

A TRANSCENDENTAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF NON-
CUSTODIAL GRANDPARENTS WHO CONTRIBUTE RESOURCES TOWARD THE
GRANDCHILD'S CHRISTIAN SCHOOL EDUCATION

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to discover the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. The guiding theory for this study was Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development and the specific psychological stage of pursuing Generativity action versus Stagnation. This transcendental phenomenology included 15 non-custodial grandparents who had a grandchild who attended a K-12 Christian school and who had contributed resources operationally defined as financial, physical, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual for the grandchild's Christian school education within the United States. The data was collected through grandparent interviews, focus group, support documents, and a grandparent letter by the grandparents and completed through the transcendental phenomenology model of reflective analysis and interpretation of the grandparents' accounts. The results of the study identified one main theme of support and the five subthemes: (a) why grandparents support, (b) ways grandparents support, (c) aids or barriers to contributing resources, (d) generative results in supporting, and (e) encouragement to be a support. Recommendations were made to families, non-involved grandparents, and school stakeholders encouraging grandparent resource contribution as well as recommended future study on the impact of grandparent contributions on the family unit, the custodial grandparent experience in contributing, grandparent contribution in public schools, and model grandparent contributions in Christian schools.

Keywords: Grandparent, non-custodial grandparent, grandparent resources, role of grandparent, Christian school education, Christian school

Dedication

I dedicate this to my family. I have learned the value of legacy from the rich spiritual heritage I have from those that came before me as they shared both victories and failures from their own lives. My hope is that I also create a rich legacy for my precious family and for those that are yet to come. My partner in this mission is my dear husband, Lee, who has been my rock, my joy, and my sustainer in always bringing me back to the eternal value in what we do and who we are.

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God's redeeming love and unmerited favor have been my strength and the fuel to live my life. Any accomplishment that He empowers me to attain is to complete His mission and further His Kingdom.

Throughout my childhood, I heard my parents, Paul and Annette Sutton, share their college love story, so the importance of education and not settling for average was instilled at a young age. Mom and dad, thank you for being a strong spiritual example and believing in me. Spiritual giants spoke faith statements into my life that sustained me when this process took its toll. 20 years ago, Vicki Beale ignited a passion in me for Christian education, and my Aunt Sarah's vision of me sitting with a stack of books and writing as well as Pastor David Longobardo's voice message from 9 years ago prophetically calling me Dr. Worley kept me strong and moving forward.

My siblings' text messages, my family's nights at La Carretta with Lee, Kristin and Marc, and Morgan and Kevin, and my daughter Morgan's runs to Joe Beans kept me encouraged, laughing, and caffeinated—everything I needed to reach the finish line

Many thanks to my chair, Dr. Swezey, and committee member, Dr. Spaulding, for pushing me forward and finding my voice and passion for this study. I would not be where I am without your commitment and dedication to excellence.

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List of Abbreviations

Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Educational Records Bureau (ERB)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Technology and medical advancement have lengthened the life expectancy, increased the quality of life, and possibly expanded the emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual resources most Americans have at their disposal (Deprez, 2017; Majjala, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2013; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, Dominguez, & Velasco, 2017; Powell, 2014). Erikson's (1950) theory of the stages of psychosocial development indicates that individuals aged 40 to 65 need to impart and invest into future generations for the individual's development and psychosocial well-being. Grandparents have an innate connection to subsequent generations through their relationship with their grandchildren (Erikson, 1950) and have the opportunity to invest their emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual resources into that relationship, yet research indicates some grandparents are confused about their role or unaware of the resources they possess (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Grandparents must search for avenues of beneficial investment into the grandparent-grandchild relationship that makes a positive impact on the next generation. The Christian school education environment may be an opportunity for the grandparents to invest in their grandchildren's development and implement the resources that are at their disposal to fortify the subsequent generation (Cleary, Handley, & Kornhaber, 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Deprez, 2017). Christian school education has a two-part mission of (a) educating the whole child—spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually, and (b) supporting parents in their God-given role as primary educator (Braley, Layman, & White, 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988). The grandparent's resources can be implemented through the Christian school education context to partner in the Christian school mission while having a reciprocal benefit for the

grandparent and grandchild. While research of the parent's role and needed involvement in a child's education is well-established in the literature (Dugan, 2009; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), little research is available on the role grandparents could play as an educator and role model to the grandchild (Kenner, Ruby, Jessel, Gregory, & Arju, 2007) and the subsequent involvement in the Christian school. There is currently no research on the lived experiences of grandparents who invest their resources into their grandchild's Christian school education.

This chapter provides an overview of the relevant literature on the topic of grandparents and the opportunities they have to invest their resources in the subsequent generations from a historical, social, and theoretical perspective with specific attention on the setting of the Christian school education context. The literature provided led to the problem and purpose statement for the study. The chapter also explains my relationship to the topic, and the reasons this study is significant. The chapter ends with the research questions used for the study and needed definitions for the study's content.

Background

The importance of grandparents' investment of their resources toward the subsequent generations and their application, specifically in the Christian school context can be examined from a historical, social, and theoretical viewpoint. In the past, most of the literature on the subject of grandparents is related to health or dealing with end of life issues, but recent studies have focused on the grandparent well-being and the quality of life during this life period (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017). The literature currently available regarding grandparent resources focuses on the types of emotional, academic, physical, and spiritual resources as well as the obstacles in the application of these resources in society and even in the family itself. The grandparent

resources researched have focused on the types of resources grandparents have, but the research has not considered grandparents might not realize the opportunity or personal benefit in investing these resources in the subsequent generations, and grandparents might not realize the investment opportunities available. Currently, no research addresses the connection of the importance of grandparents' implementation of their resources, specifically to the setting of the Christian school context. This study will address this gap in the literature and add to the research available for Christian families and Christian schools.

Historical

From a historical perspective, changes in America's economic landscape had a profound effect and inadvertently altered the grandparent status and the dynamics of multigenerational relationships. In early colonial days in America, land ownership was a sign of status in a person's ability for provision, stability, and authority in the family and even in the community as only landowners had the right to vote (Gratton, 1984). Land represented the ability to provide for the family and produce wealth through farming, and it had an extended value in being an asset that could be passed down to future generations. The older generation was respected for their acquisition of land and the ability to farm and had authority in their family and community as the landowner (Gratton & Haber, 1996). The land ownership also created a reciprocal multigenerational relationship as the older generation had the wisdom and knowledge of farming as well as the actual land as inheritance while the younger generation had the strength needed for farming success in the difficult farming tasks (Gratton, 1984; Mulvihill, 2013).

As the industrial era began, American society shifted from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing sector. Higher financial opportunities within the industrial vocations led to urbanization as families found it more profitable to live in the city as opposed to the rural

communities (Bengston, 2001; Ruggles, 2007). The new jobs also warranted higher education compelling students to stay in school longer, making them less accessible to give their physical resources on the farm (Geffen, 2014; Mulvihill, 2013; Ruggles, 2007). While the focus of the societal shift was in the economic field, the family unit experienced a shift also. The financial power the grandparent had as a landowner, as well as the wisdom and knowledge of the farming industry, was no longer valued (Friedman, Hechter, & Kreager, 2008; Gratton & Haber, 1996). Gratton and Haber (1996) provided the family's historical progression:

During the colonial period, 87 percent of all testators passed their farms or other businesses to their heirs; in the 1790s, the proportion had fallen to 71 percent. By 1890, only about a third bequeathed their property to their offspring. (p. 9)

Urbanization led to individualism as the younger generation wanted more independence and a different vocation than previous generations (Bengston, 2001; Friedman et al., 2008).

Subsequently, the family experienced a multigenerational identity crisis.

The impact of the macrosocial modernization trends was evident in the microsocial aspect of the family as the family identification changed from the extended family to the nuclear family and the family's functionality changed from "social-institutional to emotional-supportive" (Bengston, 2001, p. 1). Each generation worked to establish its independence from each other, and the relationships changed from a mandatory relationship built on authority and respect to a voluntary relationship based on "equality rather than interdependence" (Gatton & Haber, 1996, p. 10). The older generations began to look at their place in society in a new way. The term *retirement* was introduced as the elderly could spend time, energy, and resources on themselves in reward for their years of labor. Social Security was established in 1935 to fund the older generation's later years due to the "rise in wage labor, the decline in farming and resulting

changes in living arrangements of the aged” (Ruggles, 2007, p. 907). Employers also offered private pension programs to aid in the welfare and enjoyment of the retirement years (Gatton & Haber, 1996). The grandparent’s inheritance for the family was no longer an expectation of passing down as a vocation established in years of family bonding; instead, the grandparent’s inheritance was an option to spend in whatever way the individual desired. “The elderly no longer used inheritance provisions to maintain authority over their heirs. Instead, the old sold the property and created their own ‘nest egg’ for retirement” (Gatton & Haber, 1996, p. 9).

As the family unit in the United States migrated from a centralized extended family to a more independent nuclear family, the role of grandparent became obscure (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016). Even in the current generation, research suggests grandparents have little clarity as to their function in the family unit or society as a whole; subsequently, they may have little intentional impact on subsequent generations and specifically their grandchildren’s lives (Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). This lack of grandparent identity has the potential of forfeiting a valuable opportunity to make a profound impact on subsequent generations and add value to the grandparent’s life at a key juncture in their psychological development (Erikson, 1950). Given the changes in the “intergenerational demography (changing societal and family age structures, creating longer years of ‘shared lives’) have resulted in increased opportunities—and needs—for interaction, support, and mutual influence across more than just two generations” (Bengston, 2001, p. 5). With the life expectancy of Americans increasing, grandparents are now able to work for a longer period of their life and may have better health to be able to contribute a higher quality of investment into subsequent generations (Bengston, 2001; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Dunifon, Near, & Ziol-Guest, 2018; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013). The increase in life expectancy and better quality of life provides the opportunity for grandparents to invest the

valuable physical/financial, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual resources which cannot only be a benefit to the grandchild and society as a whole but can also add value and meaning to the grandparent (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Deprez, 2017).

One of the avenues grandparents may consider as an opportunity to invest in subsequent generations could be the Christian school education context. Christian school education is an option to families that desire an educational platform for their children based on a Biblical worldview that acknowledges the parents as the primary educators (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988). The Christian school partners with the family by teaching the whole child—spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually (Chandler, 2015). This foundational mission of teaching the whole child creates an environment of partnership and welcome interaction between the school and the multigenerational family members that are valued more in this private school context than they are necessarily in other public school systems (West, Peterson, & Barrows, 2017). In addition to personal and educational resources that can be applied, Christian school education has a distinct financial investment that is required. Christian school education operates as a private institution requiring the family to make a financial investment toward the schooling of the child. This reality can be a hardship for parents as they balance their Christian conviction with the monetary resources they have available to spend toward their children’s education (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). By grandparents choosing to participate and be part of the partnership in Christian school education, the family can extend their view of the emotional, intellectual, and physical resources they have as an investment to include grandparents and further support their mission to educate their children within a Biblical worldview.

Social

Because of the longer life-expectancy and resources they have available, grandparents have an opportunity to offer their resources to build strong relationships with their family and their grandchildren and subsequently, make an impact on subsequent generations. Grandparents have a lifetime of resources to offer as foundational lessons and truths for others to emulate that would have a positive reciprocal benefit. As grandparents invest in their grandchildren's lives, they establish well-being for themselves as grandparents have "a sense of purpose, and a special wisdom and maturity that comes with parenting the second time around" (Cleary et al., 2017, p. 180).

The relational investment of the grandparent can strengthen the self-identity of the grandchild, which in turn can strengthen the grandchild as a student in the school setting. Because grandparents have the ability to create stability and family heritage, grandchildren have a better sense of personal and family identity (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Ochiltree, 2006; Smorti, Tschiesner, & Farneti, 2012; Taylor & Bates, 2014), which helps establish their own self-identity and strengthens their academic and social confidence in school (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mansson, 2014; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014). As grandparents share their own academic experiences and goals, grandchildren gain a greater value of education and knowledge in content areas that can inspire grandchildren to pursue their own academic goals (Chiu, 2013; Modin, Erikson, & Vågerö, 2013).

In addition to the social aspect the grandparent influence reaches, the spiritual impact grandparents can make is relevant specifically in the Christian school context. As Christian school education has a strong emphasis on the students' spiritual growth, grandparents' spiritual resources can profoundly impact grandchildren in the identification of Christian principles,

truths, and life choices (Allana, Tennant, & Petrucka, 2017; Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016). The Christian school environment is one avenue in the grandchild's life, where each of these developmental aspects is evident (Chandler, 2015). The school could be an opportunity for the relationship between the grandparent and grandchild as well as parent to be strengthened and each of these areas to be facilitated through the schools' activities and daily interactions.

Theoretical

The prominent theory providing the theoretical framework for this study is Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development. In 1950, Erik Erikson introduced the eight stages of psychosocial development being "qualities which emerge from critical periods of development by which the individual demonstrates his ego at a given stage is strong enough to integrate the timetable of the organism with the structure of social institutions" (p. 146). The stages are as follows: Infancy (birth to 12 months): Trust versus Mistrust; Early Childhood (ages 1 to 3 years): Autonomy versus Shame, Doubt; Play Age (ages 3 to 6 years): Initiative versus Guilt; School Age (ages 6 to 12 years): Industry versus Inferiority; Adolescence (ages 12 to 18 years): Identity versus Role Confusion; Young Adulthood (ages 20 to 40 years): Intimacy versus Isolation; Maturity (ages 40 to 65 years): Generativity versus Stagnation; and, Old Age (year 65 to end of life): Ego Integrity versus Despair (Erikson, 1950). The stage of development that is relevant to this study of grandparent development is grandparent ages 40 to the end of life to include Maturity: Generativity versus Stagnation and Ego Integrity versus Despair. During the Maturity stage, an individual begins to face their mortality and begins to experience the need to invest into the "establishing and guiding of the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). Erikson, Erikson, and Kivnick (1986) expanded the generative interest to be beyond middle age. While the primary psychosocial development for the age group that is 65 years and older is Ego Integrity

versus Despair, the grandparent could also re-enter the generative stage in what Erikson (1982) posed as “grand-generative function” (p. 63). This refers to adults over the age of 65 continuing to find value in “bear nurture and guide those people who will succeed them as adults” (Erikson et al., 1986, p. 72) through purposeful generative activities with children and grandchildren to maintain personal healthy development (Bates, 2009; Ochilree, 2006; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). This study will consider both the grand-generative function and their primary psychosocial development stage of Ego Integrity versus Despair.

Erikson et al. (1986) extended this investment to include the grandparent-grandchild relationship as “the possibility of caring for the newest generation” (p. 91) resulting in more research in the area of generativity among grandparents (Bates, 2009; Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Moore, & Rosenthal, 2017; Serrat, Villar, Pratt, & Stukas, 2018; Thiele & Whelan, 2008). Erikson (1968) stated if the individual does not find ways to invest in subsequent generations, the individual will turn inward to self-absorption and experience stagnation in the person’s development. Recent studies indicate engaging in the generative process aids individuals in overall well-being and adjustment to life changes such as retirement (Serrat et al., 2018). For individuals who are grandparents, subsequent generations are already established within the family and would be the most natural recipient of the resources the grandparent has to offer (Erikson, 1950). Recent studies of non-custodial grandparents who invest time and energy into their grandchildren have higher role satisfaction and stronger feelings of the need for generativity in this period of their lives (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Thiele & Whelan, 2008; Triadó, Villar, Celdrán, & Solé, 2014). In order for this development to be effective, the grandparent would need to explore avenues where personal investment is worthwhile and has the greatest impact. The Christian school education setting provides an opportunity for grandparents to offer a range

of their resources toward their grandchild's whole child development- emotional intellectual, physical, and spiritual (Chandler, 2015). The secondary benefit is the impact the grandparent investment can make on the family as a whole as well as all of the Christian school participants connected to the grandchild. The generational investment has the opportunity to expand out of the investment made toward the grandchild to impact the Christian school community. The personal development gained from a grandparent's generative action causes a reciprocal benefit between the grandparent and all who receive the resources the grandparent offers.

Situation to Self

The Christian family and Christian school education are core to my personal and professional life. I have operated in the Christian school education arena for the majority of my life as a student, a teacher, and various roles in administration. My Christian beliefs and values are aligned with the Christian school mission of the family being the primary educators as well as the important position grandparents have in the family unit. The research paradigm I have integrated is the Biblical worldview as it provides the foundational truth of its acknowledgment of the family unit and the ministry of Christian school education based on the Word of God. The Bible establishes the family (Genesis 2:22-24) as the primary educators to teach (Deuteronomy 11:9; Isaiah 38:9; Joel 1:3; Ephesians 6:4) and is extended to the former generation such as grandparents (Deuteronomy 4:9; Psalm 78). Regardless of the grandparents' religious beliefs, the foundational truth established in Scripture of the role of grandparent in the family and their engagement with their grandchild in this case, within the Christian school context, is built on the belief education is more than a transfer of information and facts, but an opportunity to shape and pass on the beliefs, values, and truths and principles to their grandchild.

Grandparents have the opportunity to share their lives through educational experiences to

give more than information for the grandchild to apply in life. For the Christian grandparent, it provides an opportunity to share spiritual truths such as an appreciation of who God is and what part humans play in His redemptive plan. The Christian believer teaches from the knowledge of God being Creator of all and being in and through all things (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:17). The close relationship to the subject matter of this study and my advocacy of Christian school education did produce a clear bias to the results of the study. Although I have knowledge of Christian school education, I did not have a direct experience of being a grandparent that had implemented resources toward a grandchild in Christian school education. As a researcher in a transcendental phenomenological study, I needed to “engage in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22) so the study was “free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies” (p. 22). This action was accomplished by bracketing out my own experience to be able to focus purely on the lived experiences of the participants in the study (Moustakas, 1994).

Based on the truths provided in the Christian faith of the role of the family in education and the grandparent within the family, the foundational paradigm for the study was a Biblical worldview with the knowledge gained in the study through the constructionist method. The Biblical worldview paradigm undergirded all aspect of the study since “His existence calls for an educational system in which He is the central reality that gives meaning to everything else” (Knight, 2006, p. 178). The constructionist approach allowed me to gather knowledge based on the experiences the grandparents discovered and shared. My ontological, philosophical assumption was the nature of reality is established on the Word of God as God’s truth, God as

the creator of all and the revelation of Christ as the Son of God (Knight, 2006; Van Brummelen, 1988).

The reality of the lived experiences of the relationships discussed in the study was attained through the stories the grandparents' share through the constructionist approach. My epistemological, philosophical assumption was "the Bible is the foremost source of knowledge and the most essential epistemological authority" (Knight, 2006, p. 179). All knowledge is founded in the Word of God and the truths of Christianity, giving answers to the philosophical questions of humanity, roles in society, and the family, as well as individual purpose. The knowledge about the grandparents' relationships with the grandchild, the family members, and the Christian school community as well as their experiences in sharing their resources in the Christian school setting was gained through the constructionist approach in order to find the essence of the experience. The methodological, philosophical assumption in the process of research was to obtain "comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). The rhetorical, philosophical assumption was demonstrated as the language of the voice of the grandparent generation was examined and analyzed. The dialogue revealed different wording and connotations from more current terminology, but as the researcher, I gained clarification when needed to ensure the accuracy of the research information. The axiological paradigm was seen in the focus on the value of the role of grandparent and the grandparent resources to the grandchild, the family, and the Christian school education context.

Problem Statement

Grandparents are living in an era where they may have greater available resources due to longer lifespans that could produce potential economic well-being and higher quality of life

(Deprez, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Velasco, & Lopez, 2017; Powell, 2014). During this stage of life, it is important for their psychological development to explore ways to invest and create a legacy for subsequent generations (Erikson, 1950), but grandparents may be uncertain about the role they should take and the avenues or methods they can use to make the multigenerational investment (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Some Christian families have chosen a Christian school education, which could provide an avenue for grandparents to contribute their valuable physical/financial, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual resources and make a reciprocal impact on the school, the family, and the grandparent (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Deprez, 2017). While research indicated grandparents might have become more influential in the choice for Christian school education than in the past (Association of Christian Schools International [ACSI], 2017), no research had been conducted as to the meaning derived from the grandparent's contribution or involvement and their lived experiences. The problem this study addressed is the need to further understand and describe the developmental opportunity grandparents have in making an investment using the many resources they have into their grandchild's life within the Christian school education setting. The goal in this transcendental phenomenology of the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education was to explore the meaning and value of these investments to the grandparents, the types of resources that are implemented in the Christian school setting, and the obstacles grandparents face in the resource implementation.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to discover the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school

education. The non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education was generally defined as grandparents who "do not live with their grandchildren but who make their contributions through visits, childcare in their own or grandchild's home, outings, holidays, or provision of other kinds of practical and psychosocial assistance" (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 27) and who had a grandchild who attended a K-12 Christian school and had contributed resources operationally defined as financial, physical, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual for the grandchild's Christian school education. The theory guiding this study was Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development as the theory highlights the specific psychological dynamic relevant to the grandparent age demographic in pursuing Generativity action in impacting subsequent generations versus Stagnation in not realizing or pursuing the opportunity.

Significance of the Study

The empirical implications of this study are the information gained of the meaning that was derived from grandparents through their offering of resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. The information gained can give perspective to other grandparents as well as parents and grandchildren. This empirical implication can also affect the Christian school community as the stakeholders have a greater knowledge and understanding of the meaning that was gained from the grandparents being an active part of the Christian school community. There is no research on the opportunity grandparents may have in using the Christian school education context as a specific avenue to invest in their grandchild and subsequently, in subsequent generations.

A practical implication of this study for grandparents is the knowledge of the personal benefit of being an active participant in the grandchild's Christian school education. In

understanding the personal benefit and seeing examples of the unique ways the grandparents implement these resources within the Christian school setting, other grandparents may want to be more involved and be encouraged to explore ways to implement their resources. The practical implication for Christian teachers and administrators is to provide research on the effects of grandparent resources operating in the Christian school setting. As a result of the study, the Christian school leadership and stakeholders may want to consider ways they can intentionally include grandparents in being more active in Christian school education. The Christian school could provide ideas for families on ways grandparents could support the Christian school both within the school and in the family's personal lives (Prichard & Swezey, 2016). The study also has practical implications for Christian school education parents who may be lacking in resources and who may not realize the value of implementing grandparent resources in the Christian school context (Allana et al., 2017, Deprez, 2017; Majjala et al., 2013). Finally, the family may be strengthened by enriching the grandparents' lives in a period of life where many suffer from loneliness, lack of motivation, etc. (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Deprez, 2017), as well as their grandchild's Christian school education in strengthening the family's investment of resources.

The theoretical framework is extended through the application of Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development as the theory highlights the specific psychological dynamic relevant to the grandparent age demographic in pursuing Generativity action in impacting subsequent generations versus Stagnation in not realizing or pursuing the opportunity to invest in others. The research explores the personal meaning gained from the investment grandparents make in offering their resources within the Christian school education setting.

This study provided needed research to address the gap in the literature on both the subject of the meaning grandparents gain from investing their resources and the implementation of these resources in the Christian school education context. The existing body of research focuses on the generalities of the grandparent resources but does not focus specifically on the Christian school environment or how the grandparent involvement can impact the grandparent as well as the Christian school, the family, and the intergenerational relationship. This study further strengthens the research of grandparent resources as well as provides the needed research of the connection of the application of the grandparent resources to the grandchild's Christian school context.

Research Questions

The research questions were derived from the problem and purpose statements for this study. This transcendental phenomenology had research questions that will “delineate a focus of investigation in such a way that it is understandable to others” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 15). The study had one central research question: What are the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education? This research question explored the essence of this grandparent experience of investing grandparents' resources in the Christian school and the meaning derived from the experience. The question addressed the main concern of the study being the meaning gained from the resources being implemented through the grandparent involvement within the context of the grandchild's Christian school environment (Allana et al., 2017; Chiu, 2013; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Majjala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016).

Subquestion A is: How does the experience of contributing resources for the grandchild's Christian school education relate influence the continued psychosocial development of the non-

custodial grandparent's life? Erikson's (1950) stages of psychosocial development identified the stage of Generativity versus Stagnation as a critical period of development for adulthood years. Erikson (1950) highlighted this basic desire to make an impact beyond their own life and gain value from investing in others: "Generativity is primarily concerned with establishing and guiding of the next generation" (p. 267). If the individual does not invest in others' lives, Erikson's (1968) theory stated the person risks experiencing "a pervading sense of stagnation, boredom and interpersonal impoverishment" (p. 138). The investment that is made into others causes a reciprocal benefit as both the mature individual and subsequent generations gaining value from the experience. This question established the theory as the focal point of the study and explored the impact on the grandparent's personal life through the offering of the grandparent resources.

