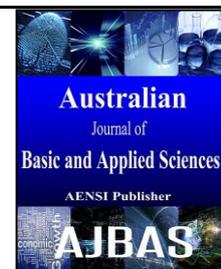




ISSN:1991-8178

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences

Journal home page: www.ajbasweb.com



Applied Grandparenting Modes in Grandchildren Cognitive and Emotional Development

Muhammed Yusuf

¹Faculty of Education and Human Development Department of Educational Studies Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) Tanjung Malim –Perak Malaysia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 13 June 2015

Accepted 28 July 2015

Available online 5 August 2015

Keywords:

Grandparent, cognitive, emotion, development, educating

ABSTRACT

It is assumed that the saving grace to the children cognitive and emotional development could be the grandparent based on interest to raise their grandchildren and their wealth of experiences in life. Whatever experience they use will have great impact on grandchild's development in the future. The applied grandparents' approach towards grandchildren nurturing may be determined by race, ethnicity, family structure, and others. This paper explores applied grand-parenting modes and practices on grandchildren's cognitive and emotional development applying the qualitative method to interview Twenty one grandparents from three cities in Malaysia. It is gathered from the interview analysis that, grandparents applied several modes which have great impact on their grandchildren's cognition and emotional growths. The modes visibly boost grandchildren's learning interest, impart culture and pioussness into them, and consequently develop their cognitive and emotion in a wide scope suggesting urgent needs to seriously reconsider grandparents in our global educational system to regain golden lost of educational goal in the present global diluted era.

© 2015 AENSI Publisher All rights reserved.

To Cite This Article: Muhammed Yusuf, Applied Grandparenting Modes in Grandchildren Cognitive and Emotional Development. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 9(25): 96-100, 2015

INTRODUCTION

There is a change in family settings since two decades ago, due to the fact that, many families in the present world, are witnessing a situation whereby; both parents are in the labor force (Bifocal 2012; Hayslip *et al.* 2013; Policy Brief 2010). Based on this, some families face the problem of upbringing their children and rely only on school care which is not enough to inculcate the desired behavior in the children. This shows that family setting needs the help of someone that could take up partially or completely the responsibility of the parent in order for children to be emotionally and physically balanced, which could not be provided by a nanny.

Alternatively, some studies show that many grandparents wish to spend time with their grandchildren; they take care of their grandchildren with curiosity. Grandparents used to speak about the joy of staying with their grandchildren, equally the grandchildren also showed high interest in staying with their grandparents (Ferguson & Ready 2011; Cherlin & Furstenberg 1985, 1986). In a study conducted in united state of America on 376 grandparents and 340 grandchildren to explore their emotional stability and depression symptoms from 1985 to 2004 found that the grandparents and

grandchildren who were emotionally closed to each other experienced happiness and less depression symptoms (Moorman *et al.* 2013).

One of the crucial aspects of the human development is the aspect of relating with others, which is greatly determined by the emotional stability attachment of the individual. Emotional stability assists the individual in relating with others, as children's abstract thinking and language skills develop, that is when they are able to explain and discuss their emotions with others (Mann & Leeson 2010; Oswalt 2008). Hence, the task of developing emotional stability of children requires someone that shows interest in taking care of the children and desires to be with them. A study shows that, grandparents desire to spend time with their grandchildren; they take care of their grandchildren with a considerable caring, interest, and passion (Ferguson & Ready 2011; Mann & Leeson 2010; Cherlin & Furstenberg 1985).

Furthermore, there are various studies that identify and explain grand-parenting styles. One of them is the study conducted by Neugarten & Weinstein (1964) that identifies five grand-parenting styles; they are as follows: 1) Formal: this type of grandparent is distanced from their grandchildren, they do not always deal directly with their

Corresponding Author: Muhammed Yusuf, Faculty of Education and Human Development Department of Educational Studies Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) Tanjung Malim –Perak Malaysia
E-mail: kuanademola@yahoo.com

grandchildren, 2) Playmate: the playmate grandparent always play and interact with their grandchildren, they play with the grandchildren as if they are young like them, 3) Ghost: this kind of grandparent almost never show up to their grandchildren, they are largely not involved in the affairs of their grandchildren, they almost like the formal grandparent, but the area of difference is that the formal grandparents sometimes visit their children but prefer to deal with their own children rather than their grandchildren, 4) Surrogate: this kind of grandparent, act exactly like the real parents, they are involved in the affairs of their grandchildren, and 5) Sage: this type of grandparent could visit but seldom intervene in the affair of their grandchildren unless upon request.

