of child abuse had a predisposition to poly violence perpetration. Goulette (2016) reported that reduced involvement and poor communication added with "abuse and neglect" in the home could surface later in life in households headed by grandmothers. These findings

add to the literature acknowledging that generational patterns began early in the family's lineage/genealogy, how far back can be determined by further research.

Neglect

According to Rebbe (2018), neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment reported in child abuse cases. Rebbe tells us that 75.3 % of children in the United States during 2015 were confirmed cases of neglect. Neglect differs from other forms of maltreatment because it is the result of an "omission or failure to provide" such as an emotional connection like warmth or comfort from a parent (Rebbe, 2018). Other forms of abuse are "an act of commission" an act to hurt physically and or mentally (See English, Thompson, Graham, & Briggs, 2005; Mennen, Kim, Sang, & Trickett, 2010; Rose & Meezan, 1993). As previously mentioned, the participants spoke of feeling unworthy, unloved, and unwanted. Kelley et al. (2017) argued that if the child experiences any form of abuse or neglect in the home, this would more than likely provide the experience of adverse childhood. The participants expressed that they were never told they were loved and felt like disappointments or failures to their parents. This is evident in the destructive behavior exhibited through the course of their lives with the consumption of alcohol, drugs, and promiscuous behavior. Many of the grandmothers took chances during that time in their life that could have resulted in serious consequences such as living on the streets at such a young age. And because of what they endured, facilitated a decision to run away and live on the streets with no food or shelter as P5 did. Several of the participants acknowledged doing unthinkable things to survive and mainly submitting their bodies to sexual acts to please others or to get something in

return. These findings supported current literature that individuals learn through interactions and influences of others (Khalil, 2013). Eight participants exposed to neglectful homes described it as "hard or unbearable" and that no one cared about their feelings or what they were experiencing as a child. People who do not learn to express their feelings or emotions will provide a cold and unaffectionate environment (Kelley et al., 2017). The participants did not know how to show affection as P9 admitted. She felt her children should just toughen up because "people" will not care about you in return. She felt feelings and emotions were a waste and had no place in her life. Many of the grandmothers spoke of finding acceptance in others through their actions, what they did, and how they helped them in their time of need. Many of the grandmothers reported that actions were essential to them; it was more about what you did, not what you said. These experiences continued into adulthood and were witnessed by their children. These findings add to the body of literature explaining generation patterns and the passing of learned behavior with future generations (Steele & McKinney, 2018).

Abandonment

Research has shown that a child who has been abandoned struggles with anxieties and has trust issues leading to the long-term problems of how they can relate to others (Shaw, Bright, & Sharpe, 2015). Experiences of abandonment often surface when the person has a fear of losing someone significant to them and later manifests as clingy or a fear of being left alone, and low self-esteem (Cohen et al., 2017). Other issues that may be present in children in severe cases of abandonment present as lashing out, self-harm, aggression, and or withdrawal (Cohen et al., 2017; Webb, 2018). Issues with

abandonment are evident with P5, who spoke of anger and hostility at an early age. She says she no longer trusted people and believed everyone lied. She went on to describe what a negative perspective on life was, and this led to her reckless lifestyle of drugs, alcohol, promiscuity, and criminal activity. Individuals who feel no one cares about them began to resent their existence and live destructive lifestyles (Akella, 2015). P5 continued to engage in this behavior even though it brought her pain and misery and cost her time spent in prison.

Children who suffer abandonment issues struggle with how to engage socially. Social settings feel awkward, as described by P7. They may find themselves always wanting to please others, especially those of importance to them. Those who suffer from abandonment issues are commonly easy prey for deviants, such as pedophiles (Lancaster, 2017). Children who suffer abandonment issues will also suffer from attachment and adjustment disorders facilitating mental health problems and inappropriate behavior (Lancaster, 2017). The participants in this study have reported unspeakable acts because of a need to feel wanted. When someone showed them any kind of attention, they would do shocking things to please that person, as reported by the participants in this study. Individuals with attachment and adjustment disorders as a result of abandonment have trouble connecting with others and tend to remove themselves emotionally for fear of rejection (See Mayo Clinic, 1998-2020; Pam, 2018).

While abandonment can affect the lives of these individuals as children, it can also impact their development into adulthood (Cohen et al., 2017; Shaw et al., 2015; & Webb, 2018). As a result of abandonment, unmet emotional needs contribute to a

deficiency in the child's development. These findings support the literature, which tells us that to thrive as adults, children must feel loved and wanted by their parents (Shaw et al., 2015). However, the findings also add knowledge to the literature regarding how the participants go on to struggle with the why of being abandoned and leads to the needing of the approval of others which may explain why they continued to make poor choices regarding their relationships (Shaw et al., 2015). Shaw et al. also revealed that children who have been abandoned by a parent tend to suffer cognitive challenges, delinquent behavior, as well as an insecure attachment with others. The issue of trust, again here, creates problems in all relationships. Guilt is the result of the child blaming themselves for their parents not wanting them, leaving the individual seeking unhealthy attention in others (Webb, 2018; Shaw et al., 2015). Attention seeking behavior resulted in unhealthy relationships, diminishes or further damages self-worth, and continues to manifest as promiscuous behavior, a continued need to please others, and not feeling worthy of love (Webb, 2018). Here again, we see a pattern developing as unwanted behavior. When such problems are left untreated, and much like the participants, they are unaware of their behavior and the reasons behind it, patterns are passed on poor behavior continues (Webb, 2018; Shaw et al., 2015).