Subquestion B is: What environmental factors permit or facilitate the non-custodial grandparents' experience of investing resources in the grandchild's Christian school education? This question highlighted not only the experience but also the "dimensions, incidents, and people intimately connected with the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116). By exploring the environmental factors in contributing the grandparent resources, there will be a clearer understanding of how these factors affect the grandparent's ability to engage in this action and identify strengths and obstacles to the action. In addition, investigating these environmental factors will be important in gaining a clearer idea of the ease of offering the resources through structured opportunities in the school as opposed to more organic moments of investing in the grandchild in the Christian school setting (Allana et al., 2017; Chiu, 2013; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). Through gaining this knowledge, the study considered all the factors involved in offering the resources as well as the advantages and

challenges that may exist for the grandparent's implementation of the resources (Deprez, 2017; Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017).

Subquestion C is: How does the non-custodial grandparent's contribution of resources in the Christian school education setting impact the grandparent's meaning of being a grandparent? This question noted the personal impact of the phenomenon for the grandparent "to facilitate the obtaining of rich, vital, substantive descriptions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 116) of the experience. Since research indicates grandparents have had difficulty identifying their role as grandparent, it is important to have knowledge of the personal impact of being a grandparent that is made, if any, from the phenomenon (Beiner, Lowenstein, Worenklein, & Sauber, 2014; Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017).

Definitions

1. *Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)* is the organization that provides support and accreditation for Christian schools. These accreditations are important for academic and spiritual credibility in the Christian school community (ACSI, 2018).
2. *Grandparent resources in Christian school education* were defined as grandparents aiding their children by providing financial, physical, emotional, intellectual (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Chiu, 2013) and/or spiritual resources toward their grandchildren's Christian school education (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016).
3. *Generativity* is the counterpart of the maturity stage of ages 40-65 in Erikson's psychodynamic development of man. "Generativity then is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation" (Erikson, 1950, p. 267).

4. *Non-custodial grandparents* were defined as grandparents who “do not live with their grandchildren but who make their contributions through visits, childcare in their own or grandchild’s home, outings, holidays, or provision of other kinds of practical and psychosocial assistance” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 27).
5. *Resources* were defined as the attributes that are available to benefit another person or group (Deindl & Tieben, 2017).
6. *Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)* is an accrediting body for both public and private schools. The organization provides accreditation, which is important to ensure credibility to its stakeholders.
7. *Stagnation* is the counterpart of the maturity stage of ages 40-65 in Erikson’s stages of psychodynamic development. Erikson described stagnation as caused by an individual that decides not to take generative action and therefore turns inward to themselves defined as “a pervading sense of stagnation, boredom and interpersonal impoverishment” (Erikson, 1968, p. 138)

Summary

Grandparents are in a crucial time in their life where knowing they are making an impact and difference in others’ lives is important to their well-being (Erikson, 1950). Grandparents have valuable spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual resources to invest in others. Families that have decided to invest in Christian school education for their children may face difficulties in attaining the multilayered resources needed for the children’s education and could benefit from grandparents’ involvement. Research indicates the benefits for grandchildren, parents, and grandparents in having these resources implemented toward the family, yet little research has been conducted in the experiences of grandparents who have applied their resources

toward the Christian school setting (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Deprez, 2017).

This study examined the non-custodial grandparents' experiences in implementing resources in the Christian school context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this literature review was to extend the knowledge of the value and impact of grandparent resources specifically invested in the grandchild's Christian school education. This chapter will also address the problem for this study being that although grandparents in this stage of life need to explore ways to invest and create legacy for subsequent generations for their psychosocial development (Erikson, 1950), they may be confused about the role they should take and the avenues or methods they can use to make the multigenerational investment (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). One avenue grandparents could use as a way to invest in their grandchild is through involvement in their grandchild's Christian school education. With the Christian school education mission to educate the whole child—emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually (Chandler, 2015)—and partner with the parents by acknowledging them as the primary educators (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988), grandparents could have an avenue to strengthen the Christian school mission and impact subsequent generations. While educators encourage the active involvement of parents in the school setting (Dugan, 2009; Fan & Chen, 2001; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), the grandparent role for a large part may not be taken into account as part of the family educator role (Anderson, Sheppard, & Monden, 2018; Kenner et al, 2007; Ruby, Kenner, Jessel, Gregory, & Argu, 2007).

Research indicates grandparents have become more influential in a family's choice for Christian school education (ACSI, 2017), yet, no research has been conducted as to whether the grandparent's involvement extends past the choosing of the school. Grandparents' involvement in their grandchild's Christian school education could be a valuable avenue to invest in, but no

research has been conducted as to the meaning derived from the grandparent's contribution or involvement and their lived experiences nor of the multi-dimensional impact the grandparent resources could make in the Christian school education community. Chapter Two provides the theoretical framework for the study, the related literature of the various types of grandparent resources, the challenges grandparents face in using the resources, and grandparent involvement in the Christian school education setting. The chapter ends with a summary of the chapter's content.

Theoretical Framework

The prominent theory providing the theoretical framework for this study is Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. In 1950, Erikson introduced the eight stages of psychosocial development being "qualities which emerge from critical periods of development by which the individual demonstrates his ego at a given stage is strong enough to integrate the timetable of the organism with the structure of social institutions" (p. 146). These qualities are key conflicts that occurred in a specific period in an individual's lifespan that must be resolved (Stuart-Hamilton, 2014). The stages are as follows: Infancy (birth to 12 months): Trust versus Mistrust; Early Childhood (ages 1 to 3 years): Autonomy vs Shame, Doubt; Play Age (ages 3 to 6 years): Initiative versus Guilt; School Age (ages 6 to 12 years): Industry versus Inferiority; Adolescence (ages 12 to 18 years): Identity versus Role Confusion; Young Adulthood (ages 20 to 40 years): Intimacy versus Isolation; Maturity (ages 40 to 65 years): Generativity versus Stagnation; and Old Age (year 65 to end of life): Ego Integrity versus Despair (Erikson, 1950). The stage of development that is relevant to this study of grandparent development is Maturity: Generativity versus Stagnation.

“Generativity is itself a driving power in human organization” (Erikson, 1968, p. 139). It is similar to productivity or creativity, but “generativity is primarily concerned with establishing and guiding of the next generation” (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). While human beings may have a desire to inspire others, during the Maturity stage, this desire becomes central to personal development as the individual faces mortality and realizes the limitations of the person’s life (Erikson, 1950). Erikson (1950) highlighted this basic desire to make an impact beyond their own life and gain value from investing in others: “Mature man needs to be needed, and maturity needs guidance as well as encouragement from what has been produced and must be taken care of” (p. 267). The investment that is made into others causes a reciprocal benefit as both the mature individual and subsequent generations gain value from the experience. Erikson et al. (1986) expanded the generative interest to beyond middle age. Erikson posed the concept of “grand-generative function” referring to adults over the age of 65 continuing to find value in “the possibility of caring for the newest generation” (p. 91), resulting in more research in the area of generativity among grandparents (Bates, 2009; Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Moore, & Rosenthal, 2017; Serrat et al., 2018; Thiele & Whelan, 2008).

When individuals decide not to invest in others, both parties miss out on a life-affirming opportunity. When individuals choose not to take generative action, Erikson (1968) stated they turn inward in self-absorption, becoming self-indulgent and consumed with self-concern, and are described as a person with “a pervading sense of stagnation, boredom and interpersonal impoverishment” (p. 138). A lack of engaging and investing in others results in feeling “disconnected or uninvolved with their community and society as a whole; they may be self-absorbed for example with complaints of ageing or the need to appear young” causing the

individuals to have a “weaker sense of self, lower self-esteem, and/or compromised maturity” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 30).

While the primary psychosocial development for the age group that is 65 years and older is Ego Integrity versus Despair, Erikson’s later work (Erikson, 1982; Erikson et al., 1986) expanded the generative interest to be beyond middle age. Erikson (1982) posed the concept of “grand-generative function” (p. 63) referring to adults over the age of 65 continuing to find value in investing into younger generations through purposeful generative activities with children and grandchildren to maintain personal healthy development (Bates, 2009; Ochiltree, 2006; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). This study considered both the grand-generative function and their primary psychosocial development stage of Ego Integrity versus Despair.

The “establishing and guiding of the next generation” is a natural experience for individuals that are grandparents since subsequent generations are already established within the family and grandchildren would be the best recipient of the grandparent generative action (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). Several recent studies of non-custodial grandparents who invest time and energy into their grandchildren reveal higher role satisfaction and stronger feelings of the need for generativity in this period of their lives (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Thiele & Whelan, 2008). This generative action can take place through the offering of the emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual resources the grandparent has. In order for this development to be effective, the grandparent would need to explore avenues where personal investment is worthwhile and has the greatest impact.

The Christian school education setting provides an avenue for grandparents to offer all of their resources toward their grandchild’s whole child development—emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually (Chandler, 2015). Research indicates non-custodial grandparents

desire more opportunities; they can have greater contact with their grandchildren (Block, 2000; Condon, Corkindale, Luszcz, & Gamble, 2013; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). The grandparent and grandchild can benefit from the experience, as the grandparent is able to offer their resources in generative action (Coall & Hertwig, 2010; Reitzes & Mutran, 2004) and the grandchild is strengthened in all areas for personal development (Bates, 2009). Erikson (1968) heralded “organized human community” that is established to allow generations to support each other in “a set of proven methods, which enables each generation to meet the needs of the next in relative independence from personal differences and changing conditions” (p. 139). The secondary benefit of the grandparents’ investment of resources is the impact the investment can make on the family as a whole as well as all of the Christian school participants that are connected to the grandchild. The generational investment has the opportunity to expand out of the investment made toward the grandchild to impact the Christian school community. The personal development that is gained from a grandparent’s generative action causes a reciprocal benefit between the grandparent and all that receive the resources the grandparent offers.

Related Literature

While the research available in the area of grandparent resources being applied to a grandchild’s Christian school education is minimal, there is research of the topic of grandparents and the many resources grandparents possess that may have reciprocal benefits as well as the challenges in implementing these resources. There is also research on Christian school education and the reasons for choosing the Christian school option for the child and the benefits of family involvement within the school setting. While there is a lack of research of the connection between grandparents and Christian school education, the interest in expanding the scope of involvement to include grandparents as part of the family creating a multigenerational unit in this

context is valuable. Grandparents are a vital part of society, and consideration of the vast resources this demographic possesses should be examined more thoroughly.

Grandparent Demographics

Grandparents are currently one of the largest demographics in the United States. While not all older people will become grandparents, research estimates 70-80% of older people across cultures and nations will become grandparents (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017). The United States population also has an older profile with the nation's median age rising from 35.3 in 2000 to 37.9 in 2016 and people over 65 growing from "35.0 million in 2000, to 49.2 million in 2016, accounting for 12.4% and 15.2% of the total population, respectively" (United States Census Bureau, 2017). The Census Bureau states the number of grandparents has grown by 24% since 2001 with the United States having 69.5 million grandparents in 2014 with the median age of new grandmothers being age 50 and grandfathers being 54 (Jayson, 2017). The expectation is "that the global share of people aged over 60 that was 11.7 percent in 2013 is predicted to reach 21.7 percent by 2050, with more than 2 billion people" (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 2).

Grandparents have greater longevity, are healthier than their predecessors, and are more educated (Deprez, 2017; Friedman et al., 2008; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016; Ochiltree, 2006; Powell, 2014; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013). Older adults are also physically able to have longer work-life resulting in greater economic well-being and financial stability which can provide an increased time shared between generations (Beiner et al., 2014; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Velasco, & Lopez, 2017). Since the increase in life expectancy, the research needed for this demographic has changed as well. In the past, most of the literature on the subject of grandparents is related to health or dealing with end of life issues, but recent studies have focused on the "positive ageing" with studies considering a grandparent's well-being and quality

of life during this life period (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 1). One of the goals of this study is to add to the research available regarding grandparents being active and taking advantage of this period in their lives and the benefit to the grandparent, family members and society as a whole.

Grandparent Resources

Grandparents have an abundance of resources that can strengthen grandparents' well-being in knowing each grandparent has their unique gifts or resources to offer as well as providing valuable resources to the family and society. Grandparents can have a substantial impact on the family through their implementation of resources toward the family and specifically grandchildren. Because grandparents may have more resources available to invest in their grandchildren, the impact on the family could be substantial (Chiu, 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). Through the uniqueness of each grandparent's experience, knowledge, skill, and wisdom, the resources the grandparent can offer are spread across all aspects of life. The range of grandparent resources are emotional, intellectual, financial, and physical resources (Chiu, 2013), and for the Christian grandparent, there is the inclusion of spiritual resources (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). These grandparent resources can be offered in many ways in the grandparents' life that can have reciprocal benefits to the grandparent and the recipient of the resource. This study focuses specifically on the avenue of the grandchild's Christian school education context. The grandparent's ability to offer emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual resources coincides with the Christian school education mission to teach and develop the whole child (Chandler, 2015) and can be valuable to the grandparent, the grandchild, the parent, and the Christian school.

Emotional resources. Grandparents have lived long enough to have a broader and more mature outlook on life that can allow the grandparent to be an emotional support and a voice of

wisdom to subsequent generations (Barnett, Scaramella, Nepl, Ontai, & Rand, 2010; Bates, 2009). The emotional investment a grandparent makes in their family and specifically in their grandchildren can be beneficial to the psychological well-being of the grandchild and grandparent (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012) with close relationships even reducing depressive symptoms in grandchildren in single-parent families (Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014; Yorgason, Padilla-Walker & Jackson, 2011) as well as benefitting their family as a whole (Mitchell, 2008; Moorman & Stokes, 2014). By grandparents providing emotional support for their grandchildren, grandchildren can be more stable and able to focus more clearly on their studies and engaging in being a student (Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mansson, 2014), resulting in improved cognitive and socioemotional outcomes (Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018). Grandparents can provide ongoing emotional resources in family interactions with their grandchildren as well as application in the Christian school education setting.

The relationship between a grandparent and grandchild could be one of the most important relationships in the grandchild's life as one study's findings stated "the bond between grandparent and grandchild is more influential or emotionally powerful than any other bond except for that which exists between a child and the parent" (Beiner et al., 2014, p. 115). As grandparents relate to their grandchildren, they have a unique perspective in the grandchild's life as they are capable of seeing past the grandchild's current condition and may have a broader insight into their circumstances. Beiner et al. (2014) stated, "Loving grandparents can provide care, sustenance, stability, maturity, wisdom, nurturance, and guidance for their grandchildren" (p. 115). As grandparents transfer their knowledge and skills to their grandchildren, it provides mental stability and the ability for grandchildren to be themselves and try new things (Chiu,

2013; Maijala et al., 2013). The relationship is of “particular importance because the quality of grandparent to grandchild relationships may impact the grandchildren’s development and mental well-being” (Mansson, 2013, p. 57).

Grandparents can be a key factor in giving emotional stability during difficult familial times as grandparents have a unique opportunity to speak into the grandchild’s life (Barnett et al., 2010; Deblaquiere, Moloney & Weston, 2012; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Flouri, Buchanan, Tan, Griggs & Attar-Schwartz, 2010) as the child may feel more open (Bridges, Roe, Dunn, & O’Conner, 2007; Henderson, Hayslip, Sanders, & Louden, 2009; Smith, 2005; Yorgason et al., 2011) to “reveal themselves emotionally and be reassured that they are loved” by their grandparent (Deprez, 2017, p. 114). This relationship is not only beneficial to the grandchild but is reciprocal as grandparents have “a sense of purpose, and a special wisdom and maturity that comes with parenting the second time around” (Cleary et al., 2017, p. 180). Researchers have found grandparents who enjoy their role as grandparent feel younger through being around younger people, and the social activity gives the grandparent a reason for living (Kaufman & Elder, 2003; Shlomo, Taubman-Ben-Ari, Findler, Sivan & Dolizki, 2010). Grandparents experience satisfaction in being able to be a reinforcement in a socialization role in the grandchild’s life resulting in a successful ageing component in the grandparent’s life (Arpino & Bordone, 2014; Bates, 2009; Noriega, Velasco, & Lopez, 2017). Recent research has noted the need for future research in the potential biological changes of heightened oxytocin levels that could take place in light of the positive social bonding between the grandparent and the grandchild (Huffmeijer, van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2013). Elevated oxytocin levels could affect social bonding, stress regulation, and overall mental health which would be a

great benefit to the grandparents' age demographic (Huffmeijer et al., 2013; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Olff et al., 2013).

The resources grandparents offer to their grandchildren branch out from the grandchild's well-being to the grandchild's interaction with their peers. The emotional resource grandparents offer can affect the grandchild's social interaction and confidence (Flouri et al., 2010). When grandparents are esteemed as the appropriate role model in the grandchild's life, the opportunity for cultural knowledge, skills, and values to be transmitted into the grandchild's life is possible (Beiner et al, 2014; Bernal & Anuncibay, 2008; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Noriega, Velasco, & Lopez, 2017; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014) instead of a dependency on society to provide these resources (Chiu, 2013; Maijala et al, 2013; Mitchell, 2008). Through the grandparent investment of consistent personal time and communication, research indicates a close bond is created with the grandchild (Fingerman, 2004; Fuller-Thompson & Minkler, 2001; St. George & Fletcher, 2014) giving the grandchild a greater sense of personal meaning and belonging, which can result in healthier identity and stronger social relationships (Chandler, 2015; Cleary et al., 2017; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mansson, 2014; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014).

The emotional bond grandparents create is fostered through their investment of time and in offering their personal life (Barnett et al., 2010; Breheny, Stephens, & Spilsbury, 2013; Coall & Hertwig, 2010; Smorti et al., 2012). Grandparents can build community and commonality as they transfer their knowledge and skills through the art of storytelling. Grandparents can build family heritage and give familial value as the stories represent the family's character, virtues, and values (Allana et al. 2017; Bates, 2009; Deprez, 2017; Goodsell, Bates, & Behnke, 2011; Maijala et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al.,

2017; Smith, 2005; Stelle, Fruhauf, Orel, & Landry-Meyer, 2010; Taylor & Bates, 2014; Thompson et al., 2009). Storytelling is a unique technique that can be used in the Christian school setting that gives value to the grandparent in being able to share their lives with others (Goodsell et al., 2005; Thompson et al., 2009) while grandchildren and student peers receive a new perspective. Deprez (2017) found “stories naturally connect generations, further mentioning that good storytelling allows for a younger generation to grow roots, as well as meeting the needs of senior citizens to leave legacies” (p. 113).

From an educational perspective, there is benefit in grandparents sharing their experiences, knowledge, and values (Bates, 2009; Noriega, Velasco & Lopez, 2017; Smorti et al., 2012) in that they can “bridge the abyss between the facts of history books and the news of today,” are able to be living stories of Biblical truths, and “transmit the importance of work ethic, spiritual values, and family heritage” (Deprez, 2017, pp. 112-113). These lived experiences can build a commonality across the generations and provide an educational and spiritual platform for the Christian school to reinforce value and quality of life to the grandparent’s life. In addition to the bridge in historical knowledge is the bridge to generational connection. By having intentional intergenerational activities, the younger age group benefits from improved self-perception and lower behavior difficulties (Boger & Mercer, 2017), and relationally has a better understanding of the value and commonality of the older generation, learns to be more open to investing in intergenerational relationships, and has a more realistic idea of old age (Thompson & Weaver, 2016).

Grandparents’ emotional resources strengthen the relationships between the grandparent and grandchild, provide companionship with stability and well-being for both grandparent and

grandchild (Breheny et al., 2013), and provide the opportunity for grandparents to invest themselves in the grandchild's life through the Christian school education setting.

Intellectual resources. Grandparents have valuable intellectual resources to offer that can have reciprocal benefits as well as challenge the grandparents' own intellectual acuity to embrace new academic knowledge. Although the parents hold the primary responsibility as educators in the grandchild's life (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Van Brummelen, 1988), grandparents can strengthen and support their grandchildren's intellectual and educational aspirations on a significant level, especially in low income families (Anderson et al., 2018). Recent studies indicate frequency of grandparent-grandchild interaction is associated with grandchildren's higher test scores (Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2016) as well as grandparents affecting specific academic areas with grandfathers' academic performance in math and language influencing grandchildren's academic success but grandmothers' academic performance in language skills only influencing granddaughters' academic success (Modin et al., 2013). Grandparents' investment in the academic success of their grandchildren starts with family interactions that reinforce mental stability and the importance of education. Grandparents who invest in establishing a strong mental and emotional stability for their grandchildren allow them to be able to focus more clearly on their academic achievement and goals (Chiu, 2013; Modin et al., 2013; Yorgason et al., 2011). Research finds grandparents can transmit the importance of education in the family legacy through stories, communication of academic strategies or practices, and celebrations of academic success (Chiu, 2013; Modin et al., 2013).

Grandparent's direct participation in their grandchild's academic activities strengthens the message of the importance of education of being a lifelong learner and creates a mutual

learning dynamic in the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Kenner et al., 2007). Since research indicates non-custodial grandparents desire more opportunities where they can have greater contact with their grandchildren (Block, 2000; Condon et al., 2013; St. George & Fletcher, 2014), the Christian school should consider new ways to incorporate grandparents into the academic aspects of the curriculum. Research describes grandparents' knowledge as "funds of knowledge" (Kenner et al., 2007; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Ruby et al., 2007) which can span beyond the academic level to home-based life skills, such as "cooking, gardening, story-telling, reading and shopping" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 130). This opportunity would allow grandparents to share their talent and create a legacy with their grandchild as well as other classmates (Kenner et al., 2007; Triadó et al., 2014). Grandparents can offer practical help in assistance with homework and providing a high-quality learning environment as well as attend the child's academic activities (Chiu, 2013; Kazimi, Sadruddin, & Khowaja, 2016). The grandparent could benefit personally from their involvement in their grandchild's academic activities by expanding intellectually and socially through time spent with their grandchild (Arpino & Bordone, 2014) and gain a better knowledge of new trends in school subjects and use of technology (Kenner et al., 2007; Maijala et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008). Research suggests "spending a moderate amount of time with grandchildren may increase brain function and memory, possibly even delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of cognitive decline" (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 32). The grandparent's investment of time and openness to a reciprocal learning experience with the grandchild as well as taking on a teaching role to share their talents could foster a greater sense of purpose and meaning for the grandparent (Bates, 2009; Mitchell, 2008; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; St. George & Fletcher, 2014; Strom & Strom, 2017).

There are benefits of parental involvement in a child's academic life (Wilder, 2014) and there is a "growing international body of literature exploring general benefits of intergenerational learning between grandparents, grandchildren, and school," but there is limited research on the relationship between the grandparent and school in the "support that grandparents can play in children's learning and wider family stability" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 129). Further research is needed to determine if the same benefits are extended to children when grandparents are involved. Academic support and practical opportunities to teach home-based life skills is an area that could be strengthened through the school's curriculum or individual school activities to include grandparent involvement when possible purposely (Kenner et al., 2007; Thompson & Weaver, 2016). Currently, there is no research on the grandparent involvement in their grandchildren's academic activities in Christian school education and the effect of involvement. Research is needed regarding the effect of grandparent involvement in their grandchild's academic aspects, specifically in Christian school education.

Physical/material resources. Grandparents can meet many of the practical needs that are unique to each family by implementing valuable physical and material resources in offering material goods, financial support, and their ability to simply be in their family's lives (Barnett et al, 2010; Bernal & Anuncibay, 2008; Dunifon et al., 2018; Kenner et al, 2007; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013; Smith, 2005). Grandparents are actively involved in their grandchildren's lives with "50% of U.S. grandparents provide financial assistance to their adult children and grandchildren, 39% provide grandchild care, and 31% help with errands, housework, and home repairs" (Meyer & Kandic, 2017, p. 1). Physical resources are determined by the health and well-being of the grandparent and their ability to be physically present (Maijala et al., 2013), which has high benefits to the grandchild and the family. Having a physical presence is what

research describes as “being there” (Breheny et al., 2013; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; St. George & Fletcher, 2014) which is “physically helps establish family feelings, love and belongingness across the generations, feelings that increase the collective will to avoid or resolve conflicts” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 32). Financial and material resources may also be at the grandparents’ disposal as grandparents have extended their work-life due to an increase in longevity, the financial and material resources at their disposal may have also increased (Dunifon et al., 2018; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013). Grandparents who are wanting to make a practical difference in their extended family’s lives may have greater means to partner in the children’s mission to offer a Biblical education for their grandchildren through Christian school education. These resources can be more than just financial support as grandparents consider all the resources that are available for them to offer.

The implementation of the grandparent’s physical resources in being present in the grandchild’s life can have benefit for the family as a whole. As grandparents dedicate time for their grandchildren, parents can feel they have reinforcement in raising their children (Allana et al., 2017; Dunifon, 2013; Friedman et al., 2008; Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018), as grandparents can be

much more focused; the grandparent is able to spend quality, uninterrupted time with a grandchild, thus making a grandchild feel cared for in ways parents cannot. They have time to listen, to play games, to encourage and to be “spiritual directors” of the young.