Based on frequency of contacts and services provided for grandchildren, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1985) distinguished between three grandparenting styles, they are; detached grandparents, passive grandparents, and active grandparents. Detached grandparents hardly visit their grandchildren and help them, passive grandparents frequently visit their grandchildren and provide fewer services for them while active grandparents constantly visit their grandchildren, provide them with more services, and have more influence on them. The more the grandparents contact and support their grandchildren the more the influence on them. They are there for consultation.

All the above-mentioned styles are grandparenting styles, which are used by different grandparents. However, each Malaysian grandparent is different in terms of the modes they use in bringing up their grandchildren. These modes were not visibly documented, now in this study specifically; one will like to know the one that is used by most grandparents to develop cognitive and emotional stability of their grandchildren. Hence, this paper explores applied grand-parenting modes on grandchildren's cognitive and emotional development.

Methodology:

The qualitative research method is widely used to explore phenomena in their natural environments. Also, qualitative approach is an effective tool to obtain specific information about the culture, values, and behaviours of a definite group of people (Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Crotty 1998). Therefore, this research applied the qualitative method to investigate grandparents' modes and practices on grandchildren's Cognitive and emotional development. The research aimed to answer the following research question: What is the role played by grandparents in influencing the grandchildren's development cognitively and emotionally.

Twenty one grandparents were selected from three cities in Malaysia. The cities are Ipoh, Tanjung Malim, and Wilayah Persekutuan. Ipoh and Tanjung

Malim cities are situated in Perak state while Wilayah Persekutuan is known as Malaysia business capital city. The respondents were indiscriminately selected and participated voluntarily in this study expressing their views and practices on how they contribute to their grandchildren's cognitive and emotional development. The participants were selected based on belief that they were the right people to be interviewed. Those grandparents have practical information about grandchildren nurturing, they speak undiluted language, and they possess some valuable domestic skills that some of the present day parents are lacking. Most importantly, they are morally upright to leave a good legacy for their grandchildren. These premises are sufficiently suggesting the grandparents to be educators for grandchildren and young kids. Consequently, this research attains useful information about grandparents' contribution towards grandchild's development in aspects of cognitive and emotional development.

In this study, data were collected using the interview method, whereby some grandparents were interviewed. The conversations from the interviews were recorded using an MP3 recorder and field notes to ensure the reliability of responses and to obtain deep understanding of the respondents' view. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the aim of gaining insight into and sorting out answers to the questions which the research is raising. The questions were drafted and were sent to the anticipated interviewee prior to the given dates of the interview for their contribution to be added. The themes in these particular interviews were extracted and analyzed according to the research question and issues identified from literatures as well as on the field revelations (thereby inculcating the participants' views).

Findings:

The qualitative investigation indicated that the participant grandparents applied different type of modes in grandchildren's cognitive and emotional development. Several themes were also derived from the interview, hereby, the themes are as follows:

1. Learning interest development
2. Strictness of the grandparents
3. Different kinds of attention
4. Field trips for learning purposes -Aceh 12/26
5. Modeling mode

Learning interest development:

It is gathered from the interview that, grandparents who involved in grandchildren's activities, most especially, the area that is related to academics, improved their children's learning interest. As explained by one of the respondents thus: In order for the grandchildren to obtain better academic result, we need to participate in their

studies. Our participation is wajib [*wajib*; an obligatory act in Islam].