Strict Home Environment

Byford and Richards (2011) explained how parenting practices influence cognitive development in children beginning at birth and causes aggression and low self-esteem in children as well as self-doubt. Aggression and low self-esteem were evident with the participants in this study, and they lacked flexibility. The participants spoke of

not wanting to be told what to do or having a strong will. In contrast, others reported needing someone to guide them regarding decisions. In the cases of living in an austere environment, individuals may become too dependent on others when making decisions. At the same time, others rebelled. These findings add to the current literature by Dewar (2017) that those who were experiencing confusion or an inability to make choices protected themselves by not taking chances for fear of failing. Strict home environments also result in stress and anxiety in individuals who struggle with achieving essential tasks tend to fail because they may lack the maturity or competency to complete many of the tasks that were asked of them (Darling, 2014; Dewar, 2017). These findings also support the current research of Dewar, with several of the participants reporting low self-esteem and the inability to accomplish some things considered milestones to others, such as academia or a career. Many of the participants have acknowledged that they did not try because they did not think they would succeed.

Many of the participants justified with "I didn't have time," referencing them caring for their children and other responsibilities. P8 reported feeling that no one would accept her because of her deficiencies. P8 was observed in a low mood when describing the accomplishments of her siblings versus what she felt she was lacking, including being a good mother to her children. She often spoke of regret because of what she gave up caring for her ailing mother. P8 even attributes the lack of affection from her children to her as not being a good enough as a mother. It is possible that because she did not receive affection from her mother that there was an inability to give love to her children, and this, in turn, was cause for them not returning affection or the lack of emotional connection

with their mother. Here there is evidence of conflict in the parent-child relationship because the participant does not feel adequate with her children, and maybe she too places high demands on them as her mother placed on her. Ultimately a child living in a strict home environment under an authoritarian parenting style would potentially suffer from stress, anxieties, and poor behavioral problems. These issues not only impacted the participants as a child but also as an adult, with their adult children, and now with their grandchildren (Dewar, 2017). Again, there is a generational pattern of parenting practices, and as suggested by the current literature, each of the 11 participants expressed feelings of stress and anxieties while caring for their grandchildren and seemingly using similar parenting practices as the parents before them (Dewar, 2017). These findings support the research when relating to the literature, as the participants often spoke of aggression and maltreatment in the home (Byford & Richards, 2011). Ten of the participants spoke of corporal punishment as a form of chastising. Researchers suggest that long exposure in such an environment will impact the child's thought processes as well (Byford & Richards, 2011). In this study, the grandmothers expressed a need to avoid repeating the parenting practices of their mothers and yet found themselves in similar situations but justified their actions because of their grandchild's problematic behavior. The cycle continues with the grandchildren in similar positions as their grandmother.

Trauma

Trauma can occur in many forms, such as witnessing a crime take place or a violent act of aggression by an individual experiencing it firsthand. Trauma can also be physical or emotional abuse experienced directly or indirectly. A caretaker who commits

this form of trauma, after being trusted to provide safety and protection in a warm and caring manner. When reviewing the data from each of the participants in this study, it is safe to say that each suffered a form of complex trauma during their childhood. Children suffering from a complex trauma have trouble regulating and even expressing emotions (See the National Childhood Trauma Stress Network, n.d.). Complex trauma occurs when the caretaker fails to provide love, warmth, and protection, which then results in problematic behavior, poor relationships, inhibiting the individual's ability to develop socially (Hodel et al., 2015). The participants in this study had verbalized traumatic incidents ranging from physical and emotional abuse, sexual assault, and abandonment. This would explain the lack of coping skills, and an inability to maintain healthy relationships, an inability of a healthy expression of feelings, and emotions (Hodel et al., 2015). This then created problematic relationships beginning with their children, further transferring poor coping skills onto their grandchildren (Hodel et al., 2015). As mentioned before, P8 spoke about her poor relationship with her daughter and how her daughter does not respond to her affectionately. P8 reported that she did not have an intimate connection with either of her daughters and cannot understand why. Research has shown that trauma impacts the child's neurological development and can result in lasting damage if not properly treated with counseling interventions (Hodel et al., 2015). Nine of the 11 participants had complained of one or more symptoms to include sadness, anger, and frustrations, hopelessness due to trauma during their childhood. These findings support the reports by Georgetown University (2015) that trauma can change the trajectory of a child's life physically, emotionally, and intellectually if left unchecked

(NCBI, 2015). The source states that long term exposure locks a child's brain development, for example, flight or fight mode, which makes it difficult for the participant to engage in meaningful relationships (SAMSHA, 2014).