(Deprez, 2017, p.114)

Grandparents act as a safety net by assisting in the hectic daily routine by offering informal childcare by assisting in summer childcare, extra-curricular activities, and day-to-day activities which allows the parents to work longer hours and remain focused on their vocation (Allana et

al., 2017; Breheny et al., 2013; Dunifon et al., 2018; Fuller-Thompson & Minkler, 2001; Mitchell, 2008; Ochiltree, 2006; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013; Smith, 2005; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). Studies have found grandparents who provide moderate childcare for their grandchildren have a stronger sense of generativity and satisfaction (St. George & Fletcher, 2014), higher quality of life, a sense of purpose (Silverstein & Giarrusso, 2013) and enhanced longevity (Hilbrand, Coall, Meyer, Gerstorf, & Hertwig, 2017), feel more youthful (Bordone & Arpino, 2016), and have better health with less depressive symptoms and better cognition (Arpino & Bordone, 2014; Bates & Taylor, 2012; Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Trevisan et al., 2018). Engagement in childcare can increase feelings of self-esteem and well-being (Arpino, Bordone, & Balbo, 2018), preserve cognitive function reducing the risk of dementia (Trevisan, 2018), and improve mental health (Condon, Luszcz & McKee, 2018). The amount and intensity of the childcare is a concern with research indicating extensive childcare can be a strain on a grandparent which can result in stress, negative cognitive functioning, and a decrease in health (Arpino & Bordone, 2014; Burn, Henderson, Ames, Desserstein, & Szoeki, 2014; Burn & Szoeki, 2015; Hilbrand et al., 2017; Ochiltree, 2006) and can have a negative effect on the number of additional social activities in which grandmothers engage (Arpino & Bordone, 2017). Other studies indicated these negative aspects could result specifically from the perception of care-related difficulties (Triadó et al., 2014). Parents and grandparents have to find a balance of what is beneficial for both parties to maintain a healthy relationship.

In the United States, grandparents are taking more of a role in childcare to aid in family dynamics. A report showed “about 60 percent of US grandparents who had a grandchild under the age of 13 and lived within an hour’s travel from them, were looking after their grandchildren while parents worked or studied” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 3). Informal childcare support is

specifically valued by single-parent homes and parents who work non-traditional hours (Mitchell, 2008; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007) and at times when normal childcare is canceled, or sickness, holidays, or unexpected events happen (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, 2008). Research indicates grandparents have become more involved in childcare due to parent work schedules and an increase in married women's labor participation (Bol & Kalmijn, 2016; Condon et al., 2013; Fuller-Thompson & Minkler) and are dedicated enough to rearrange their work schedules and take their own vacation and sick days to care for their grandchildren (Meyer & Kandic, 2017). Childcare is most needed in the preschool years, but a recent study indicated grandparents continue to provide childcare after grandchildren start school, spending on "average almost 13 hours a week with the child, with about half of that in active participation in the child's activities" (Dunifon et al., 2018, p. 764).

Erikson (1950) noted the benefit of this reciprocal relationship in the family as an "organized human community...that attempts to establish a set of proven methods...which enables each generation to meet the needs of the next in relative independence from personal differences and changing conditions" (Erikson, 1968, p. 139). The result could be a spiritual and practical fortification for the family as a whole when the parents embrace and encourage the involvement of the grandparent in the grandchild's Christian school education activities.

In addition, parents of children in Christian schools may be able to consider another way to finance their child's Christian education. Grandparents are already directing money toward their grandchildren, estimated in the billions in the United States alone by helping with their grandchildren's school fees, clothing, and other items (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013). Grandparents may be more willing to provide financial help to parents (Bates &

Goodsell, 2013; Chiteji, 2010; MaloneBeach, Hakoyama, & Arnold, 2018; Modin et al., 2013; Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018) “to help sustain and/or educate the grandchildren” (Beiner et al., 2014, p. 115), which could be a benefit to the grandchild’s academic success.

Recent studies indicate there is an association between grandchildren who received financial support from grandparents and the grandchild’s financial achievement (Pfeffer & Killewald, 2018), higher academic test scores, and fewer problems compared to grandchildren that did not receive any financial support (Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018). Grandparents may also provide educational resources to “create a rich learning environment for their grandchildren” (Chiu, 2013, p. 333), further transmitting the importance of education to the family (Bates, 2009; Chiu, 2013; Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013). These grandparent investments help “facilitate their grandchildren’s educational, occupational, and financial successes, through human and financial capital in various forms” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 120).

Research indicates some grandparents provide financial assistance based on the relationship with the parents (Muller & Litwin, 2011, Yorgason et al., 2011) and their financial needs. Others prefer to pass on their children’s inheritance while they are still living, and while it will be most beneficial to their children. Some grandparents consider a financial investment in a grandchild’s religious activities a moral responsibility to ensure the academic and/or spiritual integrity of the family (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016). Since Christian school education requires a financial investment of paying tuition for the private school, grandparents who have a strong conviction towards education with a Biblical worldview may consider assisting the family in this cost. By inviting the grandparent to be a part of the Christian school mission, the grandparent might be able to contribute the resources they have and become part of

the Christian school community further strengthening the bond between the grandparent and grandchild. In a recent research interview by Mulvihill (2016), a Christian grandparent stated,

I think it would be more important for a grandparent to help provide a Christian school education for the grandchildren while the grandparents are alive than it would be to give them an inheritance maybe after they have gone through the public school system and secular college and not have that influence while you were alive. I think it is more important to spend the money on them during their formative years to help them grow spiritually than to leave them money. (p. 110)

This desire for grandparents to influence the choice for Christian education for their grandchildren was confirmed in a recent study conducted for ACSI. ACSI found grandparents have an increased influence on a parent's decision to enroll their grandchild in Christian school from past generations. Within Millennials, ages 18 to 31, 22% of parents stated the grandparent was a factor in their decision which was a rise from 10% for Gen-Xers, ages 32 to 50 (ACSI, 2017). The study did not indicate the grandparent was assisting in the tuition payment for the grandchild but did point to specific factors, such as increased grandparent life expectancy, physical vitality, and stronger monetary stability, could be relevant to the increase in influence which are also confirmed in previous research given (ACSI, 2017; Bengston, 2001; Deindl & Tieben, 2017). In conjunction to these factors, the millennial "generation is less economically independent at this point in their lives than previous generations, and their parents may be helping the family to a significant extent" (ACSI, 2017, p. 51). The parent's openness to assistance in the decision for Christian education as well as monetary assistance for the tuition payment allows the grandparent to invest and become a more vital part of the grandchild's life in the Christian school context.

Since grandparents may be more involved in the daily lives of their grandchildren through school drop-off and pickup, assisting with homework as well as financial assistance, Christian schools may need to consider an appropriate way to include grandparents in the school's communication with the family. "For teachers, grandparents may be a first or, at least, significant point of contact with a child's home life, providing important information about their current home situation and learning" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 129).

There is a gap in the literature of how grandparents have participated in the physical and financial investment of their grandchildren's Christian school education. Because of the increase in the influence grandparents have in the choice for Christian school education (ACSI, 2017), further research is needed as to the extent of the grandparent involvement beyond the choosing of the Christian school education. The furthering of this study will provide information Christian school administrators need to understand the potential investment and buy-in grandparents can make in their schools.

Spiritual resources. A resource that is absent from the secular list of what grandparents have to offer is the spiritual resource. Most secular views couple this role into the cultural or social aspect of the grandparent. From a Christian perspective, the spiritual investment grandparents can make in their grandchildren is the most important since it is eternal. All of the resources that have been mentioned only have temporary value in light of the spiritual foundation the grandparent can give. The spiritual value a grandparent can impart is affirmed and established through Scripture referring to a grandparent as a "forefather," "father's father," "God of your fathers" and grandchildren as "children's children" (Goodrick & Kohlenberger, 1999). The Biblical instruction in Scripture for grandparents to be spiritually active in the family unit is multilayered: to be a transmitter of heritage or heritage builder; to instruct, teach, and counsel in

truth and righteous living; to leave an inheritance; and, live a godly life as an example and heritage to the family (Allen & Oschwald, 2008; Bates, 2009; Bengston, Copen, Putney, & Silverstein, 2009; Mulvihill, 2016; Psalms 71:17-18; 2 Timothy 1:5; Deuteronomy 4:9; Genesis 31:55). The integral role of grandparents is not only emphasized in the Christian faith but other religions as well. Research indicates grandparents understand the importance of transmitting the values of benevolence, justice, and service to others to future generations (Bengston et al., 2009; King & Elder, 1999; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Taylor & Bates, 2014). Even in religions such as Judaism (Geffen, 2014), Islam (Allana et al., 2017) and latter day saints (Taylor & Bates, 2014), the grandparents are revered as the “interpreters of religious ideology and role models of faith” (Allana et al., 2017, p. 240).

Recent research notes the change in multigenerational impact as “grandparents positively influenced their grandchildren’s religious values, although the impact of these values has declined in recent decades” (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017, p. 1228). Some research suggests a potential reason could be ambiguity as to the spiritual role of the grandparent in the family (Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Many Christian grandparents have not seen their role in the family as a Biblical instruction but instead simply a spiritual desire to see their children and grandchildren follow Christ. Religious grandparents use the disciplines of the faith such as prayer and spiritual reading to be evident to their grandchildren and make it a point to tell their grandchildren they pray for them (Allana et al., 2017; Allen & Oschwald, 2008; Bengston et al., 2009; Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016; Taylor & Bates, 2014). Research implies grandparents who have a full understanding of their role as a transmitter of spiritual heritage engage in a stronger mentoring or discipleship role (Allen & Oschwald, 2008; Bates, 2009; Bengston et al., 2009; Geffen, 2014; King & Elder, 1999; Taylor & Bates, 2014; Van der Walt,

2017), “rooting the child in spirituality as a way of being” (Allana et al., 2017, p. 252). In fact, research suggests religious grandparents are generally more involved with their grandchildren with greater consistency due to their desire to pass on their spiritual beliefs and share in religious practices together (Bengston et al., 2009; Dunifon, 2013; Geffen, 2014; King & Elder, 1999; Taylor & Bates, 2014).

This model of intergenerational mentoring and discipleship has the potential of increasing the spiritual formation in the child’s life. Spiritual formation is defined as “the life-long transformational self-analytic and relational process where individuals become more like Christ through the Holy Spirit and Biblical guidance resulting in a relationship with God” (Horan, 2017, p. 56). This spiritual formation is usually not produced in solidarity, but through relationships and interactions with others that have a spiritual foundation, such as grandparents. This discipleship model is akin to Vygotsky’s (1978) principle of the zone of proximal development in “participating in a task with more experienced members of their culture who are farther ahead developmentally” (Clark, 2013, p. 189). Through grandparents taking an active discipling role in grandchildren’s lives, grandparents can attest to the truths of God and how their relationship with God has formed in their lives (Allen & Oswald, 2009; Bengston et al., 2009; King & Elder, 1999; Taylor & Bates, 2014). The discipling role can have an impact in the grandchild’s life as “children, therefore, are able to deepen their faith by seeing how older generations have experienced their faith journey” (Deprez, 2017, p.112).

The benefits of this spiritual formation in grandchildren are significant (Allana et al., 2017; Deprez, 2017) as “spiritual formation is increasingly recognized by policymakers, researchers, and psychologists as a significant component of human development” (Horan, 2017, p. 61). The results in young people are that they are “more likely to participate in community

service and extra-curricular activities, exhibit prosocial behaviors, improved self-esteem, self-control, and academic achievement with fewer risk behaviors” (Horan, 2017, p. 57). The investment made by grandparents in the formative years of a child’s life can produce benefits throughout the grandchild’s life (Allana et al., 2017; Deprez, 2017).

The lack of clarity of the grandparent role and the deficiency of active spiritual influence in the family has been a disadvantage to the current generation (Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016; Van der Walt, 2017) defined as the millennial age. “Young people born from 1980 to 2000, often referred to as millennials, comprise the largest and most diverse generation to date and statistically are the least concerned with spiritual matters” (Horan, 2017, p. 56). Millennials have access to a technological world their grandparents could only dream of having, yet the information age has made millennials skeptical of many religious organizations and produced an exodus from churches and established religions (Barna Group, 2015; Grey Matter Research & Consulting, 2010). In fact, a study indicated the spiritual influence of the grandparent-grandchild mentoring relationship has changed from an impact of the grandchild’s spiritual practices from 30 years ago to more of an impact on the grandchild’s spiritual beliefs in the year 2000 (Bengston et al., 2009). For the millennial young person, the mentoring model is most significant. Millennials are looking for more than a program or an event to attend; they are craving genuine godly relationships. Millennials are relational and interpret spiritual truth through relationship. They have a level of respect for older generations and like to have intergenerational relationships with mentors who understand their doubts and concerns (Kinnaman, 2011; Rainer & Rainer, 2011; Raymo & Raymo, 2014), producing a stronger and higher quality grandparent-grandchild relationship (MaloneBeach et al., 2018).

The Christian school education model is an avenue where grandparents could be more involved and could transform not only the grandchild but the Christian school, also. In considering action points to facilitate spiritual mentorship, “practitioners should become more aware of the breadth and depth of these often ignored kin ties and include grandparents in their programming, school, and spiritual family outreach efforts” (Geffen, 2014, p. 60). As Christian schools are always in need of volunteers to assist in the daily activities, such as reading to children or helping with lunch duties as well as big events throughout the school year, grandparents might consider how they can be active as a volunteer for these opportunities (Mitchell, 2008). Christian schools might also consider expanding the curriculum to include home-based life skills that could include grandparents in sharing their funds of knowledge and skill or intergenerational projects (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Kenner et al., 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Ruby et al, 2007; Thompson & Weaver, 2016). These integrated curriculum activities could blend home life with academic life, facilitating the spiritual development in the child as they begin to sense the “natural, material and physical world they live in, reflecting on their part in it, and exploring questions such as when does life start and where does life come from?” (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, p. 8). Grandparents may need to seek out opportunities within the school programs or initiatives they could use to strengthen spiritual formation through mentorship with their grandchildren. The relationships can naturally be formed as the grandparent is an active part of school life. There has never been a more crucial time for grandparents to understand the reciprocal benefit of investing in subsequent generations and for churches and Christian schools to affirm their Biblical instruction in their grandparenting role.

Barriers to the Use of Grandparent Resources

The research is clear on the abundance of resources grandparents have to offer their grandchildren. Unfortunately, grandparents may encounter challenges first in the realization they have these resources and secondly, in the practical application and logistical dynamics in offering these resources to the family, the grandchildren, and the Christian school context (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Personal, familial, and societal challenges in the definition of the grandparent role (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017) as well as educational (Maijala et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008) and even geographic challenges (Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016) can deter a grandparent from making a significant investment in their grandchild's life.

Grandparent role confusion. As a grandparent transitions from being a parent to the new role of grandparent, there can be difficulty in defining a norm for the role of the grandparent causing the role to be complex (Beiner et al., 2014; Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004; Stelle et al., 2010). Grandparents may also have conflicting messages coming from society (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004), the family unit (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017), and even personal internal dialogue (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Research indicates grandparents who have a clearly defined grandparent identity and a clearly defined intergenerational family identity are negatively related to depressive symptoms (Muller & Litwin, 2011) and positively related to self-esteem (Reitzes & Mutran, 2004; Shlomo et al., 2010). This lack of clarity may lead to grandparents missing an opportunity for greater quality of life, personal growth, and greater purpose during this phase in their lives.

Personal challenges. While the increase of life expectancy and resources in the grandparents' lives may be a reality, at the same time, grandparents may not understand they are valuable to subsequent generations and may succumb to an identity crisis in understanding their role in this phase of their lives and their role in the family (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). Many of the traditional family models do not fit the 21st-century lifestyle, leaving families with an internal conflict of "what their family is" and "what it ought to be" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 126). Some grandparents expressed a need for role models since the "socializing styles that were used in the past are no longer useful, and they do not know how to develop their role as grandparents" (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017, p. 1232). Amidst the confusion of the grandparent role is the lack of knowledge of the personal benefit that can be gained by investing in subsequent generations. Erikson (1950) addressed this psychological dynamic as the seventh stage in the psychosocial development called Generative versus Stagnation. The opportunity is available many times to make the impact on subsequent generations which is primary in this phase of life and known as Generativity, yet at times the opportunity is not realized or pursued which can lead to Stagnation. Erikson (1963) explained the dichotomy as "Generativity, then, is primarily the concern in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are individuals who, through misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to their own offspring" (p. 267).

The confusion of the grandparent role has robbed grandparents of quality of life and rich relationships that could benefit grandparents as they age. Studies have found grandparents who are actively engaged in their grandchild's life experience a greater sense of meaning, lower stress, and higher self-esteem (Park, 2018; Young & Denson, 2014). The relationship is reciprocal as both grandparent and grandchild give and receive affection and respect, resulting in

a sense of purpose for the grandparent (Burn et al., 2014; Cleary et al., 2017; Mansson, 2014; Park, 2018). As the grandparent is satisfied with the grandparent role, the grandparent has greater meaning, centrality, and self-esteem as a result (Maijala et al., 2013; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004).

The influence grandparents have is more than just developing well-being for the grandparent and grandchild, but for the Christian, it is making an eternal impact through spiritual discipleship. The decision to engage in the Biblical model of discipleship and take the responsibility of a grandparent is a personal decision. A study conducted by Maijala et al. (2013) found

the way a grandparent will use his or her resources manifests itself in the grandparent's role and dedication to it. How the grandparent adopts the changes introduced by grandparenthood ... means how ready the grandparent is to accept the role and changes.
(p. 637)

The decision to be spiritually active in grandchildren's lives is a conviction each grandparent has to embrace. The church and Christian school education has the opportunity to instruct, encourage, and affirm the Biblical role of grandparents by providing opportunities for grandparent to grandchild interactions and showing the benefits of these relationships.

Societal challenges. Another factor in the role confusion is the changing perceptions of the relationship between the generations and a cultural ageism attitude (Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016; Thompson & Weaver, 2016). Research has indicated the literary portrayal of the grandparent role found in older books and even television has a standard depiction of being a grey-haired, old-fashioned, and aged person in their 70s or 80s with little updated to more modern depictions (Binet & Carter, 2013; Crawford & Bhattacharya, 2014; Meyer & Kandic,

2017; Ochiltree, 2006; Smith, 2005; Thompson & Weaver, 2016). “These stereotypes of ageing do not fit the reality of today’s grandparents’ lives, nor do they reflect how grandchildren interact with their grandparents” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 4).

These cultural depictions are misaligned with the modern grandparent and can marginalize the value of grandparenting and cause confusion as to their personal mission (Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004; Ruby et al., 2007; Stelle et al., 2010). At a time when grandparents possess extra time to invest in family and grandparent to grandchild relationships, research indicates the marginalized older generation invests in their own personal and professional interests and may spend their resources on themselves through their retirement years (Gratton & Haber, 1996; Mulvihill, 2016). Through Erikson’s (1986) expansion of the stage of the psychosocial development stage of Generativity into grand-generativity, the retirement age demographic can find value and purpose in investing in the younger generation. This lack of intergenerational engagement in society causes negative attitudes and misconceptions of this age group (Block, 2000; Thompson & Weaver, 2016). While these actions may seem beneficial to the grandparent in self-satisfaction, Erikson (1950) indicated the lack of action toward investment in subsequent generations could cause Stagnation in the individual’s life. Stagnation is described as when a person in this age range turns inward with the resources the person possesses instead of outward. This response leads to self-absorption and a sense of “boredom and interpersonal impoverishment” (Erikson, 1968, p. 138). Historically, this option of investing in one’s self instead of into subsequent generations was reinforced when retirement, Social Security, private pension plans, and the term “golden years” was introduced into society (Gatton & Haber, 1996). The systems that were set up to protect the elderly and their financial future turned into an opportunity to complete their working years and look forward to personal

satisfaction and leisure (Gatton & Haber, 1996; Mulvihill, 2016). While this opportunity is a great reward for a life of vocational service to the community, the complete emersion into a lifestyle of self-indulgence negates the psychosocial development needed at this stage in life and sends a confusing message of what creates true happiness and well-being in this age group.

Some grandparents understand the value of making the generational investment, but face challenges in finding quality time with their grandchildren as each has their own work/school life and their own personal interest (Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). The result of these challenges can be grandparents and grandchildren miss out on an “invaluable, enriching, and impactful relationship” (Allana et al., 2017, p. 255) and the grandparent investment is outsourced as the family looks to society for needed advice and support (Mulvihill, 2016). Finding a balance in the grandparents’ lives of personal commitments and family commitments is important to maintain differentiation in the individual and be a positive impact on the grandchild (Bowen, 1978).

Familial challenges. Another concern in grandparents making a more concerted effort to invest in their family’s lives is the potential shift in the intergenerational relationships in the family. While research indicates grandparents remain an integral part of family life (Mitchell, 2008), there can be difficulty in defining the grandparent role in the family which can result in an unhealthy balance for all parties (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). The definition of the grandparent is created not only from the grandparent’s view of their role but also the expectation the parent has in the grandparent role (Breheny et al., 2013; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Fingerman, 2004; MaloneBeach et al., 2018; Ochiltree, 2006; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2009; Sims & Rofail, 2013; Stelle et al, 2010; Thompson & Weaver, 2016; Yorgason, & Gustafson, 2014). Parents become the “gatekeepers and mediate the amount of contact and the quality of the relationship

between grandparents and grandchildren” (Reitzes, & Mutran, 2009, p. 214). This mediation can also affect how the grandparent defines their role (Meyer & Kandic, 2017; Ochiltree, 2006) which can lead to three categories of imbalance for grandparent roles: distant, substitute, and replacement.

Distant grandparent roles can be a factor in the American family unit as American families are more of an independent nuclear family. This dynamic is different from other parts of the world, such as in Asian countries where the extended family remains attached to parents throughout their lifetime (Kazimi et al., 2016; Mulvihill, 2016). Many times, American grandparents are hesitant to invest in the relationships as they do not want to interfere with the family dynamic, be judged as meddling, or deal with challenges that may exist in differences in child rearing principles or opinions (Breheny et al., 2013; Geffen, 2014; Maijala et al., 2013; MaloneBeach et al., 2018; Mulvihill, 2016; Sims & Rofail, 2013). The grandparent remains distant, so they do not interfere or cause conflict in the family.

A substitute grandparent role is when the grandparent is welcomed to be part of the family to meet the needs of the family but is adopted as an equal substitution and takes on all of the responsibilities of the parent in the parent’s absence due to work or other responsibilities (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Sims & Rofail, 2013; Triadó et al., 2014). Instead of the grandparent being secondary support, the parenting role causes conflict for the grandparent in feelings of “tiredness, overloading or lack of personal time, stress, fatigue and burden” (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017, p. 1232). One grandparent described the difference as “those who act as servants, and those, who help parents carry out their responsibilities properly” (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017, p. 1232) or as a “slave grandmother” (Triadó et al., 2014, p. 115). Due to the imbalance in the relationship, the strength of the relationship is based on the needs of the family

which can result in an end in the relationship when there is no physical need for the grandparents' assistance (Sims & Rofail, 2013).

The most evasive grandparent role is the replacement role where the grandparent assumes the parental role in the family. Many times, difficulties in the primary family unit such as divorce, addiction, teenage pregnancy, mental health issues, etc., lead to greater involvement for grandparents in the family unit and at times result in the grandparents taking over the parental role in replacement or assuming guardianship (Barnett et al, 2010; Bates, 2009; Bridges et al., 2007; Henderson et al, 2009; Kazimi et al., 2016; King & Elder, 1999; Mansson, 2013; Mitchell, 2008; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Ochiltrie, 2006; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007). As the grandparent becomes the primary caregiver, the role of grandparent is blended with parenting responsibilities. Because of the nature of this new blended relationship, the primary relationship of the grandparent is eclipsed as the parenting role becomes primary (Mansson, 2013) which can lead to increased risk of depression, anxiety, and other negative psychosocial outcomes (Condon et al., 2013; Musil et al., 2017). The transition from choosing to be a grandparent to having an obligation to be a primary caregiver can result in a "sense of obligation with a heavy social, financial, and/or emotional burden with real personal cost for some grandparents" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 127). This dynamic is a prevalent circumstance, and there is much research regarding the topic of a grandparent as a parent that is beyond the scope of this study. The area of non-custodial grandparents is a much more common dynamic yet has a smaller number of focused studies (Dunifon, 2013; Muller & Litwin, 2011). This study will focus solely on non-custodial grandparents being defined as grandparents who "do not live with their grandchildren but who make their contributions through visits, childcare in their own or grandchild's home, outings, holidays, or provision of other kinds of practical and psychosocial assistance" (Moore &

Rosenthal, 2017, p. 27). This choice will allow the study to focus on grandparents who can keep their identity as grandparent intact and are creating their role as a grandparent in the family unit.

Bowen's (1978) family systems theory addressed this need for balance in the relationship in his identification of the need for grandparents to have a strong differentiation of self. Grandparents need a clear identity within themselves as a "distinctly separate organism while remaining in intimate connection with others and its environment" (Regina, 2011, p. 17). Each of these types of roles can be overbalanced and could have "important implications in grandparents' own lives, such as giving up paid work opportunities, the extra expenditure that can incur and the added caring burden" (Mitchell, 2008, p. 127). The family has to work to understand and establish both the boundaries and opportunities grandparents have in being distinct yet an important part of the family unit. Due to the varying personalities and the lack of clarity in the grandparent role, the expectation is this study will reveal many aspects of the confusion of the role of the grandparent and the struggle for grandparents to have the personal differentiation to draw boundaries of their contribution to the family.