From the above statement, it is deduced that, if the grandparents want their grandchildren to do well academically, they need to participate with their own superior experiences. In fact, participation according to them is an obligatory act to facilitate grandchildren's learning activities, even self when there are many grandchildren to attend to; the older grandchildren will be requested to tutor their younger brothers and sisters. As an illustration, a grandparent of 14 grandchildren said: Sometimes, when we have them together, I find that, we can ask them to teach each other. I said to the senior grandchildren that you have to teach the youngsters. As a result, their 'tajwid' is good, due to my quality supervision, [*tajwid*: rules and regulation of how to recite the noble *Quran* perfectly]. So, I can trust them, and I feel that this really helps me a lot. I see the result, yes my mission is achieved.

This is supported by the findings of previous studies, that, some grandparents derive pleasure from having the opportunity to be a companion or playmate with their grandchildren. They speak with interest of time spent sharing mutual interest, playing games and reading books with their grandchildren. This explains that playing with children will enable them to learn many things from their grandparents (Biscoglio & Langer 2011; Sarti 2010; Mitchell 2008). In line with this, another participant explains that: In order for the grandchildren to enjoy the games, we seriously participate in their activities and when we observe any wrong doing, we caution them. I am not bothered to play with my grandchildren; I sometime follow them to the supermarkets to buy game tools or other items. I am doing all these to know them better and train them properly.

The above statement shows that when the grandchildren feel free with the grandparents and not feel threatened in their sight, they will come closer to their grandparents and excel in their academic performance.

Strictness of the grandparents:

As opposed to the first discussion, some of the grandparents believe that, the best way to inculcate and build cognitive skills and make them balanced emotionally is to play with them, then pass the desired message through that avenue and avoid being strict with the grandchildren. They said this would send them away and will not learn what they are supposed to learn from grandparents. From the interview one of the respondents explained thus: I don't pamper my grandchildren, especially the elders, the eldest one is very happy with me in a way I have been nurturing him, some of my young grandchildren don't like too much of rules and regulations. So, when they come here they don't want to stay for long time, they want to go to somewhere else [laughs].

The respondent explained that he was very strict with his grandchildren; therefore they do not always like staying with him. They preferred going somewhere else that is more interesting to them. Therefore, it is advised that grandparents should soften ground for their grandchildren so that grandchildren can learn greatly from them. This shows that when the connection and the relationship between the grandparents and their grandchildren is positive, grandchildren benefit from a wide range of caring, which will keep on to be present in their lives and lead them also to the ultimate learning attainment and perfection. In accordance, Hurne *et al.* (2010) found a significant positive relation between grandparents and grandchildren's contact frequency. In addition, Moorman *et al.* 2013 emphasized that warm relationship between grandparents and grandchildren increased psychological well-being for both.

As a result, it is discouraged that, grandparents should not be too strict to their grandchildren because of their position in the family; they are not the real parents and the grandchildren themselves can still live and survive without grandparents' support. Therefore, grandparents were advised to do and say things that will make the grandchildren become closer so that they will learn a lot from them. Emphasizing the above, one the participants logically and practically said: We do admonish them for wrong doing, because sometimes they get carried with attitude of watching TV too much or watching a different channel which we don't approve. We caution them for TV addiction tendency and emphasize on the channels which we want them to watch frequently. But I feel that I have to do it in a nice way, so that they don't feel hurt. Sometimes, they feel more hurt when we caution them than their own parents. When their parents say something they don't bother about it, but when we say the same thing they take hearts. So, we have to be more careful with our words and the way we explain things to them. In order to be more professional, they have their own roaster or timetable which they have to follow. I overheard one of them saying; you know my grandmother doesn't like this TV station" and another one also says; it is your turn now". I feel satisfied with this development in my life, and I hope they will grow up following this thought, when we are not around.

Different kinds of attention:

Some of the respondents reveal that, there are individual differences among the grandchildren, consequently, grandparents cannot deal with them in the same way, because what works for one might not work for another, one respondent assert that: I have many grandchildren (14) and I have some students coming here to study. So, I don't have sufficient time for these small grandchildren since they need a different kind of attention, they are not like adult

grandchildren whom we can ask to do things on their own. For that reason, I do not like to mix my young grandchildren with adult students in learning activities, they are too young, but I give them a special attention and allow them to observe the learning activities in my house.