Experience as a Parent

Teen Pregnancy

Research currently shows a decline in teen pregnancy since 1991, after the United States declared a crisis with under-age mothers living in poverty (Fuller et al., 2018) Hoffman & Maynard, 2008). However, those statistics do not reflect the grandmothers in this study who were born in the early 50s. Nevertheless, research has shown that teen pregnancy has been the result of poor parenting and untreated trauma. In some cases, teen pregnancy continues to replicate similar parenting practices, as seen with the grandmothers in this study. The findings support Widom et al. 's (2015) research, who agrees that teen pregnancy is the result of an adverse home environment, rape or incest, and lack of education. Regarding the participants in this study, it was clear that their sexual behavior was the result of childhood trauma, molestation, and or rape. The previous trauma is all due to an unhealthy home environment resulting in low self-esteem and diminished values worsening the psychological scarring (Steele & McKinney, 2019; Widom et al., 2015). This information adds to a recent study by Stephanie Mollborn Ph.D. submitted by Science News (2019), acknowledging that teen pregnancy was the result of psychological distress, not post-pregnancy, as some scholars initially thought.

Diminished values reflect a poor sense of self-worth, which is primarily developed in the home through a healthy relationship with parents (Steele & McKinney,

2019). An influential parental figure in the home is the first in many relationships, but lack thereof is the result when the parental relationship fails or is non-existing and can often result in teen pregnancy (Fuller et al., 2018). These findings contribute to the current literature of Akella and Jordan (2015) about the cause and impact of the home environment as it is related to pregnancy. The mother-daughter bond could not develop with the participants in this study due to the lack of parental engagement each has reported. Each of the participants spoke of a disconnect with their mother, and few did not know their mother because they were separated from their mother at an early age. Because there is such a disconnect between mother and daughter, many teenagers never think about the consequences of poor choices regarding sexual behavior and teen pregnancy, as described by P5 and P9.

Domestic Violence

Individuals who suffered domestic violence (DV) will either continue to be a victim and or will go on to victimize (Jackson, 2017). The nine participants in this study had all expressed experiencing DV at the hands of a significant other as early 12 years old, and taking notice of their ages, and the participants acknowledge having significant intimate relationships very early in their lives. However, the participants in this study expressed tolerance for DV because their needs were being met. As spoken by P9 "it was better than being on the streets." Other participants expressed not knowing or believing anything was wrong. This was seen as normal behavior considering the participants did not have a legitimate role model to guide them with advice regarding healthy relationships. It was common during those days for women to stay in dysfunctional

relationships; after all, at this juncture, this was all they knew, beginning with their home environment (Jackson, 2017). Their values and sense of right and wrong had been diminished by previous trauma, abuse, and neglect. Developmental stages were interrupted, and according to what was witnessed and expressed in their last home environment, if you did wrong, you were punished, which was often physical (Jackson, 2017). Therefore, victims continue to be victims or begin to victimize others with abusive behavior (Jackson, 2017). Underage marriages increase the possibility of poverty and usually end in divorce, which is especially true within the groups of dropouts and expands to controlling behavior in the relationship (Sattarzadeh, Khalili, Hatamian-Maleki, 2019). The findings add to the body of information on domestic violence, as explained by Sahin et al. (2010) who says that underage marriages result in several issues, such as "emotional manipulation and domestic violence." P5 – P9 has acknowledged living with abusive mates as early as 12 years old. Other participants even longer, well into adulthood. The findings of this study contribute to the body of literature by Fram, Miller, and Farber (2006) regarding violence in the home and how it affects not only adults in relationships but also those at an unfair advantage, such as a minor subject to the vices of an older spouse. Jackson (2017) adds that this type of acceptance and exception to laws regarding statutory rape also promotes teen pregnancy and violence in these types of relationships.

Parenting Skills

Many of the participants in this study had described having an authoritarian mother or caretaker and often spoke off not wanting to be like their mother regarding

parenting styles. Yet, each has described a similar home environment regarding their children and did not recognize those traits or behavior in themselves during that period of their lives. Of the 11 participants, seven described themselves, unknowingly, as an authoritarian. Others were the exception because they either did not raise their children or provided a mixed atmosphere of permissive, uninvolved parenting. For example, a child does not follow the rules of doing chores but expects tokens or rewards in return. Just as the parent will fuss and give the token or reward even if the task was not completed, the parent then complains the child has a behavior problem. The previous statement revealed that this parent did not enforce rules, nor was she strengthening any values in the home but sending mixed messages. This supports literature by Horwath and Platt (2019), who warns about mixed messages and creating confusion while generating failure. Mixed messages suggest that her child would eventually learn that their mother would not follow through with consequences (Horwath & Platt, 2019). Learning that mom makes threats but never acts on them.