In addition to the general confusion of a grandparent's role, the Christian family may not have a clear understanding of the spiritual investment grandparents can have in the family. In a recent study, when evangelical Christians ($N = 25$) were asked about their role as grandparents, over a third communicated a lack of clarity (Mulvihill, 2016). A grandparent's role is not being communicated to the family through society (Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004; Ruby et al, 2007; Stelle et al., 2010), and many times, biblical sound instruction needs to be more of a focus in the church (Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016). The Christian school as an extension of the church is also lacking in supporting the Biblical instruction of the grandparent role and providing opportunities for the patriarch investment in the family.

In the same way, grandparents have to embrace the Biblical instruction of the grandparent role, so also the family has to come to terms with the Biblical outline of the family unit. “Each member of the family has been given an important, God-ordained role that is not interchangeable with other members of the family” (Mulvihill, 2016, p. 35). By affirming the grandparent role in the family, parents and grandchildren also accept the grandparent as a vital part of the family unit (Mitchell, 2008) and a spiritual mentor for the grandchildren (Allana et al., 2017; Deprez, 2017; Van der Walt, 2017). Grandchildren have their Biblical instruction to follow concerning their grandparent. Grandchildren are also given a responsibility to honor their grandparent by “meeting their needs, listening to their advice, recognizing their worth” (Mulvihill, 2016, p. 29). To negate this God-given relationship between grandparent and grandchild could result in the grandchild missing out on an important relationship with the grandparent and the parents missing out on incorporating a strong relationship and spiritual fortification in the family. Christian school education has a unique opportunity to affirm the strong relationship and role each family member possesses and encourage a strong, healthy family unit.

Educational challenges. Many grandparents may not feel qualified to assist in the grandchild’s education due to technological advances and new educational approaches (Maijala et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008). This lack of knowledge can create a barrier to the grandparent in being comfortable in participating in class activities or help their grandchild in homework assignments. This problem extends beyond the class assignments to methods of school communication and teacher’s take-home notes for the grandchild. In the Christian school deciding to involve grandparents, the administration may consider ways to offer grandparents a working knowledge of the technology used, the new teaching methods that are being introduced, as well as school policies and routines, and curriculum (Mitchell, 2008). This action could

provide a great comfort level in assisting and a greater openness to participating in classroom activities. The grandparent, in turn, may need to view the opportunity as a chance for personal growth and new knowledge which can assist in their overall mental status.

Geographic proximity. Research pinpoints one of the greatest concerns for grandparents that could be a barrier to cultivating the relationship between the grandparent and grandchild is geographic proximity (Breheny et al., 2013; Deprez, 2017; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Dunifon, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Mulvihill, 2016; Stelle et al., 2010; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014). Strong relationships are established through consistent face-to-face interactions that are more than once a week to develop a deep close bond (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Deprez, 2017; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; MaloneBeach et al., 2018; Mulvihill, 2016). Recent research indicated grandparents who live more than 100 miles away are “associated with reduction in grandparent-grandchild relationship quality of 35%” (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012, p. 1188). Since distance could be a barrier to facilitating these strong relationships, grandparents have choices to make in living out their conviction to be a mentoring grandparent that wants to invest in subsequent generations. Research finds some grandparents decide to move closer in geographic proximity with a recent study stating half of teenagers live within nine miles from a grandparent (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012), while other grandparents use the technological resources available to connect on a consistent basis to ensure their mentoring relationship (Boger & Mercer, 2017; Deprez, 2017; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Geffen, 2014; Mayasari, Pedell, & Barnes, 2016; Mulvihill, 2016). The conviction to be an engaged spiritual role model fuels grandparents to work through the difficulty to find a successful solution to the distance problem. The Christian school could consider assisting the family connection and the grandparents’ ability to participate by creating opportunities that could be completed at a distance such as letter-writing, video or

using the internet to include the grandparent in the activity (Kelly, 2015; Mayasari et al., 2016; Mitchell, 2008). Recent research highlights the advantage of using technology in communication to create a greater partnership between the grandchild and grandparent due to the familiarity and expertise grandchildren have with this mode of communication (Kelly, 2015). Even though grandparents might not be familiar with the technology, they have been shown to be open to ask for help in order to connect with their grandchildren (Boger & Mercer, 2017).

Grandparent Involvement in Christian School Education

Grandparents may be able to offer financial, physical, emotional, intellectual (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Chiu, 2013) and/or spiritual resources (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Majjala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016) to their grandchild to make an impact in the grandchild's life. These resources can be used in many areas of the relationship between the grandparent and the grandchild, yet there may be a unique opportunity within the context of the Christian school setting that needs to be explored. An examination of the Christian school education culture is required to consider how appropriate and viable the setting is for the grandparents' generative action and the significant impact of reciprocal benefit to the grandparent and the grandchild.

Within the context of the United States, Christian school education is not only an educational choice for families but also a financial commitment the family has to make. In the United States, all children have the right to a public education funded by citizen taxes (Constitutional Rights Foundation, 1991). Parents have a right to choose a private education option for their child if the parents do not believe public education meets the needs of their child, and the parents are willing to pay for the educational service. Since the institution of private education, parents have many reasons for making this financial commitment to private education. For the Christian family, the option of a Christian school education meets many of the parent's

desires for an educational program that includes the Christian faith as part of the curriculum and environment.

The parental choice to select Christian school education for their child is made through the influence of many people and factors in the family's life. A recent study conducted by ACSI (2017) found millennials', aged 18 to 30, top five influencers are "spouse, other parents, school rankings, grandparents, and one of your children" (p. 51). The grandparent influence is an increase of 12% from the previous generation of Gen-Xers. The increase in grandparent influence could indicate a stronger and more prominent voice in the grandparent-grandchild relationship and the millennial family dynamic. Research indicates the millennial generation has a longer transition into financial adulthood (Chiteji, 2010), and the ACSI (2017) study speculates the reasons could be due to a lack of financial stability in the millennial parents and a greater resource base from the grandparent. Although there is no current research on this topic, the statistic warrants a deeper examination into the grandparents' influence in both the selection of the Christian school and the long-term commitment the grandparent has in their grandchild's Christian school education.

There are also many factors that influence the parents' choice for Christian school education such as "their own school experiences, financial constraints, customary enrollment patterns, and socioeconomic status" (Prichard & Swezey, 2016, p. 20). An ACSI (2017) study cited the top six factors in both prospective and current parents choosing Christian school education to be "safety, caring teachers, academic excellence, accessible teachers, character development, and college preparation" (p. 20). These values indicate a parental desire for the child to have a holistic educational experience that includes character development and in the Christian school setting, dedication to Christian principles. The Biblical principles provide a

foundation of a holistic experience that is not isolated to the classroom but is an extension and inclusive of the child's entire life, including the family and potentially, the grandparent-grandchild relationship.

Christian school education is dedicated to educating the whole child, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically for the glory of God (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988). "Christian schools have a multi-faceted call to educate, minister, introduce Christian worldview, and facilitate spiritual formation" (Horan, 2017, p. 62). Just as the grandparent role impacts all aspects of grandchildren's lives, so also Christian school education and the potential spiritual formation can transform the child's entire life. This spiritual transformation affects all aspects of life as it provides a lifelong foundation that fosters stewardship in "other dimensions, including the emotions, relationships, intellect, vocation, the physical body, along with the stewardship of God-given resources including the earth, money, and possessions" (Chandler, 2015, p. 315).

All of the resources grandparents have to offer their children are parallel to the mission of Christian school education. While research indicates the benefits of parental involvement in child's education (Wilder, 2014), there has not been any focus on the extended role of the grandparent and the impact that can be made through grandparent involvement. In Christian school education, research has focused on the conviction of the family being the primary educators and the school's role in being an educational and spiritual support, but there has not been any focus on the grandparent role in the family unit and their educational and spiritual role in the grandchild's life (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988; Van der Walt, 2017).

While there is a lack of research in how Christian schools have included grandparents into the educational equation, there is research of potential ways Christian schools can welcome grandparents into the Christian school family (Deprez, 2017; West et al., 2017). As the Christian school acknowledges the role of the grandparent, this common value of mentoring the grandchild can be an invitation for grandparents to be part of the Christian school family (West et al., 2017).

With the Christian school ethos of supporting strong godly relationships in the children's lives, grandparents may have more opportunities for interactions in the Christian school that may not be possible in the public schools setting. Grandparents can be involved and part of the community of the school as private schools "provide more informal occasions for interactions between students and adults" (West et al., 2017, p.16). The initiatives implemented to honor grandparents in their God-given role can cover all areas of the Christian school. Encouraging planned lunches or day-trips with grandparents can be a way grandchildren have one on one time for discipleship (Deprez, 2017). Worship services such as weekly chapels or special events, including grandparents' day, can be opportunities for students to see their grandparent in worship and spiritual disciplines. The curriculum can also include grandparents through interview opportunities, essay writing, and spiritual reflection for the students in understanding what the grandparent role is in the family.

Additionally, with the study identifying the number of grandparents who are already involved in their grandchild's Christian school, the Christian school may be the need for more communication that includes the grandparent as part of the "whole-family school/home" communication links (Mitchell, 2008, p. 129). In considering these activities, the Christian school and staff should not assume all grandparents are able to due to health or financial problems or will want to elevate their involvement. Administration will need to find a balance in

respecting grandparents' physical ability and unique family dynamics in promoting elevated involvement with the Christian school, so it is a positive experience (Mitchell, 2008, p. 129).

Summary

Grandparents have an exceptional God-given calling to further their legacy through the grandparent to grandchild relationship. Yet, grandparents can experience an identity crisis by having difficulty in identifying their role as grandparents. In conjunction, societal influences can minimize the importance of the spiritual impact of the grandparent role in the family and causing some grandparents to feel overlooked or underappreciated causing a potential for self-indulgence or losing hope of making a difference in the world in their golden years. Research indicates the abundance of resources grandparents have to offer the family unit and specifically grandchildren. The relational benefits are reciprocal as both grandparent and grandchild receive and develop from the relationship. The church has an opportunity to speak to this forgotten demographic and open the treasure of the abundance of resources these patriarchs have to offer. The Christian school model with a mission of educating the whole child and supporting the family as the primary educators are the perfect pairing to encourage and affirm this Biblical instruction to Christian grandparents and strengthen the family unit. There is a clear gap in the literature as to the lived experiences of grandparents who make the investment of resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. This qualitative study explored these experiences and the meaning gained from the investment of these valuable resources toward Christian school education.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to discover the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. Chapter Three consists of the research design and research questions chosen for this study, including details of the site, participants, and procedures. The researcher's role was explained followed by the details of the data collection and data analysis. Moustakas (1994) and Descartes (1977) provided the foundational knowledge of transcendental phenomenology design and analysis with Creswell (2013) contributing to the insights into qualitative research methods. The chapter concludes with insights from Schwandt (2007), Patton (2015) and Denzin (1989) into the trustworthiness and ethical considerations for the study.

Design

Transcendental phenomenology was an appropriate design for my research study because of the parameters and the qualitative nature of this specific case study. A qualitative study allows the researcher to explore the stories, meanings, and gain detailed firsthand accounts of the experiences (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative approach was preferred over a quantitative approach since it provided the depth needed by "searching for meaning and essences of experience rather than measurements and explanations" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). The personal knowledge gained was needed for a full understanding of what grandparents experience in their investment into their grandchild's Christian school education. A qualitative transcendental phenomenology provided "the comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13) the grandparent had in implementing their resources in the Christian school context.

The phenomenological approach was appropriate for this specific study because it focused on “the wholeness of the experience” being examined “rather than solely on its objects or parts” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). The purpose of this study was to understand the full meaning non-custodial grandparents gained from the implementation of their resources toward their grandchild’s Christian school. The interviews and in-depth conversations allowed for the essence of this experience to be explored (Moustakas, 1994). This phenomenology also provided “the description of experience in the context of a particular situation” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14) which was important as the study focuses on the specific experiences the grandparents had (McAdam & de St. Aubin, 1992) as they implemented their resources in the grandchild’s Christian school educational context. Non-custodial grandparent resources can be active in a variety of connections with the grandchild, but this study explored the unique context of Christian school education and its focus on educating the whole child—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically (Chandler, 2015).

The transcendental phenomenology was selected for this study in order to capture the purest essence of the experiences by requiring a bracketing of the researcher’s prejudgments, or Epoche, so the research was “free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies- to be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). This was ideal for this study in the truest meanings of the experiences the grandparents had was explored and as prejudgments were set aside, the researcher allowed an “emphasis on intuition, imagination, and universal structures in obtaining a picture of the dynamics that underlay the experience” and represented the emotions of the experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22).

One of the main authorities in the subject of phenomenology is Clark Moustakas (1994) who gained his knowledge from Edmund Husserl's work in philosophy (i.e., Descartes, 1912/1988) and science. Some of the main concepts developed for transcendental phenomenology are the concepts of Epoche, transcendental phenomenological reduction, and imaginative variation (Moustakas, 1994). Each concept builds on each other with Epoche being the "elimination of suppositions and the raising of knowledge above every possible doubt" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26), then transcendental phenomenological reduction, considering an experience in singularity with a comprehensive description, and finally imaginative variation, using of all "imagination, sense and memory to intuit distinctly . . . unite what is sought after with what is known in order that the former may be distinguished" (Descartes, 1977, p. 57). All of the components work together to gain the purest form of the experience.

The rationale for this specific research design of transcendental phenomenology was to attain the most in-depth and truest representation of the lived experiences of the non-custodial grandparents who invest their resources into the grandchild's Christian school education. This in-depth knowledge was gained through 15 grandparents with saturation being reached, selected from a minimum of 6 different Christian school contexts. The transcendental phenomenology had demographic diversity through the different grandparents participating in the study with varying age groups attending five different Christian schools. The research "obtained descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21).

Research Questions

Central research question: What are the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education?

Subquestion A: How does the experience of contributing resources for the grandchild's Christian school education influence the continued psychosocial development of the non-custodial grandparent's life?

Subquestion B: What environmental factors permit or facilitate the non-custodial grandparents' experience of investing resources in the grandchild's Christian school education?

Subquestion C: How does the non-custodial grandparent's contribution of resources in the Christian school education setting impact the grandparent's meaning of being a grandparent?

Setting

The setting for the case study was six Christian schools in the Southeast region of the United States the selected grandchild for the case study attended. Six Christian schools were chosen as the setting to provide diversity in the types of schools and different environments of the Christian school. The schools were also chosen since their individual school's mission aligns with the premise that Christian schools are partnering with parents as the primary educators and the school's role in furthering the family in their God-given leadership.

The first school, School A, was a K-12 school with approximately 429 students with 90% White, 5% African American, 4% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The school was selected since it was a mid-range Christian school population as well as being in close proximity to the researcher. The school had been in operation for 42 years and was a ministry of an affiliated Baptist church. The vision of the school was to have "Young people with the spiritual and academic foundation to obey God's will for their lives and to walk in a manner worthy of their calling" (School A, 2018). The mission of the school was "to serve families with a Christ-centered educational environment that encourages each student to grow spiritually, academically, physically, and socially" with a core value of "encouragement to Christian families (School A, 2018). The

school offered preschool through 12th grade, and the school was accredited by ACSI, Virginia Council for Private Education, and SACS (School A, 2018). The organizational structure consisted of an administrator, director of elementary education, and administrative personnel.

The second school, School B, had a mid-range Christian school with a student body of 425 JK-12 students consisting of 93% White, 4% African American, 2% Hawaiian Native, and 1% of other ethnicities. The school was a classical Christian school accredited through AdvancED and a consortium member of Independent School Management and the Educational Records Bureau (ERB) (School B, 2018). The school's mission statement emphasized the dedication to "providing an exceptional education in a classical curriculum within the framework of historical Christianity, furnishing the student with the tools of education and the inspiration to be a lifelong learner" (School B, 2018). The school's admissions policy admitted, "students from families who desire a classical, Christian education and do not discriminate based on ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds" (School B, 2018). The school's organizational structure was an ordained headmaster and academic dean with an independent board of parents and community leaders, affiliated with the Reformed Episcopal Church (School B, 2018).

The third school, School C, was a mid-range size Christian school with 375 student body from PK-12th grade and is 87% White, 8% Asian, 3% Hispanic, and all other ethnicities 1%. The school was also accredited by ACSI and SACS (School C, 2018). The mission of the school was stated as "assisting Christian parents in educating their children to think and live consistently with a biblical world-and-life view and discipling them in love and truth toward Christlikeness and a lifelong passion for glorifying God" (School C, 2018). Admission was open to "students of any race, color or national and ethnic origin" but the "school reserves the right within its sole

discretion, to refuse admission to an applicant or to discontinue enrollment of a student” if their lifestyle does not adhere to the biblical lifestyle the school teaches (School C, 2018). The organizational leadership structure consisted of an administrator and two principals.

School D was a K-12 school with approximately 342 students with 90% White, 7% African-American, and 3% Asian. The school was selected since it was a mid-range Christian school population as well as being in close proximity to the researcher. The school had been in operation for 46 years and was a ministry of an affiliated Baptist church. The school believed “their biblical role is to work in conjunction with the home to mold students to be Christ-like” (School D, 2018). The mission of the school was to “makes disciples of Christ in obeying the command of God to train students in truth” (School D, 2018). The school offered preschool through 12th grade, and the school was accredited by ACSI and SACS (School D, 2018). The organizational structure consisted of a lower and upper school principal.

School E was a smaller Christian school with a student body of 150 PreK-12 students with no demographics provided. The school was a non-denominational, Christ-centered school and was accredited through ACSI and recognized by the Virginia Council of Private Education (School E, 2018). The school’s mission statement emphasized the dedication to “partner with the church and with Christian families committed to a Christ-centered, biblically-based education for their children” (School E, 2018). The school’s admissions process included a parent’s commitment to partner in the Biblical training of the student and to be actively involved in the child’s education (School E, 2018). The school’s organizational structure was comprised of an Executive Board in cooperation with the school Administrator (School E, 2018).

The final school, School F, was the smallest Christian school with a student body of 100 PreK-12 students with no demographics provided. The school was under a Wesleyan church and

considered a discipleship school which required a Christian testimony from the family and a statement of faith from the student at admissions. The school was a member of ACSI (School F, 2018). The school considered itself as an “extension of the Christian home and church” (School F, 2018). The school’s mission statement was

to train each student in the knowledge of God and the Scriptural way of life. Our goal is to provide the highest standards of excellence and spiritual development so that each student may be equipped with the necessary tools to effectively pursue the vocation to which the Lord will lead. (School F, 2018)

Participants

A purposeful criterion sampling was conducted to assure all research participants experienced the phenomenon and could speak from experience for the study being conducted (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). Non-custodial grandparents for the study were selected from the six Christian schools in the Southeast region of the United States. I chose to delimit the study by having the participant criteria (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015) only being a non-custodial grandparent who had a grandchild who attended the K-12 Christian schools and contributed resources operationally defined as financial, physical, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual resources for the grandchild’s Christian school education. Establishing these criteria (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015) provided the specifics of non-custodial grandparents being defined as grandparents who “do not live with their grandchildren but who make their contributions through visits, childcare in their own or grandchild’s home, outings, holidays, or provision of other kinds of practical and psychosocial assistance” (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 27). Since the grandparent was not the sole guardian of their grandchild or operating as a substitute parent to the grandchild (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017), the grandparent was able to have the full

experience of only the role of grandparent. Since the standard for phenomenological studies was to have 5 to 25 individuals (Creswell, 2013, p. 81), the goal was to have 10 to 15 participants, but participants were added until saturation was achieved at 15 participants. Another goal was to have diversity in the individuals selected in terms of gender, ethnicity, differing ages, and levels of involvement from the grandchildren's academic levels, if possible.

The individual selection for the study involved contacting the principals of the six chosen Christian schools and requesting they identify the non-custodial grandparents who were actively contributing physically, emotionally, intellectually, financially, or spiritually toward their grandchild toward the Christian school and contact the grandparents to see if they would like to participate in study (Creswell, 2013; see Appendix B). The sampling selection attempted to provide diversity in the age of grandparents to provide research information from a range of ages. Finally, the sampling attempted to provide diversity in ethnicity. The demographic information was obtained using a questionnaire as a survey instrument that identified or described the participants. The questionnaire developed by Helen Kivnick from her study, *The Meaning of Grandparenthood*, was used to collect demographic information of participants for the study (see Appendix G). The instrument was designed to provide information regarding "age, marital status, education, work status, work classification, household composition, age-segregated household, current health, parent's age, number of children, grandparent age, and number of grandchildren" (Kivnick, 1982, pp. 91-94) and I added a question about ethnicity. The participants' data remained confidential in the study itself through the use of pseudonyms in the details of the study. Table 1 provides the demographic results for the study.

Table 1

<i>Participant</i>	Age	Marital Status	Ethnicity	Level of Education	Work Status	Current Health	Age you became a grandparent	# of grandchildren	# of miles from grandchild in the study
<i>Demographi</i>									
<i>CS Participant</i>									
Abigail	63	Married	White	Masters	Retired	Good	31-40	2	20-30
Margaret	80	Married	White	4 yr college	Retired	Excellent	51-55	9	0-20
Lorraine	54	Divorced	White	Doctorate	Fulltime	Good	41-45	2	0-20
John	72	Married	White	High school	Retired	Good	51-55	5	0-20
Martha	69	Married	White	2 yr college	Retired	Excellent	51-55	5	0-20
Joanne	66	Married	White	4 yr college	Fulltime	Good	56-60	2	0-20
Leigh	56	Married	White	Masters	Retired	Excellent	31-40	5	0-20
Ginger	69	Married	White	4 yr college	Retired	Good	61-65	7	0-20
Sally	72	Married	White	4 yr college	Fulltime	Excellent	56-60	3	0-20
Marsha	58	Married	White	2 yr college	Retired	Good	45-50	4	0-20
Lydia	71	Married	White	High school	Retired	Good	51-55	6	0-20
Emma	71	Married	White	2 Masters	Retired	Excellent	41-45	10	250 and 500 miles away
Donald	80	Married	White	4 yr college	Retired	Good	45-50	11	0-20
Caroline	58	Married	White	High school	Fulltime	Excellent	51-55	1	0-20
Wanda	59	Widowed	White	2 yr college	Fulltime	Excellent	51-55	1	0-20

Procedures

The study was conducted after all Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals were granted (see Appendix A). The next step in the process was contacting the principals of the chosen Christian schools and requesting they identify and contact the non-custodial grandparents who provided resources per the definition assigned being non-custodial grandparents aiding their children by providing financial, physical, emotional, intellectual and/or spiritual resources toward their grandchildren's Christian school education (see Appendix B). By contacting the principals, I was able to utilize their working knowledge of their school and known non-custodial

grandparent involvement to meet the purposeful criteria of the study (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015). The school itself was not engaged in the study, although there was a need to use the school facilities to conduct the interview. School approvals were obtained from the principal for the use of the facilities, if needed.

Once the grandparents were identified by the principal, the principal contacted the non-custodial grandparent to see if each person would like to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013; see Appendix B). Each of the potential participants granted approval through an Informed Consent to participants 18 years and older (see Appendix D). The consent forms were brought to the interview or emailed to the researcher. The consent forms included details of the requested data collection and explanation of how the data would be collected and acknowledgment of the recording process. The data gathering consisted of a grandparent questionnaire and through “first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21). The recording method was a voice recording, and assurances of confidentiality was provided to the participants extended through the use of pseudonyms for sites and participants.

The Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher in this qualitative study was to be the human instrument in the study (Patton, 2015). I had no relationship to the sites or the participants who were chosen except close geographic proximity. This study was motivated by a dedication to the Christian family and Christian school education and a desire to provide research to support and strengthen the Christian school education mission. I worked in Christian school education as a student and as an instructor as well as in administrative positions. This study was embedded in a Biblical worldview with a specific belief the parent or family is considered the primary source of education, and the school is a partner with the family for the child’s education and development.

As an advocate for Christian school education and the family's God-given responsibility to a child's education, there was a strong bias as a researcher in the study. As a researcher in a transcendental phenomenological study, I needed to "engage in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon" being investigated, so the study is "free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). This action was accomplished by bracketing out my own experience to be able to focus purely on the lived experiences of the participants in the study (Moustakas, 1994).

Data Collection

Data collection for the study was conducted after the IRB approval had been granted for the research, and informed consent forms were received. The data collection was initiated with a questionnaire given to the grandparent to provide demographic information needed to make the sampling selection. After the selection had been completed, the data collection was conducted through interviews with the grandparents. The grandparents had a personal interview and focus group interview along with any documentation the grandparent had to provide an opportunity for multiple sources and triangulation. Each of the data collection methods was aligned with the nature of the qualitative study and designed to provide the depth and richness needed for the data analysis. Documentation was collected as proofs of the grandparent involvement in the Christian school environment.

Interviews

For this phenomenological research, interviews were conducted in an "informal, interactive process that will utilize open-ended comments and questions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 114). This type of data collection was conducted by meeting with each of the grandparents

individually to gain a deeper understanding of their value of Christian school education, the relationship they had with their grandchild, and their perspective of the resources they had to offer their grandchild in the context of the Christian school. These questions remained influx to “obtain descriptions of experience through first-person accounts in informal and formal conversations and interviews” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 21).

Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about your family and personal history.
2. Describe your role as a grandparent.
3. Describe your relationship with your grandchild that is in the Christian school. Please make sure not to provide too many specifics or identifiable information about the grandchild.
4. Since we know no one is the perfect grandparent, do you feel comfortable sharing times that you might not have been the perfect grandparent?
5. How has the knowledge of your imperfections as a grandparent affected the giving of your resources within your grandchild’s Christian school context?
6. How has your activity with your grandchild in the Christian school affected your relationship with your grandchild?
7. How have you been active in your grandchild’s Christian school? What specific activities have you participated in connected to your grandchild’s Christian school?
8. What have you experienced from investing your resources in your grandchild’s Christian school education?
9. What do you hope to gain from your investment of resources into your grandchild’s Christian school education?

10. Of the resources you possess socially, intellectually, financially/physically, and/or spiritually, what do you value the most that you have invested in your grandchild in the Christian school context?
11. Which of the resources do you believe you give more outside of the Christian school context?
12. What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected your experience of investing your resources in your grandchild's Christian school education?
13. What challenges do you experience with offering your resources to your grandchild?
14. What are the familial challenges you experience with offering your resources to your grandchild?
15. What are the societal challenges you experience with offering your resources to your grandchild?
16. If you have one closing piece of advice on this topic for (grandparents, parents, schools) what would that be?

Questions 1 through 6 addressed the grandparents' role in the family and their relationship with the grandchild. These questions provided information about the grandparent's personal views on their role as a grandparent which was important since there can be confusion on the grandparent role (Beiner et al., 2014; Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004; Stelle et al., 2010). The specifics of the activities the grandparent had been involved in will aid in the "textural and structural description" of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Questions 7 through 11 focus on the relationship between the grandparent and the Christian school context. Question 7 provided the most information as the grandparent was able

to elaborate on the specifics of the experiences. Questions 8 and 9 allowed the grandparent to explain the value and benefit of the investment. Questions 10 and 11 provided information about where the grandparent was able to implement their resources the most. These questions provided information about the personal meaning the grandparent gained from the experience and the opportunities already being implemented in the Christian school education context. These questions also highlighted what the grandparent valued the most in resources and if they were relevant to the Christian school context (Allana et al., 2017; Deprez, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013).

Questions 12 through 15 addressed the influencers for the grandparents in implementing their resources in the Christian school context. Question 12 addressed the types of influencers that were relevant to the grandparent. Questions 13 through 15 addressed the challenges grandparents perceived they had in providing resources to their grandchild in the Christian school context. This question was important in that it acknowledged the hindrances to the grandparent offering the resources. These challenges can appear from any aspect of the grandparent's life, from internal limitations such as the grandparent's health to external issues such as geographic proximity family, or unclear roles (Deprez, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). Each of the questions was important in providing information from a personal, familial, and societal perspective (Mulvihill, 2016).

Question 16 allowed the grandparents to elaborate on any aspect that had been discussed and add any areas of interest that might not have been addressed in the questions provided. This question provided more meaningful and authentic answers to gain the full essence of the grandparent experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The interview ended with a request for each grandparent to write a letter to other grandparents who are not currently involved in their grandchild's Christian school education

environment about how the experience of offering the resources in the Christian school setting had meaning in being a grandparent and the impact on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. They were also asked to provide any documentation that could be used as proofs of their involvement in the grandchild's Christian school education and if they wanted to explain or comment on the documents. This opportunity allowed the family to provide the story behind the picture or school assignment for a fuller description of the connection between the grandparent and grandchild.

Grandparent Letter

The grandparents were asked to write a letter to other grandparents who were not currently involved in their grandchild's Christian school education environment. The grandparents were requested to write about how the experience of offering the resources in the Christian school setting had meaning in being a grandparent and the impact on the grandparent-grandchild relationship. They also were asked to consider sharing their failures or weaknesses in being a grandparent and how this experience had impacted their perspective of being a grandparent (see Appendix E). The grandparents had the freedom to share any information they would like about the experience itself and its impact on their life. These answers provided insight into the grandparent's perspective of how this experience affected being a grandparent, the way grandparents described their experiences, and if they gained value from the experience.

Document Analysis

The document analysis was comprised of various resources that were supplied by the grandparents in the study. Documents that were requested are additional support documentation such as tuition payments, school activities, photos, schoolwork assignments, etc. that demonstrate the resources that had been given. This data collection provided a broader picture

and evidence of the implementation of the resources in everyday life of the Christian school setting. The documents were beneficial in providing a greater richness and description of the investment the grandparents made in their grandchild's Christian school education. The information provided a broader perspective on how grandparents found avenues to implement their resources in application to the Christian school education setting.

Focus Group

A focus group was conducted with eight of the grandparents who had agreed to participate from the schools that had been selected. The focus group consisted of a cross-section of grandparents from each of the schools for there to be variation and synergy within the focus group interview. The purpose of the focus group was to gain broad information of the ways the grandparents were involved in the different schools, the overall opportunities that were provided by the schools and ways grandparents found on their own to implement their resources, as well as what it meant to the grandparents personally to make these offerings. The focus group was conducted as a one-hour timeframe either in person at a chosen selected location or by Skype to include participants that were unable to be in person for the interview. The focus group interview was recorded to provide quality assurance and analysis. The following questions were considered for the focus group setting, but the number of questions remained open so that issues could be explored fully within the limits of focus group timeframe.

1. Did any of you help select the Christian school, how soon did you start getting involved in the Christian school, and how long have you been contributing?
2. Were the activities that you have been involved in self-generated, or were you asked to be a part of it?
3. Do you live your life differently because you are contributing?

4. Do you think that contributing resources to your grandchild in Christian school adds or subtracts from your personal life, and if so, why or why not?
5. At this stage in your life, why is contributing resources to your grandchildren important?
6. Are there ways that you have contributed that has connected with more than just your grandchild? Why did you give these types of contributions, and what did it mean to you?
7. Do you think your past experiences in work or otherwise have influenced you wanting to give into Christian education and/or education in general, and if so, why?
8. If you talk to your friends about your involvement, what do they say and what is your response?
9. Do you think your involvement hinders or hampers your self-care? Why or why not?
10. Are there times that you feel insufficient to be able to give if so how do you overcome that feeling?

Questions 1 and 2 addressed how the grandparents were involved, how quickly they joined in the Christian school community, and whether this activity was something they initiated or if the family or others ask for them to participate. These questions were in connection with research about an increase in grandparent influence in choosing the Christian school (ACSI, 2017) and due to the lack of research regarding the length of time grandparents are involved in the Christian school with the grandchildren.

Questions 3 through 5 addressed the way that the grandparents consider their own lives as they incorporate their contributions. These questions connected with the research in addressing the stage of life that the grandparents are in, given they are within the stages of Erikson's (1950) Maturity and Old Age and all participating in generative actions. The questions connected with the research in asking the effect on the grandparents' personal lives in positive or negative ways

in the generative results that grandparents may experience in contributing to subsequent generations (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Thiele & Whelan, 2008).

Question 6 addressed the extended contribution of grandparent resources to others in the school. Erikson (1950) acknowledged that the “establishing and guiding of the next generation” is a natural experience for grandparents since subsequent generations are already established within the family and grandchildren would be the best recipient of the grandparent generative action (p. 267). Since this investment is toward the next generation, this dynamic can extend past the grandchildren to others in the school setting.

Questions 7 through 10 addressed factors that either facilitate or hinder the grandparents making their contributions. These questions were connected with the research regarding the factors that affect grandparents’ ability to contribute, mainly in the areas of personal, familial, and societal influences (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). These questions were directed toward the Christian school setting specifically since there is a lack of research regarding grandparents’ contributions toward grandchildren in the Christian school setting.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedures were implemented for the data collection through interviews, grandparent letter, document collection, and focus group. Since the study was a qualitative study, the data analysis portion of the study was imperative as the researcher was the human instrument (Creswell, 2013) that was used to analyze all the information that was collected. For each of the methods used to collect data, specific types of analysis and steps were taken to ensure credibility and trustworthiness in the study.

Transcendental phenomenology uses several analytical steps for data analysis which include a deeper reading of the data, identification of significant statements called horizontalization, grouping or clustering into themes, composing individual textural and structural descriptions, creating a composite textural and structural descriptions and synthesizing the textural and structural descriptions (Moustakas, 1994).

In transcendental phenomenology, the researcher finds the essence of the phenomenon by having respect and valuing the description given by the participants through the process of horizontalization. Horizontalization is the act of treating every statement initially as having equal value as a “grounding or condition of the phenomenon that gives it a distinctive character” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 95). The wording and the way the stories are told by the participants will give a deeper meaning to the experience. As the statements are gathered and collected, the “horizons” can be identified by noting the statements that are necessary for giving a greater understanding of the phenomenon, and the irrelevant and repetitive statements are identified to omit so that only the “textural meaning and invariant constituents of the phenomenon” remains (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97).

Once these meaningful statements have been identified, similarities across the participants’ stories begin to be identified, so clusters of related meanings can be created (Moustakas, 1994). These clusters form into overarching themes that are relevant to the phenomenon. The clusters are grouped and labeled as core themes for the research study.

From the clusters, two individual descriptions are created for each participant: a textural description regarding the specifics of *what* happened, and a structural description of the setting or context that influenced *how* the phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2013). The two

descriptions require a synthesis of themes identified and verbatim examples as authenticity for the description (Moustakas, 1994).

All of the participants' textural descriptions and structural descriptions were analyzed and "put back together for a cohesive synthesized description of the essence of the situation" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 14). This composite textural-structural description integrated all the descriptions "into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). This final composite was the culmination of the study in a single depiction of the phenomenon.

The quality of the qualitative transcendental phenomenology research was dependent on the accuracy of the data collection and documentation. Several methods were implemented as safeguards to gain all of the correct information from this data collection. For the interviews and focus group, two recording devices were used to record all aspects of the time with the grandparents. The recording devices were tested for sound level and check for battery life before each session began and was turned on before the official interview. The focus of the researcher was on the questions and the interactions with the study participants.

After the session concluded, the recording was stopped, and a designated time was chosen to listen to the recording and transcribe the complete dialogue to maintain accuracy. The recording was listened to several times to ensure all the wording was correct and accounted in the transcript. The transcripts for the interviews provided the data for "reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account or story" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). These interview details led to the data analysis process. "From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived; in other words, the essences or structures of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). The data evaluated with a goal of revealing "the structure, meaning,

configuration, coherence, and the circumstances of their occurrence and clustering- both the structure of meaning and how it is created” (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 15-16).

The other data collection method was the documentation provided by the grandparents. The grandparents were asked to provide any documentation as proofs of grandparent involvement at the Christian school, such as pictures, tuition contributions by the grandparent, etc. The information gathered from these documents was analyzed for common themes and added to the reflective structural analysis as another layer of information about the grandparent’s involvement and offering of their resources.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is essential to produce quality research in the findings and interpretations of the study. Trustworthiness is defined as the “quality of an investigation (and its findings) that make it noteworthy to audiences” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 299). The study was conducted in a reputable manner, so it is valuable professional research that addresses credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility is defined as the extent to which the findings accurately describe reality. Credibility was achieved through clarifying research bias, triangulation, and member checking.

As a researcher, the information provided in the study should be truthful and accurate. My own bias was acknowledged and set aside through exercising bracketing by engaging in “disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated” so the study is “free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies- to be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being

investigated” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). The Epoche process of bracketing ensured my bias was acknowledged, set aside, and the participants’ stories were the focus of the research. This process allowed the research to be a pure and true representation through its description of the phenomenon.

Triangulation was attained through the 15 participants in the study and the interviews and documentation that was collected as data to strengthen the credibility of the study. Triangulation was vital to a qualitative study as it provided the “individual textural-structural descriptions” of how the participants experienced the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). This information highlighted patterns or themes that were common in the stories that allowed the researcher to consolidate and “develop a composite description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 121).

Member checking was completed as the participants were able to review the transcript and specific aspects of the interpretation of the data to ensure accurate representation. Grandparent participants “are viewed as ‘co-researchers’ in the research process in providing a ‘descriptive narrative’ through interviews and dialogue” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 15). The grandparents were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and verify the findings to confirm the interpretations and representations of their experiences. Member checking increased the credibility and validity of the research and overall study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability ensure the research study process is logical, consistent, and the data is reliable (Patton, 2015) and was obtained through three methods: an audit trail, peer debriefing, and expert review. An audit trail is an accurate record that is kept throughout the study that can be reviewed or consulted if needed for accuracy. This documentation was

added to the study (see Appendix I) and included the created consent form, research memos, and excerpts of the interview transcripts. This documentation provided a paper trail for researchers desiring to transfer or replicate the study. The peer debriefs and expert review was conducted through the dissertation process through the research consultant and the review team.

Transferability

The study provided detailed methodology and research that was ample enough so the study could be replicated by other researchers, and the data provided the most accurate depiction of the essence of the grandparent experience. Transferability was obtained through the type of data collected and the depth of the information. The data collection provided a rich, thick description of the phenomenon in each participant having a voice to learn the essence of the collective experience. This documentation met the goal of transcendental phenomenology in “determining what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). Through the in-depth interviews and documentation of multiple participants, the descriptions were rich in that it presented “detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships [and] evoke emotionality and self-feelings...The voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard” (Denzin, 1989, p. 83). A full description was created through in-depth formal and informal interviews, so the complete essence of the phenomenon was captured. The number of 15 grandparents and the number of interviews that were conducted created this rich, thick description.

This transcendental phenomenology was specific to grandparents who were not the sole guardian of their grandchildren and had grandchildren in Christian schools, which allowed for a deeper understanding of a specific demographic. An effort to have participants from the six

Christian schools, the varying age levels, and gender provided a higher opportunity for diversification.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations or implications of the research in protecting human subjects were addressed using the following safeguards. First, the study followed the IRB guidelines, and approval was gained before any research was conducted. The participants and site locations remained confidential throughout the study through the use of pseudonyms. All participants provided informed consent before any data collection began to adhere to ethical principles toward participants. This documentation also included information for the participants as to the voluntary nature of the study and their ability to withdraw at any time. Secured data storage and access protected the information obtained during the study by having any hardcopy information being in locked filing cabinets and digital information being under password protection.

Summary

This transcendental phenomenology is valuable in providing information about the lived experiences of 15 non-custodial grandparents who contributed resources toward the grandchild's Christian school education from six Christian schools. The human participants were protected through all needed authorizations such as IRB approval and all needed consent forms before any data was collected. The data collected through questionnaire, documentation, and interviews provided the depth needed for this qualitative study to be credible and produce triangulation. The analysis tracked structure and meaning, leading to clustering of common themes within the data collected, taking the necessary protective measures and boundaries to ensure all ethical standards and trustworthiness were met.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experience of non-custodial grandparents who contribute to their grandchildren's Christian school. The findings followed a transcendental phenomenological design to produce the essence of the experiences of contributing to their grandchildren's Christian school from the perspective of the non-custodial grandparents. A transcendental approach to the study allowed non-custodial grandparents to reflect on their beliefs, attitudes, and meaningful experiences while living through a shared phenomenon. In this chapter, I share the descriptive voices of the participants, the results section, including theme development and research question responses, and a concluding summary.

Participants

Once IRB approval was obtained (see Appendix A), the six school administrators who had agreed to be in the study were contacted. Each of the administrators identified and contacted the grandparents in their school that were actively contributing toward their grandchild's Christian school education to inform them of the study and provide contact information if they were interested in participating. They sent the recruitment letter (see Appendix C), the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G), and stamped consent form (see Appendix A) from the IRB to the grandparents. The interested grandparents contacted me directly about wanting to be in the study, and I set up an interview time with each grandparent. At the individual interview, the consent form and demographic form were collected, and after the interview, I requested the grandparent write the grandparent letter (see Appendix E) and collect support documents. After all the interviews, a focus group was conducted with eight of the grandparents.

The grandparent letter and the support documents were collected at the focus group or sent to me by email from the grandparents.

The purposeful sampling for this study consisted of 15 participants who were all White, with 13 being grandmothers and 2 being grandfathers. The grandparents were from the Southeast region of the United States, with 14 of the participants living within 30 miles from their grandchildren and 1 participant being over 200 miles from their grandchild.

The psychosocial development theory proposed by Erikson stated in a person's later years, the individual will face a decision to either participate in generative actions in investing in other human beings or becoming isolated and self-absorbed. This decision affects the quality of life and further development of the individual through the later years. The grandparent role provides an opportunity for individuals to invest all of their resources—intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual—into a subsequent generation. The Christian school environment provides an atmosphere for each of these resources to be potentially connected and foster a deeper relationship between the grandparent and grandchild.

A firsthand account of non-custodial grandparents' experiences provided an opportunity to reflect critically on the meaning of the lived experience. Reflecting on the contribution of the grandparent resources in the Christian school setting phenomenon was the foundation of this phenomenological investigation. The 15 participants who experienced the same phenomena provided validity to the findings as the perception of the experience was triangulated (Creswell, 2013). Throughout this process, participants had the opportunity to check their transcriptions to provide feedback. Detailed descriptions explained the participants' background and roles and individual perspectives through the support of quotes and summaries. The researcher kept each identity confidential by using name and location pseudonyms.

Margaret

Margaret was an 80-year-old grandmother who has nine grandchildren; two of the grandchildren attend a local Christian school in which she was active. She has been active in all of her grandchildren's lives, but when her youngest child started having children, Margaret and her husband moved to be closer to these grandchildren in their younger years. Margaret was a public school educator for over 20 years, a Christian educator for 4 years, and now is retired, but substitute teaches for two Christian schools, one being the school her grandchildren attend. Margaret was in good health, staying very active physically and mentally, and contributed to her family and community.

Margaret had given in all areas—financially, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually—since the very first day for the 12 years the children have attended the Christian school, both inside the Christian school environment and in their daily lives. Her daughter worked in the Christian school the grandchildren attended, and Margaret was very close to both her daughter and her grandchildren. Her financial contributions consisted of fundraisers and making food for events such as pie day or her famous snickerdoodles. Her physical, emotional, and intellectual support had been given by filling in wherever needed. In the early years, it consisted of keeping the grandchildren after school when needed, allowing them to talk out any issues of the day and assisting with homework or reading and shuttling to and from school and activities. As the grandchildren got older, she was present at as many extracurricular activities as possible and participated in fundraisers such as the yearly jog-a-thon. Her spiritual investment in her grandchildren was given through spiritual disciplines such as church attendance and reading the Bible, but her main goal in her investment in Christian education was the hope of seeing them in heaven one day.

Margaret believed the role of a grandparent is to love them and support them by spending as much time as possible and taking an interest in what is going on in their lives. She believed grandparents have “the power to influence them for good and to be that special person to whom they can go for advice or just to have someone who will listen.” She had a strong belief in Christian education preparing her grandchildren in their beliefs and found contributing to her grandchildren in the Christian school setting to be rewarding. She did not want to miss any opportunity since she would not have another chance and believed grandparents who do not contribute are missing out. Margaret encouraged grandparents who are not involved in starting any way they can to find common ground and start as early as possible to make the greatest impact: “Be intentional about doing things to make memories that will last throughout their lives. Let them know that you are praying for them and talk about the Bible as you interact with them.” She also encouraged school administrators to realize the skills and knowledge grandparents have, and that they may fill the role of a grandparent for others who may not have a grandparent in their life. As a teacher, she understood the value for both the grandparent and the students:

I was teaching sixth grade. I found a grandparent that had been in the 2nd world war, and I asked him to come and speak to my class. Well, it was a really neat experience because he was delighted to do it. I'm sure there's things like that out there if you tap into it. It would be so meaningful for the students.

John

John was a retired 72-years-old grandfather who has two children and three grandchildren, two of whom attend a local Christian school in second grade and K3. John and his wife moved from New Hampshire to retire and be close to their daughter and granddaughters, specifically while they are young. John and his wife had been active in their granddaughters’

lives since birth, jointly caring for the children two to three days a week until they went to school. John served 30 years in the Navy and was not raised in a religious home and had 7 brothers who are now spread all over the country. In not personally having a close family, John had a conviction of making his family strong by putting the work and time into his family. He also noted since the men usually deacease before women, “it would behoove you to be there for them now so they will have memories of you and make the best of it because life is short.”

John’s relationship with his granddaughters was built on the contribution of all of his resources—financially, physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually—which he had given from the first day of their schooling. His daughter working at the school provided many of the opportunities to give and fortunately, it also meant John had not needed to make a financial contribution beyond fundraisers, but he gave to the family incidentals when needed to support the family as a whole. John regarded his role as “secondary shield” with the parents being the primary present at field trips and such but filling in wherever needed such as dropping off, lapses of time before a babysitter can arrive, and weekend care for the parents to get away. He believed their presence at events and activities showed the grandchildren their interest in their lives and “adds immensely to the overall cohesiveness of the family.” His intellectual contribution was in encouraging his grandchildren to read books and in their homework in working on getting the right answers, but also through his daughter’s prompting investing in other children by being an entrepreneur day judge and an upcoming presenter on beekeeping. His emotional connection to his granddaughters was not as strong as to their grandmother, but he saw a reciprocal relationship fostered as his three-year-old granddaughter offered thank you notes and he engaged with them in activities such as fishing, creating memories for them to “carry in their mind and heart.” He also saw how being a grandparent affects his emotional state.

From a man's standpoint, I think what it does to a man it keeps him from becoming callous in the older age. When you invest in your grandchildren, you are investing in what they do. They invest in you in return, so you don't become calloused in your soul and in your heart. You have a softer spirit.

Spiritually, John believed grandparents play as important of a part of their grandchildren's spiritual development as the parents:

I think grandparents are responsible according to Scripture, and it doesn't say parents bring up a child; it says bring up a child in the way of the Lord, and they will not fall from it; it doesn't say only the parents. The grandparents have just as equal of a role as the parents because I think that's we are all a family, and if the family doesn't work together, it pulls apart and that's when you have your problems as far as marriages and stuff, so it is part of the God-ordained rule as far as how he created us.

John did not depend on the school for his grandchildren's spiritual development but took personal responsibility by taking their grandchildren to church each Sunday and living a godly life before them.

John evaluated his motivation for contributing being multilayered. He understood the value of the Christian school itself in providing an important spiritual foundation for their students. He believed the support grandparents give extends to the school staff in encouraging them in their sacrifices and reinforced "they are there for a reason and God is called them for that reason." Ultimately, his giving was not as much for today, but for the future value it holds.

It may not be known now, but things you do now in their life will show up later on. So when you support them now in their endeavors like when we go to their things in the morning or the concerts and stuff. I may not see it now, but it's going to be for the future.

We do not know what they are going to turn out to be, but we did what we thought was right and correct to get them there.

Ultimately, the goal was his grandchildren to “love the Lord more, and they look back and assess the value they gained in Christian school to hopefully pass on to their children.”

John understood the challenges grandparents face as “when we get older, the physical capabilities in most cases of oneself narrows each day a year but we must be able to overcome these capabilities and submit to a deeper responsibility to our children.” John’s message to other grandparents was to get past the selfish reasoning of spending money on oneself, engage in their lives while they are young, prioritize time and resources to give to the family in a balanced way, and realize the eternal value that is given for the investment that is made. The return on the investment is a full life: “You are missing out on at least half of the life that you could have because if you don't invest in their life, you'll have nothing in return.” For school administrators, John believed asking the grandparents about their skills and knowledge would benefit the school as a whole. He suggested forming a Grandparent Association to collaborate on ways grandparents could give more actively. His final word on being a grandparent:

I know there are blessings that we do not know that will be held for us in heaven, and Scripture is not clear on everything that is written, but our Lord is gracious enough and loves us like he loves everyone that there is a special place I think for grandparents as far as their grandchildren go.

Martha

Martha was 69 years old and married to John. She worked until her children were born; then, as John served in the military and on deployment much of the time, she dedicated her time to raising children and volunteering at her children’s school as a teacher’s aide until her children

were grown. Martha's family history was absent of a supportive extended family. Her memories of her grandparents were of them not being involved or engaged in her life. Because of her personal experience, she had a priority of investing in making memories that would become family stories that can be told for years to come. With this conviction, Martha and John decided to move to North Carolina to be closer to the grandchildren. Martha had considered their role as main substitute caregiver for the two granddaughters.

The grandparent resources—intellectual, emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual—are evident in their giving at the school since their very first year. The financial giving was only through fundraising, such as book drives. Their intellectual and emotional support was evident as Martha has created teaching resources for the three-year-old to learn her shapes, and they invested in taking the grandchildren to educational places to broaden their knowledge. More than these areas, Martha believed their physical presence is their greatest investment and helped both their grandchildren and their daughter: "Time and space. We are close; we planned it that way. So your impact, you have a greater impact on their lives." Martha believed the school activity of the grandparent is as important as the parent:

I think it is equally important because once you get to know the teachers or the people in the school, you usually make things better for the student. If you have never seen their teacher, you know you don't have the right to make any comments about it so.