What they are saying invariably is that, grand-parenting is not a small job, for the grandparents to create different attention for their grandchildren; they need to observe them for a long time, study their likes and dislikes and really know what they really need. The type of grandparent, in this category is the surrogate grandparent. According to Neugarten & Weinstein (1964) surrogate grandparent, assume the position of the real parent that is when they could be able to do this complex job on their grandchildren.

Field trip for learning purposes – Aceh 12/26:

In order to develop the cognitive and emotional domain of children, some respondents posit that they usually take their grandchildren for reflective and educative trip that, will improve the children's cognitive, emotional and spiritual domain. On this issue, one of the interviewees asserts that: I took them to Aceh, 12/26, and then we saw the ship on top of the houses and we saw the ship so big, so heavy, *yet allah* [God] could carry and put it on top of the houses within view minutes. These occur because of wrong doing of the people, because we don't comply teaching of Islam in our modern life. Things like this make you remember better. So my journey to Aceh not for entertainment, I make sure they learn something from that visiting. I won't take them for entertainment, never, I hate my children to take my grandchildren for entertainment, window-shopping, and *jalan jalan* [*jalan jalan* is a repeated Malay daily language which means here; walking around for nothing or for less important purpose].

Therefore it is not an easy task to bring up the grandchildren; this participant took her grandchildren to Indonesia at a place called Aceh where the Tsunami disaster happened, where many people died and the properties destroyed within ten minutes (26/12/2004). The journey was performed for the sake of learning reflection and to instill some specific manners into her grandchildren's life such as piousness and faithfulness through the critical thinking and visual processes. Indeed, taking grandchildren to Aceh, an obvious tsunamized region will inspire the cognitive system of the grandchildren to think scientifically, collectively, and reflectively about the cause and effect of Tsunami. At the same time, the journey to Aceh indicates the authenticity of the Qura'nic clues about natural disaster and tragedy miles after miles. Also, the journey shows that this life is not everlasting; there will be a transition from here to another place which could happen at any time and in any form. Therefore, the grandchildren will learn to be faithful and take things easy, in life.

Modeling mode:

The grandparents also serve as good examples for their grandchildren, they knew that the grandchildren hold them in high esteem, and they look forward to them, so they are cautious in the way they relate and behave in front of these grandchildren so that they will only learn good behavior from them. On this aspect, one of the respondents explained thus: "We normally bring them every Saturday to perform *pooja* [*pooja* is an Indian language which means; prayer or worshiping]. We taught them to praise lord ganesha followed by other Gods. We often go to the nearby temple; we spent there around an hour on ordinary day and 2 hours on special day.

Being a role model is one of the requirements of zealous grandparents, for example, their grandchildren will learn from them the way they construct their language, they relate with others and the way they behave in the society. The previous studies assert that grandparents could be good role models and a source of inspiration to their grandchildren; they could also inculcate the sense of cultural heritage and family history to the kids (Georgory & Kenner 2010; Dowshen 2009). In addition, grandparents provide their grandchildren with love and affection, then secure their best interests at heart, and make them feel safe and secured (Williams 2011; Harwood 2001).

Discussion:

From the interviews conducted, and the literatures reviewed, it can be concluded that: 1) the best way to inculcate cognitive skill and emotional intelligence in grandchildren is to assume or use the playmate style of grand-parenting. This is when the grandparents engage in play, fun and go down to the level of their grandchildren, due to the fact that, children like to be comfortable and learn best through play and activities, 2) The surrogate style of grand -parenting: this is when the grandparents assume the status of the real parents to develop grandchildren emotional stability, grandparents, need to be on the ground, observe the way the grandchildren behave and relate with others. By doing this, the grandparents could be able to make necessary adjustment and correction towards their grandchildren's behavior, 3) It is also observed that, when grandparents are far from their grandchildren, the grandchildren could miss some important aspects of their cultural heritage and can lead to the extinction of some cultural values in the family. The grandparents are supposed to communicate and hand the cultural heritage over to the next generation while the parents are busy attending to their daily routine, 4) Effective parenting teaching strategies by requesting the older kids to teach or take care of the younger grandchildren under the grandparents' supervision. In this situation, the grandparents act as facilitators, 5) Restriction to not watch television too much or watch different channels which were not

approved. Some grandparents act as a strategized commander in chief by providing grandchildren with roaster and a timetable which they have to follow.