In other cases, parents may charge a child with always being wrong when, in fact, the parent failed to give clear instructions. These mixed messages can leave a child feeling vulnerable and inadequate, believing that they cannot do anything right when judged by a parent (Horwath & Platt, 2019). P3 reported, no matter what, that her grandchild is always in trouble and can't get nothing done right," not recognizing the deficiencies on her end. Many grandmothers made similar judgments to their grandchildren. They believed that they are doing a better job than their mother regardless of the problematic issues their children or grandchildren suffer. Except for two

participants, one participant has an adult child currently incarcerated. All other participants have reported problems in the home involving adult children who are presently and had previously suffered from drugs and alcohol addiction, and incarceration. All of the participants have divorced or blended homes except for deceased husbands. These findings support the authoritarian parenting styles of Baumrind (1991), which tells us those authoritarian parents produce individuals exhibiting externalized behavior such as aggression, defiance, and antisocial conduct. These behaviors manifest as individuals mature in age (Dewar, 2017). Much of what Baumrind discusses is related to the home environment reflective of a two-parent household considered the nucleus family. We can later explore how this relates to young mothers with a dysfunctional background, no education, and no maternal instincts. There is also more to explore in this area as I have learned during this study that not every child responds the same regarding parenting style. Many children are abused, become teen mothers, lack sufficient education and knowledge. Still, some become productive individuals as one P1 stated, "I learned what not to do from my mother." P1 married early, like others, to escape her home life. Still, it used her experiences with her mother to improve her life skills, according to her. P1 describes her parenting style as that of an authoritarian as well. Eight of the participants who were raising children were already involved in volatile relationships at an early age, conning others to make ends meet, and involved in illegal activity. At some point, as P6 explained, she was on the run trying to escape her relationship as a young 16-year-old with a baby. She reported that she had figured out

that "this was not the life I wanted to live" however, she has a son who consulates and engages in drug and alcohol use.

P6 has allowed us to see the transition of generational patterns firsthand, involving her giving birth to two children with different fathers and still suffering the same fate she did as a child. Now the participants are involved with the wrong people according to her and exhibiting criminal behavior as she did. An unhealthy environment allows for negative issues to interfere with creating a nurturing atmosphere, regardless of the parenting style. There were no suitable models for these teen mothers, and four of the participants had given birth to their second child while still under the age of 18.

Absence of the Mother in the Home

Some of the participants eventually found work to help them with sustaining a lifestyle for themselves and their children. P2 was able to secure a job to provide for her child in the absence of their father, her youngest will never know his father, and her oldest was separated from her father at an early age and seldom visited with him. This meant that she would leave her children at home or with some other form of a caretaker (friend or family member) while she was out sometimes working until late in the evening. The other emulated similar choices and or were either involved in familial relationships outside of the home or usually spending significant amounts of time away from their children. By the time the participants had reach adulthood, their early 20s as reported, they were each either providing for themselves in their own home or involved in a second relationship adding a stepfather or creating a blended family. At this time, the participants shared that their children were old enough to take care of themselves. This supports the

research of Donita and Maria (2017) of a pattern that clearly shows how each participant decreases their involvement with their children who, in turn, depend on others for having their emotional needs met. In either situation, the participants now had multiple children in some cases by different men, and not much had changed for them regarding choices of how to provide for their family. P7 admitted she was "chasing a man" while her children were with her mother; she once described as physically and psychologically abusive towards her as a child. Again, repeated patterns of unhealthy choices with leaving their children in unhealthy environments similar to the situation she lived. P5 did not have an option due to her 15 years of incarceration and reported she left her children with her older sister. P5 explained that one of her children is currently an addict due to trauma she has suffered under the care of her sister. Akella and Jordan (2015) explained how a constant cycle of repeated patterns of poor parenting result in poor choices, trauma, and abuse. Many admitted that the children were competent enough to take care of themselves and their siblings. Therefore, we see again, children raising children or taking part in the latch-key kids' scenario having to raise themselves. Still, we see a disconnect with parenting, leaving children alone with no guidance, exposed to criminal activities. P9 reported she was usually out "hustling" (ill-gotten money). Six of the 11 participants acknowledge that their children complained about them not being there when they were younger. Again, a child not being heard and needs not met. This supports the literature by Doinita and Maria (2017), which tells us that children without an emotional connection or a healthy bonding experience, children will usually suffer psychologically with impaired cognitive development. This absence created insecurities and resentment, generating a

tumultuous relationship with their adult children, as P9 previously explained (See Doinita & Maria, 2017).

Trauma

According to Kolk (2017), untreated trauma, and the lasting impact and cycles of poor parenting and poor coping skills result in generational patterns. All 11 of the participants have suffered some form of trauma ranging from violence and or physical abuse either directly or indirectly as a child. This abuse and exposure to violence continued into adulthood, as told by the participants in this study. Many of the participants spoke of living in fear that one day they may succumb to the same abuse by the hands of their significant other when taking part or witnessing criminal activity such as an assault or any other criminal offenses. P1 originally stated that she "learn what not to do from my mother" found herself a victim of domestic violence lasting 15 years. P5 also was violating and abused and had to relocate due to threats on her life. According to Kolk (2017), if the violence continues, the cycle of an unhealthy environment for children continues as well. The National Institute of Health Care reports that trauma affects everyone differently. This is evident throughout the study in response to questions about upbringing and violent relationships.