Having given in her own children's public school and now in the Christian school, Martha believed there are opportunities regardless of the location. The benefit of the private setting was the smaller space and less of a chance of the student getting lost in the shuffle. She has also noted the difference in her grandchildren's spiritual growth in considering the grandchildren in the Christian school versus her other grandchildren in public education and appreciated that it

“allows me to share in the joy of Christ-centered learning and how that applies to everyday life within the community and world.” Her value in the Christian school is noting the life experiences her grandchildren will have: “they are still going to get exposed to the bad things, but in general they're going to be surrounded by people who love the Lord and going to make sure that there is a little of that as possible.”

Martha acknowledged the spiritual significance of the Christian school is linked to the grandparent's spiritual relationship.

In the Christian School setting, if your relationship with the Lord is important to you, then that setting is important. In the Christian School, it's easier if your relationship with the Lord is appropriate. If it's not then they're just going to a different kind of school. Martha encouraged grandparents who are not currently involved in their grandchild's life to foster these relationships by spending time with them in some way, shape, or form and making an effort. So, noted for grandparents who are at a distance: “special efforts must be made in order to foster closeness.” Martha believed administrators could be more proactive in asking for assistance when it is needed and filling out a questionnaire at the beginning of the year to show how the grandparents could be involved. Martha noted grandparents have to make it a priority in their life: “You spend time like you want to spend it. You make time and do the things you want to do; you do that through your whole life.” She also shared grandparents need to realize their mortality and the impact they could make: “You only get to be a grandparent to a child once. We are never guaranteed time for ‘one day I will get around to it.’ One day they will be a grandparent, so set a great example.”

Leigh

Leigh was 56 years old, married into a family of two children and six grandchildren. The relationship between the families was strong, with three grandchildren being college age, and the younger family living next door to Leigh and her husband and their three grandchildren attending the local Christian school. The grandchildren were currently in fourth grade, second grade, and K4. Leigh saw her primary role as a grandparent as being supportive of their family by offering to keep the kids when needed, supportive of their academics in being involved in programs and activities, and supportive of their Christian values. She had a close relationship with her grandmother and wanted to be able to have the same type of relationship with her grandchildren. She considered her relationship with the grandchildren as very strong through the daily interaction and simple traditions they enjoyed together.

Leigh had been engaged in the grandchildren's Christian school in all levels in a supportive role, as needed. Financially, she had paid their school tuition once when needed. Intellectual and emotional investments had not been separate events but incorporated in her interactions with the grandchildren. Physically, Leigh gave support through assisting with rides, volunteering when needed, and attending programs and activities. She believed the relationships have been strengthened through the "amount of time that we have with them, so it's not just the quality but the quantity that just bonds us together closer."

Leigh found "great joy" in the experience of contributing her resources to her grandchildren and attributed their closeness to the bond created in the Christian school setting. She attributed much of the value gained in its alignment with her own spiritual beliefs:

When you have Biblical values rooted in your own soul as well as your external life, seeing your grandchildren recite Scripture, learn songs, memorize poems, read books, etc.

that share these values, your joy only increases as you see them moving towards a life of following Jesus.

Leigh believed the Christian school environment has strengthened the cohesiveness of the family as the beliefs in the home are mirrored in the school setting. Leigh stated her gain from the experience being 3 John 1:4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (NIV). She saw spiritual evidence in her grandchildren adhering and embracing God's word in their lives and "shares in conversations that are deeper and richer as well as supportive of God's Kingdom work." She considered the spiritual investment she made as to the most important since it has eternal value.

The only challenges that hindered Leigh's giving are time constraints. She had a great relationship with her children and worked to support what they do and maintain their authority in her grandchildren's lives. Her advice to grandparents was to "take every opportunity to get involved because your time is short," and to try to get involved in their lives when they are young. She encouraged grandparents to continue to engage with grandchildren no matter what the age, but find "intentional ways to connect with them according to their interest and involvement and expect nothing in return." She encouraged administrators to make grandparents feel welcome and find ways to incorporate grandparents into the school community by volunteering with lunches or cutting materials out and finding out the grandparent's passion: "There are many different ways that they can contribute and are needed to contribute. We need to find meaningful ways for them to contribute without it being taking from them, but it being them contributing to their well-being too."

Lydia

Lydia was 71 years old and had been married for 51 years with 2 children; one is not married, and a daughter who is married with four children who attended the local Christian school. The oldest was in his first year in college, two granddaughters were in high school, and the youngest grandson was in sixth grade. Lydia was not close to her grandparents in that they did not invest much into her personal life, so she wanted to have a more positive relationship with her grandchildren. Lydia and her husband moved from Maryland to be close to their grandchildren. Her daughter taught first grade at the Christian school, which had provided opportunities for Lydia to volunteer in many ways. Lydia considered her relationship with her grandchildren as very close and worked to create a legacy through the traditions with the “memories creating a bond that lasts a lifetime,” although they stayed very busy with their many activities.

Lydia had given in most of the resource areas of the study. Although she had not had definite activities for financial, emotional, or intellectual investments, she had been active in attending all events such as school plays, mural competitions, athletic games, and Christmas programs as well as raised money through the school’s 5K event. She had supported the school by making homemade apple sauce and gingerbread houses, served ice to students, so it was sanitary, and helped with the beginning of year preparations of sorting papers and helping wherever needed. She supported her daughter by transporting the grandchildren from school when needed. Lydia believed these interactions had produced a closeness with her grandchildren by “connecting with them in their area, where they are, like in their school.” Lydia regarded her spiritual investment as most valuable understanding she will not always be here, so “making an eternal investment so that they have a faith is what matters.” She believed the Christian school’s focus on their spiritual development to be the most important aspect of the school’s mission.

Lydia had gained joy in giving and believed “there is a richness in being a part of God’s will and honoring this season of your life.” Her reward was “seeing them grow into such loving and kind young adults who love God and are happy brings satisfaction and thankfulness that I have been a small but very important part of their lives.” She hoped her contributions encouraged the teachers at the school she regarded as family and her grandchildren to know she is there for them. The only challenge she faced was time constraints and living 30 minutes from the school and believed society encourages grandparents to be a part of their grandchildren’s lives. She encouraged grandparents to make a conscious decision to get involved instead of “just settling in and not engaging before time slips away” as it will “enrich your life as well as the children.” She encouraged school administrators to continue maintaining a welcoming school environment and consider having a middle school project of interviewing a grandparent or older person to encourage that relationship. The lasting memory she wanted for her grandchildren is they will remember their Grandma helping at their school, and I will remember the joy that it brought me. In doing so, it demonstrates a love for God, for education, and also a love for our grandchildren, which will influence them for their lifetime.

Marsha

Marsha was 58 years old, and she and her husband had two children and four grandchildren, two of whom live close by and attend the local Christian school. They had worked together with the other set of grandparents in caregiving during the workday for the past nine years. Marsha had the grandchildren three days a week and filled in when needed. The grandchildren were in third grade and kindergarten and were very close since they have been with them since birth. Marsha taught preschool when her children were growing up. Marsha described her role as grandmother/mom because of the amount of care she had given. Since the

grandchildren had been in school, Marsha picked them up from school and kept them until the daughter gets off work. She believed she was very close to her grandchildren as they see her constantly, either at her house, school, or church. The school was just another extension of what they teach at home and their time together.

Beyond the physical and emotional resource of caring for the grandchildren, Marsha also contributed to the school by teaching a craft each season/holiday for each of her grandchild's grades. She considered this as one of her giftings, and she created a lesson with biblical integration, mathematical skill, and hands-on instruction of the craft. Marsha enjoyed using her gifts and being with the kids and knew some of the children might not have grandparents nearby; they all knew her by name and gave her hugs whenever she taught. She also saw the value in supporting the teachers: "My hope is to do something with the students who they enjoy and to give the teacher a break in their day and not have to worry about covering the time or the expense." Marsha felt comfortable volunteering because of her previous preschool experience, church attendance, and the school is small and welcoming and needing help. Marsha's financial investments were donations and supplies for her lessons, and her husband also volunteered to do repairs and installations when needed. Marsha supported her children by staying on-call for any need that may arise, respecting them as primary caregivers and protecting aspects such as homework as their area to give. She also attended any events or special programs the grandchildren were in. Marsha gave her spiritual resources in reinforcing what is taught in the school and her own beliefs through Bible reading with her grandchildren and prayer. She said their Bible knowledge from the school strengthened her faith in God.

Marsha's hope was her grandchildren have a relationship with the Lord and be in a safe, intimate environment where they can learn. Marsha valued the time she can spend with her

grandchildren in “laying good memories and instilling our values in them.” The greatest challenge she faced was time management and maintaining balance in her other responsibilities. Her daughter had shared how she wishes she could be as involved as Marsha is, so Marsha made sure and included her daughter in as much as possible to maintain a good relationship and kept her connected through conversation or sending her video of events such as field day. Marsha had friends who have questioned why she does all she does, but her response was “For me is the right thing to do, and it is a good fit.” Marsha’s advice to grandparents was to invest now because they grow up so fast and make sure they know they are not a burden but a blessing. Some grandparents may have questionable morals, and parents may have to consider that in allowing their children to be with them. Marsha shared some grandparents may not be comfortable being with children or working in the school setting but find ways to give in other areas: “We all have different gifts we can share, and doing the crafts is an area I love doing. If you can offer to share your talents, gifts, or life experience, you will be rewarded richly.” For school administrators, Marsha recommended “they encourage them to get involved because I think maybe some grandparents don't realize that they’re needed” and they may not realize there is a need or what to do. She recommended the school identify things or tasks others could do in support of the school like reading to the class, playground duty, etc. and see the family as a unit, including the grandparents.

Joanne

Joanne was 66 years old, married, and had two children who God miraculously gave them while on the mission field. One of her sons had two children, 7 years old and 15 months. Joanne’s parents died at a young age, so her children did not have grandparents growing up which made them very intentional in wanting to integrate Joanne and her husband into their

children's lives as grandparents and create lasting memories. The seven-year-old attended the local Christian school and was in first grade. Joanne had taught at this Christian school for 23 years which her children attended, she had taught her grandson's grade for the past two years, and she contributed since their first day of schooling. Joanne balanced the teacher versus grandmother role and taught her grandson the distinction in the classroom and outside of the classroom. She believed her giving as a grandparent plays into all areas, but she was able to distinguish the specific areas where she was able to take on the role of a grandparent. As a strong "family of prayer," she believed her primary role as a grandmother was to be a prayer warrior for him for his future, and "God would bless him with the gift of obedience, the gift of generosity, and the gift of evangelism."

As Joanne was integrated into so much of her grandson's life, she had given all the resources for this study. Financially, she paid the initial registration fee and then she split the cost of a remaining tuition bill with the other set of grandparents; she also paid for incidentals throughout the year as needed. Her emotional support was seen in the classroom and outside in helping him work through emotions and affirming leadership qualities she saw in his life. Intellectually, she helped with homework after school, on occasion; he was a strong reader, so she encouraged reading and created critical thinking games as much as possible on weekends or visits to her house. Joanne was physically present not only in school but also in support of her son's vocational ministry in keeping her grandsons when needed after school and on the weekends and received a text for assistance on a consistent basis. As a Christian educator, Joanne's spiritual aspects were interwoven in all of her life from her teaching lessons to everyday life through incorporating prayer, Bible reading, and discussing spiritual topics learned at school around the Sunday table as an extended family. Joanne believed the Christian school is

the “perfect place” for godly instruction since they have “Bible four days a week, chapel once a week and they study biblical characters” and apply these truths to everyday life. Joanne believed the spiritual outweighs the academic as well as all other areas of life as it has eternal value and her prayer was the outcome is “God works in my grandson's life in such a way that it affects other people, the ripple effect.” She had taken advantage of living lessons in helping the homeless and downtrodden with her grandson as an example of the eternal value of giving. One of her favorite verses was 3 John 1:4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (NIV) which she said was the “cry of my heart not that even my children or my grandchild would be wealthy, but I pray that they will be spiritually wealthy.”

Joanne believed one of the advantages of being involved in her grandchild’s life is it keeps her young because it forced her to be more active. There were no challenges Joanne faced in giving or foresaw in the future as she believed God equipped her with exactly what she needed to give. She did believe society instills a selfish, materialistic mindset for grandparents who either promotes them spending on themselves or throwing money at their grandchildren “instead of investing time and investing words into the lives of our grandchildren. They invest in them in things, things that do not promote their spiritual growth but actually can kind of injury it.” She did admit having grandparenting as a priority caused her to live more frugal.

I see this as an investment commitment in things that have an eternal value so when I’m purchasing something I say is this something I really need or is this just a want; maybe that money could best be used in a different way to help my grandchildren.

To grandparents who are not involved, she challenged them to get involved as they are missing out on the richness of that relationship; “that is going to be your greatest joy as they grow older and you begin to hear your words that you have invested and hear them come out or their

mouths. You know it's just wonderful.” For parents and school administrators, Joanne challenged them to understand the wealth of wisdom grandparents possess through skill, knowledge, and lived experiences that can be so valuable to grandchildren. She also recommended finding adoptive grandparents through the church to invest in students who do not have a grandparent or one that lives close. She also recommended the school encouraging their grandparents to join together to pray for the school, their grandchildren, and their families.

Lorraine

Lorraine was 54 years old, had two daughters, the oldest one having two children, a nine-year-old and three-year-old, the oldest being in third grade at the local Christian school. Although she was not raising her grandsons, Lorraine had stepped in as close to primary caregiver since birth and saw herself as much as a mom as grandmother since her daughter had been in graduate school and the father was mostly absent due to the military service. Lorraine’s own extended family was very strong with all aspects of the family living close together and very integrated into each other’s lives. Lorraine’s role as a grandparent was “unique in that I am more of a parent than a grandparent which I often regret that I don’t get more of a grandparent.”

Lorraine had given all aspects of the resources for this study in all areas of life, but specifically toward the Christian school. She believed this school “fits perfect with him and his attitudes” as the “curriculum is extremely structured” with critical thinking and incorporating Biblical integration into the lessons to give her grandson a good Christian background she is able to witness on a daily basis. Lorraine had given financial resources through anonymously giving toward his tuition, paying for all of the incidentals, and aftercare expenses as well as donations and service projects to the school itself. Lorraine provided emotional and intellectual support through her physical investment in her grandson’s life. She took him to school each day and

picked up after school, even having him at nights when her daughter needed it and helped her grandson process through the events and emotions of the day, and she attempted to “set an example for him” in giving a more mature perspective. She checked his homework each night, signed off as the parent, and managed his lunch orders when needed as well as attending field days and any other events. Grandparents’ day was a special day for Lorraine as she could truly be a grandparent instead of being both grandparent and mom. Her spiritual investment was also reinforced with her mom through instilling Scripture and reinforcing the Bible verses that are learned in school and at church.

Lorraine’s relationship with her grandson was strong as they were together constantly, and she considered it mutually beneficial as they prayed over each day in the car ride to school and she knew “firsthand all the wonderful things he’s learning in history, science, and music.” She knew enough about what he was being taught to “call him on things” as well as “him holding her accountable” for what he had learned morally and spiritually. Lorraine believed the “investment has awesome returns that are priceless” in not only giving him a Christian worldview but also the personal gain in building her faith.

His heart makes my heart hurt, or rejoice, or get excited, and I think that is the biggest thing that I’m able to do. Because of the Christian education, because everything he sees and talks about God comes into it every day, no matter if it’s a homework assignment or driving down the road, it’s a constant conversation to him, right up there with Minecraft and Star Wars. So there’s not ever a time where it’s absent, and that impacts me because I see it all the time.

The outcome she hoped for was she would be able to make memories and her grandson would follow God’s call in being in the ministry or whatever God calls him, and she believed leaving

“legacy that your kid or a grandchild knows that it is not just about them is the biggest gain that I could get.”

The challenges Lorraine faced were more in not being able to give more financially due to her obligations and the taxing nature of carrying the weight of acting more of a primary caregiver than being able to be a grandmother and coordinating with her daughter for school responsibilities. She has had to help her grandson work through his emotional turmoil in missing his parents, which had taken a toll on Lorraine and her relationship with her daughter. She felt a shift in society in millennials having expectation that grandparents should contribute for whatever is wanted instead of being more independent and responsible and advises parents to have a more mature view of life and balance. Lorraine acknowledged grandparents might have “more flexibility to be a part of their lives” but to make sure grandparents balance their obligations in time and resources in considering how much they will invest, so there is a healthy balance for the grandparent’s well-being. She challenged grandparents who are not involved to “seize every moment and memory you can, no matter how big or small.” For school administrators, Lorraine recommended sending communication out at the beginning of the year to find out how the grandparents would like to be involved and their passions. She recommended looking at simple tasks that could be distributed to the grandparents to incorporate them into the school environment without taxing the teachers or disrupting their class schedule.

Wanda

Wanda was a 59-year-old woman who had one daughter and one grandson who was not born yet, and one granddaughter who was in kindergarten in the local Christian school. Wanda was very close to her grandparents, even living with them at one point in their life and wanted to emulate the influence they were to her and be even more to her grandchildren. Her grandfather

had one request that his grandchildren be in church, and Wanda's mom honored that request even though she was not religious herself. Wanda carried on that tradition in wanting her grandchildren to be in a place where religious activities are emphasized to honor her grandfather. She grew up in the area but had moved away and decided to move back when her daughter had her first child. Wanda had been actively involved in her granddaughter's life from birth in being one of the caregivers during the workday and picking her up after preschool every day. Wanda was involved in the choice of the Christian school (although not her first choice) since her daughter went to a private school and the location of the school was the primary factor in that both sets of grandparents could pick her up conveniently. Wanda described her relationship with her granddaughter as "I am not a second mother, but I am." Wanda tried to negotiate as much time with her granddaughter as possible, and she felt she had a great deal of influence in the decision for the family since she was very close to her daughter. She described her relationship with her granddaughter as very close and extremely interactive.

Wanda's contributions within the Christian school setting had been in many areas. The son-in-law had not allowed Wanda to help with the tuition payments, but she made some donations to the school. Wanda had her granddaughter four days a week from 5:30-8:00 am and dropped her off at school. She believed God had a plan in her selecting a vocation that had tremendous flexibility so that she could be as involved as needed or as possible. She tried to make it, so she had the grandchild for any days off and took her with her when possible on her worksite, so she had that time. She also helped with school events such as the recent Easter egg hunt and special occasions such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. While she did look to be more involved, she also protected the moms' activity in the school: "I take a step back from those other moms too to make sure that I am not there too much." She had shown her granddaughter

emotional support in talking out events from the day and helping her work through the emotions from those events. If she had her in the afternoons, Wanda went over the little school books she had and helped her in any way she could intellectually. Her spiritual support was in “teaching her to do her prayers at night” and talking “to her about God about Jesus because it comes up more conversation now.”

Wanda believed the Christian school made it come full circle in “everybody is on the same page.” She believed the Christian school was an extension of her values in that the school was a safe place that provided guidance, describing the school as “Loving Hands that are constantly there for her to support her and love her no matter what she does and that is in my sense the Christian values, it’s the Christian life.” Wanda’s hope was her granddaughter have foundational values that will carry her through the rest of her life, and she grows up to be a beautiful, loving person. The most valuable resource Wanda wanted to give her granddaughter is a love for the intangible things in life of respecting and loving others and seeing the relationships she has in her life, more than the materialistic things.

Finances and knowledge of the different ways Wanda could give are the greatest challenges. In learning about the school, she was looking for new ways to be involved. Wanda worked to keep a good relationship with her daughter and son-in-law through supporting their decisions and making sure there was clear communication. Her advice to other grandparents was to start in whatever way they can to be involved and not feel guilty but give whatever time and resources they had, whether close or far away. For the school administration, Wanda encouraged them to have more than just grandparents’ day but consider grandparents’ experience and knowledge in finding ways for them to be involved as it will show respect and appreciate to them

personally. She suggested having a questionnaire given to the parents at orientation if they believed the grandparent would want to be involved and provide information to the school.

Abigail

Abigail was 63 years old and had one daughter who taught at the Christian school with two grandsons who have attended since kindergarten and are now in 11th grade and 8th grade. Both Abigail and her husband are public school educators; Abigail worked as a teacher for 12 years and an elementary counselor for 21 years. She appreciated the close relationship with her grandparents and wanted that same type of relationship with her grandchildren. She regarded her grandparent role as an extended parent, describing their relationship as

Loving, supportive, concerned, looking out for their good moral and ethical character, teaching them right from wrong, setting a good example for them to follow, always being there for them no matter what, and spending as much time as possible with them. Those boys are my life; I would do anything in the whole wide world for them.

Abigail and her husband had been active in their grandsons' lives since birth and enjoyed retirement in shifting their time management to being able to spend more time with them and "building memories and showing my grandsons I value them and their school by participating as often as possible in their school community." Her involvement in their lives had allowed her to give all of her resources through school activities and daily interactions. Because of her high comfort level in the school system, she was self-generated in much of her actions since the very first day for 10 years. She was not only involved with their grandsons in the school but also volunteering to help the teachers in tutoring individually or reading to the class and volunteering several hours for whatever the teacher needed at least once a week. She loved volunteering as the students started to recognize her and "you become famous in the best way." When the

grandsons were in middle school, it “was not as cool for grandma to be hanging out” so she shifted to mainly going to events such as field day, grandparents’ day, fundraisers, and athletic events. She had given financially mainly through the fundraisers, yearly donations, and teacher supplies. As a former teacher, her emotional and intellectual support had been both toward her grandsons and other students in tutoring and being very encouraging and positive. She tried to enhance her grandsons’ educational experiences by going to places such as museums, historical landmarks, and even camping using all parts of life as a teaching tool and sharing her own educational experience as an inspiration. In addition to her physical investment at school, she also provided support for her daughter by picking up from school, taking them to eat, and providing activities of swimming or bike riding. Her spiritual investment was made by asking the grandsons about the biblical lessons they learned in school or Sunday school and having discussions about moral questions. As a public school educator, Abigail respected her daughter’s choice for the school but initially had some reservation. In taking a closer look at the school and being with them over the years, she loved the school for its small intimate environment, their ability to implement good moral behavior in their students, the families’ similar yet diverse spiritual backgrounds, the parents’ super-involvement, the ability for teachers to not be stressed out, and the spiritual aspect being in the forefront of all that the school does. She described it as a “very unique culture” that is like a “little village” where everybody is involved and where children do not “get lost in the shuffle.”

Abigail knew her grandsons and daughter are proud of their involvement at the school, and her daughter had a stronger bond with her because of her activity and “she can depend on us to pick up the pieces if need be.” Her contribution made her happy and very blessed to have the opportunity, and she felt sorry for those that do not get involved or live far away from their

grandchildren. Her hope was her grandsons have the “opportunity to grow and develop emotionally, socially, and cognitively in a learning environment that encompasses just more than academics,” developing lifelong friendships and shaping them into “spiritual learners with an excellent education” and pass these values to their own children.

Abigail had not experienced many challenges in giving except the recent caretaking for her father, who is out of town, which is a time constraint. Her close relationship with her daughter who worked at the school gave Abigail many opportunities to volunteer such as serving as a poetry judge and on an accreditation committee, and she encourages other grandparents to learn as much about the school as possible. She believed grandparents are “probably more involved now since both parents are working” and the grandparents could step in as they are “much more active nowadays than they used to be.” She encouraged grandparents to get involved and understand what is gained from the experience: “my happiest times are when I’m going to see my grandchildren. So my heart is most full when I am able to participate with my grandchildren and their parents.” She encouraged administrators to consider all the ways grandparents can connect since they may have “more time, experience and wisdom than we had as busy, struggling parents.” Also, understand grandparents may be a “little nervous or reluctant because they’re afraid they are not going to know what to do,” so have a variety of things to choose from “whether it be daily, weekly, monthly or couple times a year” and address any concerns to get them passed the hesitation.

Caroline

Caroline was 58 years old and had two sons; the oldest had a five-year-old son who was in PK4 at the local Christian school for his first year. The families are very close, living on the same street and the wife growing up with the family and even living with them for a time during

her childhood. She noted how her grandparents did not keep them that much and were not that involved, but as society changed, she wanted to be more intimately involved as a grandparent. Caroline helped select the school by touring the campus and liked the atmosphere and the values and beliefs were aligned with their beliefs and immediately started contributing toward the Christian school. Caroline hated to be described as an “overpowering grandparent” but saw herself more as a “second parent” since she had been integrated into her son and daughter-in-law’s lives and subsequently, her grandson’s life, and had cared for him since birth by keeping him nights and weekends as well as finding babysitters. She believed the grandson would say they were close; she did many boys things such motorcycles, and the expectation was she was part of his everyday life.