Conclusion:

We may conclude here that, the role that grandparents could play in the development of family, most especially in the aspect of cognitive and emotional intelligence should not be underestimated, the grandparents should not be seen as outdated, they have a lot to contribute to the family circle, such as preserving cultural heritage, solving the problem of morality in the family, and protecting society at large from modern civilization immorality annihilation in the name of democracy which is truly crazy. The problem of moral depravity among youth and young children could be solved through the help of the grandparents. Therefore, the grandparents are advised not to be far from the grandchildren and use the appropriate approach as identified by the study so that, grandchildren could be developed cognitively and their emotional intelligence will be attained.

REFERENCES

- Angela Oswalt, 2008. Early childhood emotional and social development: emotional expressiveness and understanding. *Early Childhood*. Retrieved March 29, 2013, from; www.vbhcs.org.
- Behavior in the Social Environment*, 8: 948-962.
- Bengtson, J.F., Robertson (Eds.), Grandparenthood (pp: 97-116). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Bert Hayslip Jr., Richard S. Herrington, Rebecca J. Glover., Sara E. Pollard, 2013. Assessing attitudes toward grandparents raising their grandchildren. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 11(4): 356-379.
- Bifocal, 2012. Advising grandparents raising grandchildren. *Academic OneFile*: 40. Retrieved Mach 8, 2014, from; <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?>
- Biscoglio, J., N. Langer, 2011. Grandparents against homework. *Educational Gerontology*, 37: 154-163. New York, USA
- Cherlin, A., F.F. Furstenberg, 1985. Styles and strategies of grandparenting. In V. L.
- Cherlin, A., F.F. Furstenberg, 1986. The new American grandparent: A place in the family, a life apart. New York: Basic Books.
- Dowshen, S., 2009. Bonding with grandparents. Retrieved March 29, 2010, from; <http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/grandparents.html#>.
- Ferguson, J.L., D.D. Ready, 2011. Expanding notions of social reproduction: Grandparents' educational attainment and grandchildren's cognitive skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 26: 216-226.
- Georgory, E., M. Ruby, C. Kenner, 2010. Modeling and close observation: ways of teaching and learning between third-generation Bangladeshi British children and their grandparents in London. *Early Years*, 30: 161-173, University of London, UK.
- Helena Hurne, Susanne Westerback, Tatiana Qadrello, 2010. Traditional and new forms of contact between grandparents and grandchildren. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 8(3): 264-280.
- Jake Harwood, 2001. Comparing grandchildren's and grandparents' stake in their relationship. *NT'L. J. Aging and human development*, 53(3): 195-210.
- Michael Crotty, 1998. The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process. London: SAGE Publication: www.sagepublication.com
- Mitchell, W., 2008. The role played by grandparents in family support and learning: considerations for mainstream and special schools. *Support for Learning* 23(3): 126-135.
- Molly N. Williams. 2011. The Changing Roles of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren. *Journal of Human*
- Neugarten, L. Bernice, K. Karol, Weinstein, 1964. The Changing American Grandparent. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 26(2): 199-204.
- Norman Denzin, K., S. Yvonna Lincoln, 2000. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research London: SAGE Publication: www.sagepublication.com
- Policy Brief, 2010. The Changing Role of Grandparents. Retrieved AUG 10, 2012, from; www.rch.org.au/ccch/policybriefs. *Cfm*, (19): 1-4.
- Robin Mann, George Leeson, 2010. Grandfathers in contemporary families in Britain: evidence from qualitative research. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships*, 8(3): 234-248.
- Sara Moorman, 2013. Strong grandparent-adult grandchild relationships reduce depression for both. The 108th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association in New York. Retrieved MACH 9, 2014 from; http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2013-08/asa-sgg080613.php.
- Sarti, R., 2010. Who cares for me? Grandparents, nannies and babysitters caring for children in contemporary Italy. *Paedagogica Historica*, 46(6): 789-802.