The participants continued to con and manipulate to meet needs. At the same time, their children were witness to these incidents and possibly have taken part in. At some point, these participants would become desensitized, enraged, exhibit displaced anger, and take part in similar behavior of poor parenting with their children. Many of the participants described similar home environments of physical consequences and strict

rules. This supports the research by Kelley et al. (2013) that behaviors seen in childhood will continue into the next generation, and repeated poor parenting styles will continue to surface. Several participants were brave enough to admit that they would take their frustrations out on their children when they were angry with their spouse. Others admitted to not caring about the needs of their children as a form of punishment towards the father.

Experiences as a Grandmother

Parenting Grandchildren

Many of the grandmothers expressed feelings of stress, depression, anger, and at a loss of what to do or whom to turn to when problems surface with their grandchildren. These findings add to the literature of Kelley et al. (2013) regarding untreated trauma and grandmothers who often find themselves feeling out of control, overwhelmed, and a host of other issues that can directly impact the grandchildren. Learned behavior is evident based on the previous admissions, and the current issues confirmed that the cycle had repeated itself with the participants regarding their lived experiences and what has been acknowledged with their grandchildren. The grandmothers have had at least one interaction with agents of the courts. One or more of their grandchildren have been incarcerated, and one or more of their grandchildren have been sexually assaulted, and one or more of the grandchildren have had problems in school. The participants were also confronted with issues of drug and alcohol use. These findings support those of Tuvblad and Beaver (2013) that traits of antisocial behavior can be hereditary creating a pattern in behavior. Each participant has described their parents' parenting practices though many

were non-existing, few were able to make the connection, others seemed to be in denial. Many of the grandmothers in this group acknowledged having strict rules in some cases, and others had rules that were not enforced for the most part, but many described what is thought of as an authoritarian style of parenting. Others made attempts at enforcing rules but had no control over their situations due to frustrations, health issues, or simply just not wanting to be bothered. Many of the grandmothers expressed frustration and anger towards their adult children for allowing this to happen and not taking responsibility for their children. P5 admitted she was angry and did not want to keep her grandchildren because she had issues dealing with her and was trying to rebuild her life when her grandchildren were placed with her. These findings support those of Kirby and Sanders (2013) who explained that feelings could filter out onto the grandchildren who are also suffering emotionally. It is also evident that the participant is dealing with residual trauma from the past related to their home environment and is now impacting their ability to cope as a caregiver. The participants have not developed healthy coping skills. The grandmothers have expressed that they are doing the best they can. Hence, the grandchildren are exposed to the same trauma the participants endured as a child, but only because there were no healthy alternatives available to them. Therefore, their grandchildren are now exposed to poor parenting because of poor coping skills, insufficient parenting skills, along with an inability to regulate their emotions. These findings support Jackson's (2017) research, who reported that underage marriages create additional problems later in life. No different than the grandmothers witnessing aggression in their home as a child. When examining the history of parenting practices,

the participants have duplicated the exact parenting practices they were attempting to avoid from childhood.

Experiences with Grandchildren

Several grandmothers acknowledged arguments and physical confrontations with their grandchildren. The participants explained, feeling out of control and unable to diffuse situations or even get the grandchildren to obey a simple request. Many of the participants are experiencing legal woes because of their grandchildren's infractions or offenses. Many participants are suffering from financial difficulties because of fixed incomes and mounting legal fees, as well as constant court appearances, truancy, and theft. Few of the grandmothers admit that some of the offenses surprise them, and they believe their grandchildren are under the influence of others. Some grandmothers made excuses for the grandchildren's antisocial behavior, such as the children taking after their mother or father with their antisocial behavior. This acknowledgment further explained Kirby and Sanders's (2013) findings of "hereditary influences" among generations. The grandmothers describe similar actions and deviant behavior with their grandchildren that they, too, displayed as teenagers. Some of the grandmothers expressed being confused by this behavior and its source with the exception for a few who promoted unhealthy behavior, thinking it helped to "save him from the streets" by teaching them the ins and outs of what to do and how to do it effectively. These findings suggested a pattern stemming from the grandmothers' troubled childhood regarding untreated trauma and what it has manifested into with their children and now grandchildren.