Caroline’s involvement in her grandson’s life as well as her dedication to him being in a Christian school setting provided opportunities to give her resources in all areas. Financially, Caroline was the primary tuition payer as well as providing supplies, fundraisers, and donations. When the family was deciding on the school, the financial commitment was an obstacle, and Caroline wanted to provide the resources so it would not be a burden on the family. Caroline transported her grandson in the morning and connected with the teacher each day to find out if there was any need. She found the school very welcoming, and she was looking for a way to connect, volunteered as mystery reader in the class, and stayed current on any classroom events or activities so she could attend. Since this was their first year, she was still learning about the school and looked forward to giving more in the future. Her emotional and intellectual support was offered through their open communication about things going on in school or homework or reading that had to be done. Caroline worked on keeping an open line of communication with all members of the family and encouraged her grandson’s questions and felt close enough to give

advice when it was warranted. Caroline offered spiritual guidance in “teaching him right from wrong and how to treat people.” Her selection of the Christian school was based on concern for the negative influence in society today and a desire to have her grandson in an environment that would provide a Christian background with “people that have the same values and beliefs that I do.”

Caroline did not necessarily see that she gained from giving her resources but hoped her grandson would have good self-worth and be a good person, get closer to God, and be in a safe place with quality friendships and get a good education. She believed the greatest investment she made was her physical investment of the amount of time they were able to share, and she made it a priority to build her schedule around the grandchild’s activities.

Caroline did not have any challenges in her giving at this time, and she felt that although there had been some criticism for how much she was involved, it worked for them.

I think if grandparents want to do this and if the children are ok with it, if it works in that family, it works. I’ve heard other people say in this day and time; it almost takes a tribe to raise a child.

Caroline also noted how society had changed in grandparents being more involved in their grandchildren’s lives, and millennials are less independent and “are more willing to take whatever you are willing to pay.” Caroline encouraged all grandparents to be involved because “you don’t know what you are missing.” She noted there were many reasons for not being involved that can be more of a family dynamic that needed to be resolved, but grandparents should attempt to make an effort since their grandchild may want their involvement in their life. For school administrators, Caroline gave examples of ways grandparents could volunteer such as story time, being another adult in a classroom, helping with car-line, etc. She admitted that this

kind of involvement would be better in the younger grades, but she hoped she is able to be involved in the higher grades in the same way she was in her own children's schooling.

Sally

Sally was a 72-year-old woman who had two children, a son unmarried, and a daughter who had three boys ages 16, 14, and 12 who all attended the local Christian school since they started school. Sally described her role as a grandparent as "second mom," even calling them her children on occasion and made them the priority of her life, "and what I do revolves around their needs first. Because of my age and their age, I won't probably see great-grandchildren, so I spend all my time with them because I want to." Sally believed she has a good relationship with her grandchildren, and she believed the Christian school was a good environment for her grandsons to be in considering the poor moral culture in our country.

Sally had given in all aspects of her resources in both helping select the school and contributing immediately in supporting her grandsons' Christian education over the years. Her financial contributions had been more directed at the household expenses so her daughter could afford the school tuition payment. She had participated and given to fundraisers, donations, and given appliances from her vocation to benefit the school. Of the extracurricular activities the grandsons were involved in, Sally preferred to support and be active in their music activities more than sports. Since the music department was very active, she attended all concerts and community events as well as assisting in bake sales. Sally had developed a strong relationship where her grandsons felt "comfortable asking me questions, and I'm comfortable asking them issues they have and making recommendations. I'm trying to keep them on the right path and encourage them to do the good things and right things." Intellectually, Sally had been titled "Grammar Control," and the grandsons asked her for help on their assignments related to

English, as well as help with other homework assignments to support her daughter. Sally also liked to challenge her grandsons' academics by helping with homework, purchasing books, and taking them to cultural events although she admits her tendency to "expect equal achievements, i.e., grades, is a weakness and not realistic." Sally regarded the physical support as being very important since her daughter was single and they worked to coordinate all transportation and care so she could work. Spiritually, Sally shared one of her fondest memories she had with her grandsons.

We called it snuggling when they were in preschool, and I would be there at night while she was working, we would all get in the bed, and they would quote me their bible verses that they had learned from the day at school, and then we read from the Bible. That is my favorite memory because they were so small, and the Christian school did not hold back on the requirements because of age.

When Sally attended the school's chapel services, she saw the Christian focus that created a "sense of belonging." The family used to attend church together growing up, but they had all chosen their churches now.

Sally considered her involvement as rewarding where "both benefit greatly" and the contribution within the Christian school "strengthens the bond between the two and often gives incentive to the child toward achieving success." Sally personally found the investment brought her much joy and considered her involvement as "wanted and needed and a rewarding experience for me." Sally hoped her contributions had a positive, beneficial impact on them to allow them to accomplish what they can in life. She was proud of how they handle themselves and their abilities, and she hoped the outcome was her grandsons are "well-grounded, young Christian men that will go out in the community and do the right thing and be a role model for

others.” Her most precious resource was her time as she realized “what I spend with them now is valuable because I have so little left.”

Sally’s husband had a stroke a couple of years ago, which made Sally’s ability to give her resources more challenging. She also still dealt with the ex-husband and the aftereffects of his absence in the grandsons’ lives as well as making sure she respected her daughter’s authority as their mom to her grandsons. Sally attempted to remember her daughter’s rightful place as a mom and stay respectful and positive to keep a good relationship with the grandsons. Her viewpoint of grandparent involvement was contrary to what she thought was portrayed in society as a “selfish attitude” of spending everything on themselves and “feeling like they have raised their children and it is their children’s responsibility to raise them.” She also opposed society’s diminished view of the resources grandparents have in being labeled as the “invisible generation.” “The practice of contributing has impacted my perspective because I feel I am a vital part of educating, supporting, and showing my grandchildren I love them with actions and not just words.” Sally considered her grandchildren as a blessing, and she treasured the time with them. In speaking to other grandparents, Sally challenged them to consider the impact Christian education could have on their grandchildren’s future in “learning to do right, how to make the most of their lives, and how to avoid some the pitfalls.” Her advice to school administrators was to consider the different family dynamics when planning events and consider sending a special invitation to grandparents to get involved with provided ideas of how they can connect. Her final word on Christian education was

There is no sacrifice that’s too great to be a part of their Christian education if you can do it, whether it is funding or time or whatever it takes. I think the fact that they learn so much of the Bible that will be with them forever is important.

Ginger

Ginger was a 69-year-old woman who had three children and had seven granddaughters, from 7 years old to 12 months: “All three of my daughters were pregnant at the same time, so we had three grandchildren within six months.” Five of the seven were at the local Christian school with twins in Pre-K and three in first grade; the next granddaughter who was three, would be starting the school next year. Ginger was a former kindergarten teacher, her husband taught agriculture in the county, and her daughter was a principal at a public school, so education was a high priority in their family. Ginger and her husband retired to take care of the three youngest when they were born, but the family realized the strain it was putting on them and hired a babysitter to take the caregiver role allowing Ginger and her husband to assist and keep them on occasion. Ginger made sure older people were in her daughters’ lives, and they have shared they want the same for their children: “they’ve shared with me that they hope their children can have the influence of older people like they did, and they do.” Ginger loved being a grandparent and said she had a very close relationship to everyone with all the families living within seven minutes of each other, and the grandchildren expected to see her every day.

Ginger had been able to invest her resources in the granddaughter’s Christian education, both assisting in selection of the school and immediately getting involved in supporting the school and families. She and her husband helped transport the grandchildren to and from school until the school purchased a bus, specifically for their family’s needs. Now, they help get them to the bus stop and keep them after school when needed. She kept an afternoon schedule and helped with homework when she kept them.

Ginger did not help in the financial aspect but felt her physical presence allowed her daughters to work fulltime and they “feel at ease” and know “they’ve got the protection of the

grandparents and the children genuinely enjoy it.” She also helped her granddaughters through their emotional moments both in school and before and after school; she tried to redirect them in giving them perspective and emphasizing what matters most. One of the most unique ways Ginger found to volunteer was by being at the school one day a week with a church friend cooking lunch for the whole school. She also assisted with parties and classroom events either in place of the daughter or alongside her. The spiritual aspect of their relationship was integrated into not only the school but also in their conversation, their activities, and the church they all attended.

Even though Ginger taught in a public school, Ginger had her daughters in private school and wanted the same for her grandchildren, if possible. She described the school as a wonderful place where she felt they were protected from much of what is going on in the world. She valued the spiritual focus and her investment in her grandchildren in the Christian school as the most important.

It just a wonderful feeling when we go to chapel. I always come, and I watch everything they do here. It’s just so special, and when they finish, I look over at the parents, and I say, and that’s what we pay for; it’s worth every dime. It is wonderful, it really is. If you can engrain the spiritual, then the rest will follow.

Ginger had a “feeling of special importance” and gains great satisfaction in giving and was “happy and pleased that I physically can get in here and help” and even into the school community: “we know them by first names they know us.” She hoped that because of the relationship “that I will always mean something in their lives.” Her goal in giving the resources was they would have a “good foundation” and “our grandchildren will continue to be Christians and will choose a Christian college. That’s about the most important; if you do that, then you are

going to be fine.” Ginger’s main challenges were keeping up with the seven grandchildren under the age of 7, and she admitted she does get tired, but considered herself in good health and was happy and thankful she was able to give. “It is satisfaction, and if I’m tired, I am thinking, but they need for me to be there, but I get to rest in about an hour. I will get a good night sleep tonight.” Her friends have challenged her in questioning why she does all she does, but she considered this her priority for this season since she knows once they get older, they will not need her as much.

Her advice to grandparents who are not involved was to consider their priorities and not to be selfish but rather than “missing the most important thing,” to understand it is not about “buying a lot of stuff, but it is just the little things- what could make you happier than to see these children happy, and they are happy with their grandparents and parents.” Parents need to be open to ask for the grandparents’ help since they have “one chance to do this right and it will take sacrifice,” and grandparents are there to “help you hopefully get this right.” She felt the school is a welcoming and appreciative place, and she hoped families would reach out to other families in encouraging them to be a part of the Christian school.

Emma

Emma was 71 years old and had three children and ten grandchildren. Four grandchildren attended one Christian school with three having graduated, and the last was a junior this year, and three grandchildren attended a different Christian school in fourth grade, sixth grade, and high school. Emma was a former educator who started in public education but was convicted about Christian education when she started teaching in a Christian school and placed her children in the Christian school. Emma taught the full 12 years at the same school; then her daughter put her four children at the school also. She and her husband lived in the same

town during the grandchildren's younger years, and then moved and lived about 250-500 miles away from their children, but made a commitment to be as involved in their Christian education as possible. One daughter-in-law was an educator and worked as an adjunct for the Christian school her children attend.

Emma's involvement in contributing to her grandchildren's Christian education varied throughout the years. In the early years, Emma had not given much into the financial aspect, but since moving, her and her husband gave in fundraising, supplies, and paying for half of the tuition for the remaining junior with her son paying the other half. When she lived in the same town as her daughter when her grandchildren were young, she was very hands-on and invested in emotional support by helping with homework, reinforcing Biblical concepts taught in school through discussion, and was very involved in their everyday lives. Since moving to another state, Emma had to be more intentional with connecting by phone or FaceTime in asking about what they are learning or having them recite Bible verses to them to remain interactive with them. Academically, Emma's husband was the science expert, and Emma was English, so they assisted in homework both when they lived close and from a distance with any assignments the grandchildren had. Emma and her husband attempted to visit every two to three weeks to be there for every major school event such as plays, activities, graduations, and even when the grandkids had a day or half-day off. She quantified 98% of their travel to see the grandchildren are connected to their Christian school. Emma described her motivation to stay connected with her grandchildren in their Christian education:

First of all, it is important to me. We did not want the secular humanistic philosophy of the worldview presented to this child who was just budding in her knowledge. We wanted her to have a God-centered worldview. Second of all, I knew it was important to

their parents. Her parents both wanted that for her as well. Third, we wanted to reinforce what was being done, and both sets of these grandchildren are involved in Christian education were very close to us. Her parents both wanted that for her as well.

The gain Emma experienced from the investment was mainly through the spiritual impact on her grandchildren. She quoted 3 John 1:4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (NIV) and said “It is the peace of mind knowing that I am investing in eternity; that the things that these children are learning in Christian school, even though they might not be evident right away, that those seeds are sown.” She reinforced this through engaging with the grandchildren face-to-face or by phone or FaceTime in talking about their Scripture verses, talking about questions, and sharing what they have heard in church or at school.

Emma felt a strong connection to all of her grandchildren through their investment but especially the ones who attended the school she taught at. She regarded the emotional and spiritual resources as being most important but knew if the financial were not given, one of her grandchildren would not be in the Christian school. Finances and distance presented the greatest challenges in being on a fixed income and living far away, but she believed the sacrifice is non-negotiable, “for where your treasure is there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21, KJV) and worth the extra effort to stay connected and provide support. The opinions of others did not sway Emma from her convictions and wanting to support in whatever way she could. She challenged the school to consider the untapped resource of a grandparent’s experience and walk with the Lord, and the imprint they could make on children. She encouraged school administrators to keep open communication with grandparents by requesting contact information to willing participants and including them in the communication of ways they can stay connected for both

those who are close and far away. She suggested letting them know about incidental expenses they might consider as a way to support financially. She challenged grandparents to get involved with whatever they have regardless of whether they are near or far and suggest to invest spiritually by praying for their grandkids and know the investment is far-reaching.

And to know that you're investing in not only the second generation but the third generation; only God knows what those children are going to be called to do. And what an impact they are going to be able to have on the world and in their own immediate countries, states, cities, and families.

Donald

Donald was an 80-year-old who had 4 children, 11 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren; 2 sons who lived out of state with 5 children and 7 grandchildren, and 2 daughters who lived locally. The two sons' children had only attended public school; locally, one daughter had three children in public school, and the other daughter had four children who attend the local Christian school as 12th, 10th, 8th and 6th grades. They had attended the school since kindergarten. Donald and his wife lived in the same area for over 60 years and considered all the families to be close enough not to relocate or change location. Donald's grandparents did not have much interplay with him regarding the school or his interest, so he wanted to make sure he would "provide an atmosphere that would be pleasant for them" and show his support as much as possible. Donald described he and his wife as "doting grandparents" who considered his role as "cheerleader, encourager, supporter, a friend" and their retired life revolved around both local and distant trips to be a part of anything their grandchildren are doing to the point of needing a calendar to keep up with it all. "We get to do the fun kinds of things; we are not involved in raising them, we just get to do the fun things and be friends in whatever."

Since Donald and his wife were involved in their grandchildren's lives regardless of location, much of the involvement was distributed as evenly as possible between both the public and the private school. He noted their grandchildren's education was the largest part of their lives and where they spend the majority of their childhood. One of the main differences Donald saw was the private school had more of a need for monetary donations, which he had given over the years because "the school is their life and it is a private school, so they depend on people to give." His daughter had been able to handle the tuition, but Donald covered incidentals when they were needed. His emotional support came in the form of being a positive influence in any way he could as a counter to negativity in the world around them. His intellectual support had been toward all of his grandchildren in the form of helping with homework or projects where he could use his engineering expertise. The spiritual aspect was also distinct in Christian school education. Donald had been able to give by asking about their biblical studies but for all the grandchildren in being at special events like baptisms or Christmas programs, and his own moral conduct: "I try to live in a manner that is worthy of what the Bible says" and he had given his grandchildren religious books to encourage their faith. Another aspect that was more elevated in the Christian school was his assistance in physical needs like transportation which Donald did on a secondary basis in being available when needed, with that need diminishing as the grandchildren had gotten older. His involvement at the school had also been in a secondary role whenever his daughter was not able to be present. His main contribution had been in attending events such as games, plays, presentations, and activities the school had. Donald believed the Christian school had more flexibility than a public school to involve grandparents more; for instance, Donald was able to share about a mission's trip he took to Thailand with one of the classes. Donald shared the importance of changing with the interest and needs of the

grandchildren as they got older: “we show interest in and always ask them about their sports or classwork that’s going on and what they are studying and then you never know what that's doing but they know you ask and have taken an interest in doing so.”

One of the greatest concerns Donald had was making sure all his grandchildren are treated equally, which motivated them to be present for as many of their events to show their support, if humanly possible. Donald regarded these actions as adding to his life both physically, in keeping him active and giving him the opportunity to connect with other people in the community on a consistent basis, and emotionally in providing opportunities for him to be a positive influence and receiving their love: “they’re very loving, responsive to us, so we get hugs and love you and all of that regularly. There is a lot to be said for that kind of stuff. You can't measure it.” He regarded his relationship with his grandchildren as stronger because of his involvement in having a greater opportunity to interact with them. His hope was the contribution has a lasting effect on his grandchildren: “I hope I have some good citizens, some productive grandchildren, and faithful grandchildren living faithful in the sense of to the Bible and to their God.” The greatest challenges Donald considered was making sure he stayed healthy enough to stay engaged. His mother came to live with them as her health was failing, which also affected their ability to be as involved as they wanted. He believed grandparents who are not involved are

missing an opportunity to influence their grandchildren. I think there's some degree of satisfaction in being involved in thinking that you might have had a little bit of something to do with their success, or where they are. At least, it’s a source of pride to have the grandchildren that I have. The attitudes they have and the outcomes they have, not that I did all that, but hopefully, some of it was because of that.

Results

The central research question and three research subquestions guiding this study formed the foundation for the data collection and data analysis process. Through the data analysis process in use of the NVivo qualitative software and my analysis acting as the human instrument, one significant theme with five subthemes was revealed through the interview, focus group, grandparent letter, and support documents that were collected. The one significant theme with five subthemes that emerged from this investigation were based on the data collected through these measures and being guided by the research areas of (a) the importance of generative actions, (b) environmental factors in contributing, and (c) the meaning of being a grandparent, as well as the significance of the setting of the Christian school with recommendations for how to promote further grandparent involvement in the Christian school setting. The following section explains the theme development and supporting evidence for the one significant theme and the five subthemes.

Theme Development

Using data directly from the participants' perspective created a picture to describe the participant's life experience. Through individual interviews, focus group interviews, grandparent letter, and support documents, certain words, phrases, and/or concepts were repeated and identified. Classifying data through a tagging and grouping process and the use of NVivo software supported the investigative process. The generation of codes was a result of intentionally keeping the research questions at the forefront of my mind. Established out of the significant statements were 37 diverse clusters of meaning (see Appendix J). This analysis was important because the resulting themes were the foundation for describing what the phenomenon was and how it was experienced (Creswell, 2013). Aligned with a transcendental

phenomenological interpretation of the essence of non-custodial grandparents contributing to their grandchild in the Christian school, the meanings were classified into one major theme with five subthemes (Creswell, 2013). The main theme was support, and the five subthemes were: (a) why grandparents support, (b) ways grandparents support, (c) aids or barriers to contributing resources, (d) generative results in supporting, and (e) encouragement to be a support.

Support. In considering the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute toward their grandchild's Christian school education, it was not surprising the theme of support became the primary focus. A supportive role was not just a portion of the grandparents' life but instead was a defining element toward their role, in the family primarily, but also broadening to the school defining their role in the school community in wanting to strengthen the school's mission and teachers. Some of the most common terms in the study were support, help, give, and volunteering (see Appendix J), and the findings highlighted that the grandparents made life choices so they could position themselves to be able to support what they love to the greatest degree (personal interviews).

All of the grandparents defined their role as a support to the family with varying degrees of involvement from the grandparent. A large portion of the grandparents described their role as a second mom/mother or an extended parent: "Grandmother/mom, of course, I've had them you know anywhere between 3 to 5 days a week since they were infants" (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019); "I am not a second mother, but I am" (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019). Many have worked in tandem with the parents to cover all of the responsibilities of the family whether it was within or outside of the Christian school, and at times some grandparents carried more of a parent role than a grandparent role: "My role as a grandparent is unique in that I am more of a parent than a grandparent which I often regret that I

don't get more of a grandparent" (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019). Fourteen of the fifteen grandparents had chosen to live close to their grandchildren with five of the grandparents relocating and four retiring when the grandchildren were born so they could be a supportive presence in whatever way the family needed: "We moved here from Connecticut and retired to be with our grandchildren" (Martha, focus group, May 4, 2019); "the truth of the matter is my husband, and I retired out of the county when the girls were having these babies so we took care of the babies" (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019). Others in the study referred to their role as "cheerleader, encourager, supporter, a friend" (Donald, personal interview, May, 2, 2019), and "prayer warrior" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019), indicating their support through accompanying the family, while others defined it as a "secondary shield" as sort of a second string to jump into action, mainly when needed (John, personal interview, April, 22, 2019).

The support the grandparents offered was not limited to the family but also extended to the school itself. The grandparents gave in hope it encouraged the teachers of the school in their calling at the Christian school. Through the interactions and contributions of coming into the classroom and even teaching a lesson for the teacher, the grandparents wanted the teachers to feel supported and encouraged: "I don't like to see the teachers drained; I feel if we can give that little bit of time and resources or supplies, then that's something that helps them one way or the other" (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

Why grandparents support. The first subtheme of the main theme of support provided the foundation, and the reason grandparents support birthed out of their dedication to their family. The study findings highlight the grandparents' belief that family is the core from which everything else emanates. Each of the grandparents fashioned their supportive role based on

their past relationships and their dedication to family cohesion. The school was considered a part of the grandchildren's lives and the involvement of the grandparent in contributing in the school setting was considered an extension of the family life that was experienced between the grandparents, parents, and grandchildren. The supportive role the grandparents had in the school setting was a byproduct of the grandparent's dedication to the family.

The core is the family. The study's findings revealed the foundation of the grandparent's contribution was rooted in the family unit and the role the grandparent played in the family and the subsequent connection to the school as part of the grandchild's life: "We are all very close very family-oriented those boys are my life I would do anything in the whole wide world for them and my daughter and her husband, and they're just a very wonderful family" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019);

Well, they expect to see me daily; it's just a real close relationship because we've been with them ever since they were born and we all live in houses right in the neighborhood so we can actually get to them and help. Our older daughter, she's 7 minutes from us so we're really close that we can get to them when they need help. (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019)

This dedication to the family's and the grandparents' decision to take an active role in the grandchild's life was based on their own past experiences with their parents and grandparents. Both positive examples the grandparents wanted to emulate, as well as negative examples the grandparents wanted to avoid, were instrumental in how much they wanted to be involved in their grandchildren's lives: "I didn't have a real strong relationship with my grandparents because my son's grandparents died early and so he said I want that. I want him to have memories of grandmother and grandfather" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019). "My

grandparents would never had much interplay with them about school, but my parents were interested. So I try to provide the atmosphere that would be pleasant for them” (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

A common concept in the study was cohesion and working as a family unit: “So I think being a part of your grandchild’s life adds, it does not subtract, I think it adds immensely to the overall cohesiveness of the family, and even though they don't live with you, you still support them” (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019). This concept was evident in both the grandparent support of the family and also in the Christian school beliefs and values being aligned with the family’s values:

Well, it has uniquely supported what we believe in every sort of way and so when if we go by the house, and they're doing family devotions is just all fits with what we do at school and home, and so it's very cohesive and integrated. (Leigh, personal interview, April 16, 2019)

This cohesion also had a significant bearing on how the grandparent viewed their role in the family unit and subsequently, the level of involvement in their grandchildren’s lives.

I think it brings it full circle for her that everybody is together on and everybody is on the same page. And to me in the Christian school setting has every single thing to do with the family life because it is one in the same. (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

The school is an extension. The setting of the Christian school had primary relevance to the nature of the grandparents being able to contribute into all areas of their grandchild’s life- physically, emotionally, intellectually, financially, and spiritually. While the setting created a parameter for the grandparent to give, it was not the reason or motivation for their contribution. A major statement made in the study was the grandparents would give within their

grandchildren's schooling, regardless of whether it was public or private: "Well, because that is where they go to school, I don't think it would be any different if they went to public school" (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019); "I think there are as many opportunities in public as there are in private to be involved, if you want to be involved" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). All of the grandparents had been involved in their grandchildren's lives since birth with many of them being one of the primary daytime caregivers during their infancy, and they considered their schooling a continuation with the grandparents having contributed from their first day of school through the grandchild's schooling: "I was there the first day of school which was with the mother obviously you know I got to tag along" (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019). The major motivation was the school setting was where the grandchildren spent the majority of their lives, and with their desire to be involved in all of a grandchild's life, this included knowing and assisting in their school environment: "It's the bigger part of their lives;" "if you are going to speak to them about what they are doing in their lives, it centers around school, education, or whatever extracurricular activities that make up their lives" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

With the understanding the grandparents' contribution was offered to the grandchild as part of the family unit first, then secondarily within the Christian school setting, specific aspects of the Christian school environment were unique. Over half of the participants aided in the selection of the Christian school acting as part of the family unit, and all participants valued specific aspects of the school: "My daughter's husband was very adamant that she be raised in a Christian environment and it was something that I felt comfortable with as a grandparent for my input that you do as a family unit" (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019). As part of the family unit, one common statement was the need for a tribe or village to raise the grandchildren

“I think if grandparents want to and if the children are ok with it if it works in that family, it works. I’ve heard people say in this day and time; it takes a tribe to raise a child” (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019). The grandparents considered the Christian school as part of the set of people in the grandchild’s life to support what the family believed and valued: “they know that I love them, I love their school, I’m supporting them what again it's like a little village everybody is involved you know it takes a village” (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

There was high importance in the cohesion of the Biblical values of the school aligning with the family’s belief, creating the “overall cohesiveness of the family” unit and continuation of what they teach at home. “It is an extension of what we teach them at home; it is just to me; it is another extension” (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019). The grandparents valued their part in sharing and taking part in the spiritual knowledge their grandchildren gained and the support of their primary beliefs: “it’s the grandparents who make sure that the grandchildren understand God and the Christian based values that carries that on” (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

I think grandparents are responsible according to Scripture to bring up a child in the way of the Lord and they will not depart from it- it doesn’t say, only parents. The grandparents have just as equal of a role as the parents because I think we are all a family, and if the family doesn’t work together, it pulls apart. (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

In addition, the grandparents valued their grandchildren being in a setting where the people who they are around the most have the same values. “Most of the children are coming from backgrounds that are Christian, I would assume, and so are instilling the same basic values morals” (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019); “I kind of wanted them around people that

have the same values and beliefs that I do, and I think he is where that is” (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

Another aspect the grandparents valued in a Christian school was its size. They described the school as a “little village” in being a “safe place” where students do not get “lost in the shuffle,” where the atmosphere can be more flexible and creative, and where they feel “welcomed” and “appreciated” for the contributions they make. “The fact that the private school is a smaller setting. I think it is very important. They don't get lost in the shuffle; there's extra care there” (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019); “the Christian school community, it feels like, or what I observed, there's much more engagement, so that whole family unit is kind of united and welcomed in my perception” (Leigh, personal interview, April 16, 2019). A major concern grandparents had was the poor moral condition, the negative messages, and educational options that are in the world today. “I leave feeling that she's in a safe place. She's in a - the world is really cruel” (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

I think the fact that they learn so much of the Bible that will be with them forever is important. The public school system is a nightmare. I cringe at the thought what's happening to the kids that are coming out now. Because they are not ready for the world. (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

The grandparents admitted the Christian school was not perfect, but it was a better option because of cohesion with their values and their ability to address issues from the Christian perspective.