Dysfunctional Home Environment

This theme felt necessary in that a few participants acknowledged knowing more about their grandchildren's wrongdoings than many might have expected. While many of the participants complained of the behavioral problems their grandchildren suffered, they often knew of the delinquent behavior. They may not have known the details of the offenses, but they knew their grandchild was involved in illegal activities. P9 admitted to having conversations with her grandchild about his involvement and knowledge of offenses others/peers had committed. This supports Tuvblad and Beaver's (2013) reports of hereditary influence as it relates to the progression of antisocial behavior. Few have also admitted knowing about offenses, after the fact, while others would only speak about items appearing and not knowing where they came from. Items such as clothing, shoes, electronics, but the participants were told these items were for a friend or given to them by a friend. Other presenting issues in the home involved dysfunctional behavior from the grandmother, who openly discusses the parent's impairment. Many of the participants acknowledged that they were open about issues of the adult children regarding violence, aggression when speaking with their grandchildren. This supports the findings of Morawska and Sanders (2018) that a child having knowledge about their parents' vices and shortcomings could also facilitate anger towards an absent parent feeling their parent has chosen a vice over them. And many of the grandmothers do believe the grandchildren are "acting out" because their parents are not with them in the home. This leads to the grandchildren being disrespectful in the form of acting out towards their grandmother. This information adds to the body of literature reported by Kirby and Sanders (2017),

who acknowledge that there are no programs specifically for grandmothers parenting grandchildren with behavioral problems. Especially since there is a growing number of grandmothers heading the homes of their grandchildren (See Kirby & Sanders, 2017). Few of the grandmothers have admitted to excusing poor behavior and do not challenge alcohol and drug use in the home; they admitted to ignoring warning signs. Other grandmothers mentioned not caring because the child is disobedient. P9 admits to knowing about the trouble her grandchildren get into but states, "what am I going to do, stating he'll learn." P9 also expressed that it does not bother her that her children and grandchildren all smoke marijuana in her home. She knows about this behavior and joking reported that while she does not partake in marijuana, it does not bother her that her family does. She also has a grandson incarcerated for domestic violence and a son who is in-and-out of prison for illegal activities.

Delinquent Behavior

All of the grandmothers were experiencing some form of delinquent behavior or inappropriate behavior from their grandchildren. The majority of the grandchildren had at some point been detained by the juvenile justice system or are currently involved with officials of the juvenile court system. Many of the grandmothers had at some point reported their grandchildren as runaways at one time, and others have simply allowed their grandchildren to come and go freely, meaning there was no curfew, and many minor grandchildren would stay out overnight or for days at a time. Many of the participants in this study have had their grandchildren disrespect them, cuss at them, steal money from them, and lie about involvements in criminal activities. This lends to the research of

Glick et al. (2015), who explain the different types of disruptions that may manifest breeding dysfunction in families. Some of the behavior from the participant's sounds as if the grandmothers are describing their childhood encounters regarding incidents such as drugs and alcohol, theft, along with other offenses. These findings also align with Tuvblad and Beaver's (2013) reports of "psychopathology of biological parents "and other influencing factors.

Although grandmothers were the focus of this study, it can also apply to the individuals who were once the parent and explained more about the absent parent's behavior. Many of the grandchildren have also been exposed to environments not suitable for children. Several have witness incidents deemed inappropriate, like their mothers engaging in drugs and illegal activity. The grandmothers reported feeling helpless and angry at what their grandchildren endured with their parents, not considering their contribution to their grandchildren's behavior, as P9 said. Again, there is repeated behavior identical to what the grandmother suffered herself in the cases described in this study. These findings support the literature explaining victims were becoming victimizers (Milaniak & Widom, 2015). Not only will the victim, such as in this study, go on to victimize in a similar fashion of abuse and the sexualization of others. Victims of abuse and will become aggressive and often retaliate towards others but lack the vulnerabilities of older children. According to Huitsing and Monks (2018), aggression in adolescents is less strategic, acting on impulse rather than a planned or thoughtful approach. The grandmothers are not only displaying the aftermath of their abuse but not experiencing a cycle of abuse, anger, and violence they once endured (Tuvblad & Beaver, 2013).

Interpretations

The dominant themes in this study confirm Akers' (2012) theory of social learning as it applies to criminal behavior and other vices and deficiencies associated with human behavior. Akers (2011) stated that exposure and duration are key to strong influencing factors with learned behavior such as juvenile delinquency. The findings support the views of Akers that juveniles are usually motivated by observation and experience of those with strong influences such as a close caregiver. Throughout this study, I reported the participants' accounts of their childhood experiences leading into their adult years and finally as caretakers of their grandchildren in the absence of their parents. I mentioned the lineage to stress patterns and practices focusing solely on the participants/grandmothers of this study to show that there is a catalyst in the behavioral problems of their grandchild.

The participants in this study provided a road map of delinquent behavior as a child and poor choices as an adult who has suffered through personal trauma, which was left untreated. The trauma of rape, molestation, abuse, and abandonment manifested and led the participants to suffer further trauma because of poor choices. The poor decisions of undeveloped minds further exacerbated the problems the participants sustained, like homeless, volatile relationships, and teen pregnancies. Having to provide for an infant progressed into criminal behavior. The participants continue to exhibit criminal behaviors as an adult, and some were incarcerated as a result. Repetitive criminal behavior became the norm for many of the participants. While these grandmothers led a life that was

unintentional; in some cases, their behavior was acceptable in their circle of peers and associates exhibiting similar behavior.

Society has also contributed to their experiences in some cases by not utilizing interventions with such institutions as foster homes and school environments. However, for the purpose of this research, I will focus on the participants and their experiences. Taking note that the grandchild's exposure began with their parents much like their grandmothers and the issues she suffered as a child. This aligns with the research of Baldwin et al. (2013) theory of exposure and duration. Baldwin et al. (2013) explained that the amount of time spent with individuals committing crimes and other antisocial acts are modeling unwanted behavior with influential adolescents. These adolescents are like sponges taking in what they see and hear and later acting on impulses. These impulses may surface pending needs or desires.

Many of the grandmothers gave an account of their experiences involving criminal activities as a child. Some of these activities continued into adulthood. Therefore, the patterns of exposure were either witnessed or deliberately taught to their children according to the grandmothers by way of educating on a "need to know." Other participants have chosen to ignore or justify the behavior of their grandchild. The grandmothers would acknowledge poor behavior in their grandchildren and do so by claiming it as "acting out" in some cases. This pattern continues to repeat itself as noted by Thompson and Bynum (2016), explaining how criminal behavior in the home is transferred to the next generation and continues if left untreated. Offenses were often excused and even rewarded in a circuitous manner that seemingly encourages poor

behavior while providing no reason to avoid such behavior by the individual. This information aligns with the research of Beaver et al. (2013) who explained "impaired self-control" as a risk factor that contributes to antisocial behavior. As mentioned before, needs and desires arise, and impulses take over seemingly according to rewards and punishments.

Children with untreated trauma or issues resort to a set of systems that either produce rewards or punishments (Skinner, 2011). This set of systems that becomes a way of learning is associated with Operant Conditioning based on the reaction of choices or responses to actions. Children learn early about reactions and consequences and therefore work to manipulate if not guided by healthy coping skills (Skinner, 2011). An argument can be made that the participants were unaware of behavioral problems or disorders within themselves or the family during those years. As it relates to the participants in this study, it was evident by their responses that no such guidance or interventions were available, and many during those years lack the maturity to recognize deficiencies. However, the participants were more in tune with those among them holding a similar set of values of systems based on the rewards and unavoidable punishments such as jail and or DV. This was acknowledged during the study when participants gave accounts of learning from those who had already mastered the traits of manipulation, theft, assault, and promiscuity. Therefore, social learning theory tells us that the length of exposure and duration play a key role in the continuance of unwanted behavior of undeveloped minds (Akers, 2011). Baldwin, Church, and Wharton (2013) were in agreement with the previous study explaining that through the exposure and negative reinforcements are

crucial when developing delinquent tendencies. It can be said that the grandchildren of the participants in this study were exposed to nothing but antisocial behavior passing from one generation to the next beginning with their grandmother (Tuvblad & Beaver, 2013). There was one noticeable connection between the grandmothers and their grandchildren. Each struggle with the why and while it is unclear from the parents' perspective and their experiences, we could also assume they too were left with a burden of questioning their circumstances. The participants struggle with why of their current situations and unanswered questions as a child, and their adult children's current situation regarding drugs and incarceration to begin with. Therefore, because the grandmothers were never able to self-regulate, the behavior became repetitive, and patterns began to develop with their children and now their grandchildren. When exploring the experiences of the participants in this study, professionals did not intervene in the cycle of trauma throughout three generations of the participants to include childhood, parent, and grandmother. There is no evidence of change regarding the welfare of their grandchildren to end this cycle in many of the cases and understandably because they too are lacking the necessary coping skills and tools to intervene in such behavior or even recognize a serious problem within themselves.

Limitations to the Study

Every study has its limitations and there was one important aspect missing from this study. This study was missing the input of the grandchildren and their perspective of the accounts given by the grandmothers. My focus was on the experiences of the grandmother, seeking to make a connection with the transfer of learned behavioral

patterns throughout the generations from the participant's perspective. The study was solely reliant on the grandmother and her experiences beginning with her childhood through adult years. I was also aware of my tone and own biases as the participants shared their experiences. There were also some limits or resistance to how the questions were answered for fear of how the participant might be either complicit or implicated in some of the situations they encountered growing up or with their grandchildren. Therefore, I focused on feelings and emotions rather than content or details of incidents regarding this method of research (Goldman et al., 2014). The sample size is not representative of one group but a starting point with many layers to explore.

Recommendations

Future researchers might examine further the grandchildren's thoughts and feelings in a similar study to learn more about their experiences with their grandmothers. I would recommend learning more about the grandchildren in conjunction with the grandmothers, specifically as a collaboration further adding to the body of literature and how grandmother's experiences have shaped not only her life but those of her offspring. This, too, may highlight or provide more data as to how the professionals can assist in similar situations. Another recommendation might be to explore further the grandmothers' past trauma learning more about how institutions could have better responded in such cases of abuse and domestic violence as an adult. There is much more to learn about DV and safeguarding those living in an abusive situation. Many women do not trust current programs because of fallacies and inconsistencies. When placing children in foster care, we should not only counsel for adjustment and transition but for

what the child experienced prior to placement. This is also true for the academic institutions and the role they have with reporting. Schools must do a better job of reporting long absences, unexcused absences, along with the observable signs of abuse, justifiably. More important why even the teachers need further training in identifying the warning signs of abuse; sometimes, children are just prone to accidents, not every case is of abuse. However, future studies could explore current practices and services that are provided to caregivers in more detail and the barriers or challenges they face in accessing those services. Sometimes there or medical reasons for behavior in some cases. I want to make it clear that this is not about overreaching but more of an understanding and recognizing the signs of trauma. We can learn more from these grandmothers' experiences in this study, which would enable professionals to help others in similar situations better to alleviate the spread of traumatic patterns? It may be helpful also to explore lived experiences across social classes. A quantitative study might also serve a purpose as to how prevalent these issues are with grandmothers as the sole provider of her grandchildren with delinquent behavior. Future studies can further our knowledge about the lives of these grandmothers who are caring for their grandchildren.

Implications

The results of this study have provided several themes for social change. Regarding the placement of children, while there is a process in place for foster homes, there should be some form of assessing caregivers regardless of relation. I find this necessary for reasons that will aid the caregiver and not hinder the placement of the grandchildren. In all aspects, the home should help to sustain the child's needs by

affording the grandmother essential tools to care for her grandchildren suffering not only delinquent problems but also issues associated with being separated from a parent, transitions that can be made to feel like abandonment, and possible trauma suffered while with the parent. I believe that these changes could remedy many of the issues associated with delinquent behavior leading to healthy communities, educational improvement, and healthy coping skills through counseling interventions designed specifically to the needs of individuals living in such circumstances. There should be programs to help guide the grandmothers with the transitions while assessing her needs. Evaluations can serve as another form of assessing past or current traumas aiding the grandmother in developing essential tools to help her cope with transitions and her grandchild while breaking the cycle.

Conclusions

The findings of this study add to the current literature by providing additional data as to why grandchildren living with their grandmother have not improved behaviorally. What has become apparent here is that there is more happening in the homes of these caretakers. To just place a grandchild because it is always better to have a relative step in, does not do justice when there are existing problems in the home. These grandmothers have suffered traumatic upbringings which they endured into adulthood and now as caretakers with their grandchildren. Researchers have long agreed that dysfunctional behavior is genetic in some cases, such as alcoholism and hereditary in others, much like depression (Tuvblad & Beaver, 2013). I have accumulated data from over three generations, and it is clear there is a generational pattern of antisocial behavior. The goal

is to do more than hand a child over but to ensure their needs are met, and issues are addressed to reduce problematic behavior. Through this study, I have learned that these grandmothers have a host of untreated diagnoses and disorders and have an added responsibility to care for grandchildren. This helps to create more problems than it solves, and patterns continue. Would their parenting practices have been different if they received the much-needed help as a child or as an adult to help eliminate some of the poor behavior we see now?

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

The idea is to learn more about the participant and their journey into adulthood, parenthood, and the relationships they built along the way. Learning more about legal problems if any and how this affected the grandmother's journey into adulthood.

Learning more about their relationships and whether those relationships had a significant impact on their parenting skills or choices in life. Pending responses to the questions, the interview is schedule for two hours max leaving time for probing questions and follow-ups questions.

What were your experiences as a child?

1. Tell me about your home environment, example; was it hostile or calm, did you discuss issues at the table?
2. What type of parents did you have, example; were they mean, lenient, strict with rules?
3. Was there violence in the home, did you witness beatings or fights with any adults in the home or other family members?
4. What type of discipline was used in the home (parenting style), what type of punishment did you receive?
5. Did you witness criminal behavior in the home as a child, example; adults discussing crimes committed, expensive items that you did not know where it came from?

6. Have you had any criminal or illegal activity that did not result in an arrest as a child?

What were your experiences as parent?

1. How would you describe yourself as a parent, example, strict with rules, lenient with poor conduct?
2. Did you strive to be different than your parents were when you were a child?
3. From your perspective what type of childhood did your children have in contrast to your childhood?
4. Was there any violence in your home that your children may have witness?
5. How is your relationship with your adult children now?
6. Were there times or is there anything you would have don different with your adult children and their choices in life?
7. How have your adult children 's choices impacted your life?

What are your experiences as a grandmother

1. How would you describe yourself as a guardian/grandparent to your grandchildren, example; lenient, strict, uninvolved?
2. What were your feelings when making the decision to take on the responsibility of raising your grandchildren, example, fearful, obligated, happy, concerned?
3. What are your feelings with parenting grandchildren with delinquent behavior?
4. What are your thoughts and beliefs about how this behavior began?

5. Have you ever ignored, glorified, or excused any type of poor behavior such as defending one's self, rewarding bad behavior unknowingly such as celebrating a release from jail or prison with your children?
6. What type of discussions were held in the home after any delinquent activity which may or may not have resulted in arrest that you were aware of?
7. How have your children's choices impact your grandchildren?