I don't think we could be in a better place with them being taught, being disciplined, any of it. This is the best that we've got. It may not be perfect; it can't be- we're not perfect,

but we were so impressed with the school, and it hasn't disappointed us. (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019).

Ways grandparents support. The second subtheme provided details of how the grandparents demonstrate their support. The study findings suggested the non-custodial grandparent supports their family and their family's school through the contribution of their grandparent resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. The contribution of their resources acted as the means of support the grandparents were offering. Grandparents demonstrated their supportive role first to the family as primary focus then also to the school as an extension through the contribution of their resources. The main areas of contribution are physical resources, emotional and intellectual resources, financial resources, and spiritual resources.

Physical contribution. The largest and most consistent contribution the grandparents made is their physical presence in their grandchildren's lives regardless of age (see Appendix J). The non-custodial grandparents contributed primarily to the family, but also to the school in offering their talents in the school setting.

The study findings revealed the most common way grandparents give is through their physical resources (see Appendix G). Martha confirmed this finding when asked the most valuable resource she gives; she stated, "Time and space. We are close; we planned it that way, so you have a greater impact on their lives." The grandparents communicated with the parents, grandchildren, the school, and social media to stay current on each of the grandchildren's activities whether it is sports, music, fine arts, academic, or special programs to ensure they can attend: "I have a team app on my phone to keep up with the games" (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019);

We live about two hours away, and we were up there to see them about every two or three weekends. We have been involved from a distance; we go to plays, we go to graduations- different activities that they had going on throughout the years. 98% of the visits are school-related. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

All of the grandparents attended some type of grandparent day, which they cherished as an opportunity to acknowledge their role as a grandparent in the school: “I also do the grandparent day which I absolutely love that I think they call it Generations day, and I enjoy getting to sit there as the grandparent just watch what they are doing” (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019). Those grandparents who have younger grandchildren supported the family in caring for and transporting the grandchildren to school and being on call to care for the grandchild for sickness, days off of school, or schedule changes, etc.

And I am sure all of us here have been called many times “Can you go pick up one of the boys, they are sick” or “I’ve got to do such and such- can you take them to school?” I used to spend the night with them when they were real little just to help out, and in the mornings' everybody get ready to go to school and work. She can depend on all of us to pick up the pieces if need be. (Abigail, focus group, May 4, 2019)

Some of the grandparents occasionally kept the grandchildren overnight or on the weekends when needed or to give the parents a break: “We keep the grandkids on weekends too. So they could take a weekend off, we will keep them. If it’s a Sunday morning, we will take them to church and keep them until Sunday night” (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

Grandparents of older grandchildren showed their support by going to their extracurricular activities and events and take the role of cheerleader, knowing their presence created a memory for the family and showed the grandchild their support.

We are just doting grandparents who are all I can say we go to practically everything that we can their sports events, poetry contest, and their plays. The sports schedules are on the website. We don't have to wait for an invitation to go see a volleyball game or soccer game that type of thing. If they have a game, we go. (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019)

The grandparents wanted the "amount of time that we have with them, so it's not just the quality but the quantity that just bonds us together closer" (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019).

For many of the grandparents, their physical resources had extended beyond just their grandchild to others in giving to the school as a whole. Grandparents used their organization skills in helping teacher sort and cut, or their baking skills in making cookies for the grandchild's class or working in the cafeteria, some teaching a lesson on baking with the class, or one grandparent that cooked for the entire school once a week.

I made homemade apple sauce each fall then gingerbread houses with a class and helped at the beginning of the school year to sort out papers. I also served in the cafeteria before they had an ice maker. I would give out ice so that it was sanitary. I enjoyed encouraging teachers and interacting with high school students. (Lydia, personal interview, April 15, 2019)

Another grandmother created her craft lesson each month to coordinate with a holiday or special event and incorporated a Bible lesson and detailed instructions for the class: "We all have different gifts we can share, and doing the crafts is an area I love doing. If you can offer to share your talents, gifts, or life experience, you will be rewarded richly" (Marsha, grandparent letter). Some grandparents maintained their support role in being there at the school for the grandchild

specifically when the parent cannot be there to honor the parent's role in the grandchild's life for activities such as field day, field trips, or volunteer work: "I take a step back from those other moms too to make sure that I am not there too much" (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

Emotional and intellectual contribution. The non-custodial grandparents demonstrated their support toward their grandchild's emotional and intellectual development through contributions of their own emotional and intellectual resources. Through the grandparents' contribution within the school setting, the school and the grandchild's classmates also benefitted from their giving.

The emotional and intellectual development of the grandchild was enhanced by the grandparent's emotional and intellectual resources invested in the Christian school setting. Through much of the daily or intermittent opportunities for physical support toward the grandchild, such as after-school care, school interactions, etc., the emotional and intellectual investments were interwoven and naturally occurred with their grandchildren. The most pronounced opportunity was before-school and after-school care and as the emotional processing of the day took place: "sometimes when you pick them up, if they hadn't had such a great day they vent -you just listen" (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). The grandparents worked to keep open communication with their grandchildren, so they knew they could share what was going on at school or any concerns they had: "They are comfortable asking me questions, and I'm comfortable asking them issues that they have" (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019). A great concern for the grandparents was to make each grandchild feel special and attempt to treat each one equally in support of the grandchild's emotional development. Grandparents went to great lengths to try to spend equal time, resources, and attention to achieve

this equality.

Trying to make sure they all feel like they are treated alike- I wouldn't have any of them think oh well she does more for that one than she does for – you have to be careful that part- I always do Easter for them- I was putting it all together for each one I was making sure it looks even, so that's always a challenge. (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019)

Another contribution area that was relevant before-school and after-school care was the use of intellectual resources in helping with homework and special projects and fielding the endless “why” questions of a curious child. The grandchildren knew each of the grandparents' academic strengths and specifically asked for help even into the higher grades if the grandparent was considered an expert in specific subjects like English or science to help with essays and science projects for school. Grandparents took pride in being asked to help and share their expertise.

My husband is the science person, so he has helped with chemistry, math, and biology. But I am an English teacher. So I have been involved with how to write stories, how to tell a story, how to compose an essay and how to come up with the thesis statement to prove the point of what you are trying to make in your paper, grammar stuff, really big on grammar. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

Grandparents also provided books and learning resources within their homes to create an educational environment for their grandchildren as well as taking the grandchildren to educational destinations such as museums and theater: “I like to buy them books as gifts because the reading is important. Extracurricular activities, such as theater and things of that nature. I like to take them to events” (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

Some grandparents extended their intellectual resources to benefit the school as a whole by being a mystery reader in a class or offering tutoring services to individuals or groups: “I’ve done tutoring with the elementary school children, reading stories, helping with the entire class” (Abigail, focus group, May 4, 2019).

Financial contribution. One of the most unique aspects of the Christian school was the financial commitment from the family in school tuition, school expenses, etc. The school’s financial needs are met not only through the tuition payments but also through the school’s fundraising events. Grandparents’ support of the grandchild’s Christian school education was proven through the contributions made both directly toward the grandchild’s education expenses but also in supporting the school itself to benefit both the grandchild and the school mission.

A few grandparents in the study sacrificially covered the cost of tuition and other expenses to ensure the grandchild is able to have a Christian education. Emma shared about covering half of the tuition for her granddaughter that lives out of state:

My husband and I are both on fixed incomes, and the amount of funds that we have available have been sufficient. We have had to rearrange some things because we don't have a big savings, but we are glad to do it for this child to get through school, but it has been sacrificial for us to do.

Other grandparents looked for alternative monetary ways they could support the family and the school. Many of the grandparents covered incidentals such as lunches, parties, and supplies—small expenses that came up throughout the year: “I help I pay for all the lunches, snacks everything you need the extra things like t-shirt or field trips” (Lorraine, personal interview,

April 23, 2019). Some grandparents offered to help in other family expenses to offset the “sting out of their pocketbooks” from covering the tuition (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

The study findings revealed the non-custodial grandparents not only supported the grandchildren in their educational expenses but also supported the Christian school’s mission through financial contributions. All of the grandparents gave in the form of fundraising and donations:

It is a private school, so they depend on people to give. It’s not like they can tax more and get more. As they get older and they leave, it won’t do them any good in the future but it will somebody. It’s just an investment in the whole process. (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019)

Some volunteered to help with fundraising events and participated in events such as a jog-a-thon or 5K to raise money while others donated resources such as appliances or school uniforms or fixed broken items, so it was not an expense to the school: “My husband will go up there, and if they need a cabinet installed, he will help do that. He doesn't charge the church/school. Any supplies that I buy for whatever activity we’re doing, I never charge for that” (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

Spiritual contribution. The spiritual resource was the area that was most unique in the Christian school setting. As in all of the resources, the value the grandparent placed on that resource, in this case, spiritual, determined their emphasis and ability to give that resource themselves: “It depends on their own spiritual development whether they would be supportive in the spiritual realm” (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). The grandparents demonstrated their support of the spiritual development of the grandchild through contributing

their spiritual resources toward the grandchild, but then also contributing the spiritual resources within the school setting.

All of the grandparents valued the moral and ethical guidance the Christian school provided and appreciated the alignment of the beliefs with the family unit. Wanda shared what she wanted for her granddaughter was that “she has guidance and that she has Loving Hands that are constantly there for her to support her and love her no matter what she does and that is in the Christian values; it’s the Christian life.” Grandparents supported the school’s spiritual instruction by reviewing Bible verses and Bible songs, discussing the Bible lessons the grandchildren learned and attended chapel services when possible.

When we go to chapel, I always come, and I watch everything they do. It’s just so special, and when they finish I look over at the parents, and I say “And that’s what we pay for- It’s worth every dime.” It is wonderful, it really is. (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019)

Emma shared about her support even at a distance with her grandchildren by asking about what their memory verses are the week maybe having recite them for us, very interested in whatever kind of Bible stories they were doing in school- just very interactive with them with their Christian education and school that we could be over the phone or by physically been there every chance that we could be there.

Some of the grandparents felt a greater responsibility to engage with their grandchildren spiritually such as attending church together as a family unit, or praying or discussing the Bible together, seeing God in nature, and teaching them right from wrong and how to treat people.

I want them to understand their priorities when it comes to religion and their salvation.

God has a purpose for them, and I want them to understand that. I wanted them to know

how to focus on what should be their priorities in life. (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

Many of the grandparents acknowledged the Biblical worldview that was taught at the school and appreciated how it allowed for more spiritual integration in their lives: “I know the things he learns are Bible-based. That gives me the opportunity to bring God’s word into every situation where I am involved in our grandson’s life. I believe that is the greatest investment I could ever make” (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019). Some grandparents considered their role in the grandchild’s spiritual development as strong as the parents:

I think grandparents are responsible according to Scripture to bring up a child in the way of the Lord and they will not depart from it- it doesn’t say, only parents. The grandparents have just as equal of a role as the parents because I think we are all a family, and if the family doesn’t work together, it pulls apart. (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

For some of the grandparents, they considered this area the highest value because of the eternal investment that was made and the desire to know their grandchildren will be in heaven.

The only thing that we can take to heaven with us are our children and our grandchildren, so I don’t there is any money value we can put on that so I think any investment that do to see that our grandchildren grow spiritually will always be worth it. (Joanne, focus group, May 4, 2019)

Some grandparents also contributed to the school as a whole by giving testimony of their spiritual contributions such as sharing about mission’s trips or teaching Bible lessons.

We went on a mission trip to Thailand, and one of the teachers had me give a report about that trip. We spent ten days or so in Thailand on a mission trip. I gave a little

presentation about what we did, where we went, what the result was. (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019)

Aids or barriers to contributing resources. The third subtheme addressed the areas that either encourage or discourage grandparents from contributing to support their families and Christian school. In the non-custodial grandparent's desire to support the family and the family's Christian school, the study identified several environmental factors that can either aid in the non-custodial grandparent's ability to contribute or can act as a barrier to their contributions. The primary areas that were found to aid in their ability to contribute were previous involvement in the school setting and personal connection to the school or church. Barriers identified that could hinder the non-custodial grandparent's contributing were health, time management, age of the grandchild, geographic proximity, and relationship with the parents of the grandchild, and society's perspective of a grandparent's role. The study also identified specific action the Christian school could take to strengthen the positive message of grandparent involvement in the Christian school setting.

Aids in contributing. A major theme in the level of involvement in the Christian school was over half of the grandparents had current or past experience in a teaching profession in a public or Christian setting. They attributed a high comfort level in being in the school system having firsthand knowledge of how they could contribute in a meaningful way and tended to be self-generated in offering their assistance in the school setting.

I was an educator 33 years I taught elementary school for 12 years and was a elementary counselor for 21 years and I think that has a lot to do with my comfort level of approaching people in school saying what can I do because I know how much we needed the support, at my public school, of parents and grandparents coming in and how much it

meant. I realized at some point that a lot grandparents, even parents, are a little nervous or reluctant because they're afraid they are not going to know what to do, they aren't sure how they can be helpful. (Abigail, focus group, May 4, 2019)

Another major theme was some grandparents had a personal connection to the school, such as a relative working at the school or church affiliation with the school. Having these connections provided more communication about the opportunities and ways to offer contributions.

My daughter's the librarian over there, so she knows what goes on there, and she knows some of my background, so she told me "Dad, next year, when we have the thing on raising bees, you are going to present the program to the second and third grade when they learn about bees" and I said okay. So a lot of this is how networking goes you have to be here so long for things to start happening and to know about what is going on.

(John, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

Barriers to contributing resources. There were several challenges the grandparents either had to overcome or came to a realization it could affect their level of giving. Health was the main concern; all of the participants had good health at the time of the study, but there was an acknowledgment they are more susceptible due to their age: "Any decline in health, at our age that affects our resources at this point - that would be the only hindrance you know if one of us became terminally ill, so you can't do things at the school" (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019). Several mentioned caring for elderly parents as being a challenge in not being able to contribute consistently due to the division of priorities: "My husband had a stroke a couple of years ago, so he's more demanding now, so that is a consideration that impacts our ability to do as much together as we used to" (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

A second challenge was time management and the need to live a balanced life in self-care in conjunction with contributing to the family: “Well, it is a time management, I mean I can go more if I wanted to, but you know why, but I try to balance what I feel like I need to do here at home and you know what I can do there” (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019). With retired living, some would assume there would be time to contribute, but the grandparents emphasized the need for planning and considering all the responsibilities to create a balanced life.

If you don't have your priorities, as far as when you retire, of what do you want to do- you've got to think about how much time you want to give. You can give all of your time to your children, and have nothing for yourself, or you pick up things like- I like to fish so days that I want to go fishing, I can't. So there are some conflicts, and if you are an active retiree with church and all the other stuff that goes on, you can have a full life. (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

A third factor in contributing was the age of the grandchild in exploring new ways to connect and contribute in a way the grandchild will appreciate. Several of the grandparents had been contributing from kindergarten to their senior year and shared the shifting that was necessary to stay connected to the grandchildren. The grandparents acknowledged the engagement with the grandchildren needs to happen as early as possible for the greatest impact on the child's life: “The time of influence I feel goes down; your ability to influence them goes down the older the child gets” (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

There were also challenges that had the potential of affecting grandparents contributing. Although only one participant was more than 30 miles from their grandchildren, all the participants recognized distance would be a great challenge in being able to contribute in the

Christian school setting and even said how sorry they felt for those who did not have grandchildren living close.

I feel very sorry for people's whose grandchildren live far away. I grew up with grandparents in the same town, and I know how much they meant to me having the extended family. I think it is very important when you can achieve that. (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

Participants recognized technological advancements increased the ability for grandparents to connect and encouraged grandparents who were not involved in being intentional in taking action to get involved.

The grandparents had very close relationships with their children who are the parents of the grandchildren, but they recognized the strength of that relationship would affect the nature of the relationship with the grandchild: "I think it follows suit sometimes if you have a good relationship with your child, you will have a good relationship with your grandchildren because if there's not, there's nothing there to build on" (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019). Much of the communication and information the grandparent received was through the parent or in coordination with the parent. In working as a family unit, the grandparents had to work to uphold positive communication and mutual respect with their children concerning their grandchildren. Parents had to understand the level of involvement that is a healthy balance for the grandparent in considering how much they were asking for them to contribute: "We took care of the babies when they were babies, they could see us getting tired so throughout the years it's been someone to fill it, but if they are out of town, they sleep in my house" (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019). In desiring to protect the relationship with their children, some of the grandparents voiced frustration in their children's willingness to take whatever they want to offer

but acknowledged their own need to set boundaries for self-care: “I think kids are if you are willing to do it, they are willing to take it. I don’t think they are as independent if grandparents are willing to pay it, they will take it” (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019). Lorraine shared her frustration in the shift to “expecting the grandparents to contribute to cover whatever they can’t do” and the need for grandparents to make sure they maintained balance and “figure it out a better way of handling what you can and cannot do with your grandchildren.”

Grandparents also had to consider the emotional effect on the parent as they stepped into a support role toward the grandchild. One grandparent shared her daughter felt guilty, and that it bothered her that she could not be there with her child instead of the grandparent (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019). Both grandparent and parent had to work together to create balance and understanding to protect the cohesive nature of the family unit and produce healthy relationships in the family.

The grandparents acknowledged society does not always support the grandparent involvement that each of them had committed to for their family. They understood some grandparents believed “they have raised their children and it is their children's responsibility to raise their children;” many of the grandparents considered this as a selfish viewpoint that was sad for this stage of life: “They wanted to do what suits them best. I think that is a selfish attitude myself” (Sally, focus group, May 4, 2019). Each family made the commitment to the level of involvement they believed was necessary for that family’s success, and they stood on that in the face of criticism that had been voiced by friends who did not understand why they committed to the level they did: “Friends that have grandchildren will tell me I couldn’t do what you do, and your child should be doing what you do, but it’s what I want to do” (Caroline, focus group, May 4, 2019).

Generative results from supporting. The fourth subtheme addressed the generative results grandparents attain from the support they offer. The support the non-custodial grandparents offered through their contributions toward their grandchild's Christian school education provided an opportunity for the grandparents to give in a generative way and as a result, the grandparents hoped for certain outcomes. The results of the generative action in "establishing and guiding of the next generation" was evident in the personal gains the grandparents had from the experience (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). The grandparents hoped the way they contributed would affect the life they lived through the deposit they made in their grandchildren. The grandparent's contribution had four primary areas of results: close relationships built in the family, creation of their legacy, the impact on their grandchild's development, and the impact on the grandparent.

Close relationships built in the family. Each of the grandparents believed they had a close relationship with the grandchild as a result of the investment being made daily in the grandchild's life. The terms used to describe the relationship were "very strong," "close," and "very connected" through the activities and investment of time, energy, and resources. The grandparents considered the investment worth the return: "It takes time, discipline, and commitment, but the effort will build your relationship into a more positive and loving one" (Lydia, grandparent letter). The relationship to the parent was also relevant as it created a foundation the grandparent was able to build on: "I think it follows suit if you have a good relationship with your child, you will have a good relationship with your grandchildren because if there's not, there's nothing there to build on" (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019). The generative actions and support that was given to the family strengthened this relationship and built cohesion in the family: "It's really strengthened our bond, my daughters

and my bond because she appreciates me so much and always has and knows I would do anything for at a moment's notice" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

Creation of the grandparent's own legacy. An intrinsic goal the grandparents had was to create a lasting legacy of who they are as grandparents through the support and interactions they had with their family and grandchildren. The grandparents determined the type of grandparent they wanted to be from the example set by their parents and grandparents. Half of the participants had a close relationship with their extended family who they wanted to emulate through their legacy: "My grandparents would never had much interplay with them about school, but my parents were interested. So I try to provide the atmosphere that would be pleasant for them" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019). Others remembered little to no involvement and were dedicated to making sure their grandchildren had positive memories of them through their involvement in their lives: "I didn't have a real strong relationship with my grandparents because my son's grandparents died early and so he said I want that. I want him to have memories of grandmother and grandfather" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

Because of the stage of life, the grandparent was in and having been a parent and understanding how short the childhood time period is; they had a greater investment in each moment in making the most of the time they had with their family: "Take every opportunity to be involved because your time is short and the time goes very fast" (Leigh, personal interview, April 16, 2019). This working knowledge motivated the grandparents to have positive, meaningful interactions with their grandchildren.

The grandparents established their legacy through the memories they created through their involvement in the family and specifically the grandchild's life that would be with the family beyond the grandparent's life: "Simple moments with your grandchild often become

priceless memories” (Abigail, grandparent letter). These memories served as a bonding agent to the cohesion of the family unit through traditions created, and stories told around the kitchen table and at family gatherings. The memories also ensured a positive image of the grandparent both during their life and as a deposit for after they are deceased: “I want them to have fond memories of me when I’m dead and gone” (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). The hope was that through these memories, the family values were established and will live on through the next generation.

The hope of an impact on the grandchild’s development. An intrinsic goal the grandparents had was to be an influence and example, so the grandparents were part of the molding of their grandchild in becoming a responsible adult: “I pray every day I keep my health that I can be an example” (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019). Because of the value of cohesion in the family unit and the Christian school, the contribution the grandparent gave the grandchild was one more layer of a good example for the grandchild to follow. The grandparents highly valued supporting the parents in raising the grandchild and being one more positive example to emulate and possibly even see the value of Christian education for their children in years to come: “I think any positive thing you can do is a positive influence now it may not be much of anything. I think the more positive things, the better it is. We’ve got enough negative stuff in the world” (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019). The grandparents “look out for their good moral and ethical character, teach them right from wrong, and set a good example for them to follow” through the contributions that they made so they would hopefully also become a good moral citizen and role models for others (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). This generative action could influence far beyond the grandparent’s life into generations to come.

You're investing in this, not the second generation but the third-generation- only God knows what those children are going to be called to do. And what an impact they are going to be able to have on the world and in their own immediate countries and states, cities and families. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

Another intrinsic goal many of the grandparents had was the hope of the grandchildren having the security of their eternity in heaven. Through the example the grandparents demonstrated and the support of the Christian principles in the school and home, the hope was the grandchild would accept Christ, follow God's call in this life, and have eternal security. Many of the grandparents admitted much of the investment they were making might not have a visible reward in the present time, but was an investment toward the future of the grandchild and to benefit future generations: "It is the peace of mind knowing that I am investing in eternity, that the things that these children are learning in Christian school even though they might not be evident right away, that those seeds are sown" (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019). "It may not be known now, but things you do now in their life will show up later" (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

Impact on grandparent. While the grandparents' focus was on explaining what the grandchildren gain from their involvement in their Christian schools, the grandparents also shared the impact the involvement made on them. Grandparents received many positive aspects from their investment in their grandchildren in the Christian school setting, including personal growth, fulfillment, satisfaction, and joy.

When grandparents were asked about whether their investments added or subtracted from their life, although they knew technically there had to be a subtraction of their own time and energy, they all stated the investment had a far greater return than the amount that was given.

Well, I would say in some ways, it subtracts-not in the important things, but the time involved alone if you are working with the children in the school. You have no time for social events, but you basically choose your priorities, and my priority is my grandchildren, and because of my age and their age I won't probably see great grandchildren, but so I spend all my time with them because I want to. (Sally, focus group, May 4, 2019)

Making their contribution enriched grandparents' lives by giving them a purpose to get up in the morning and be physically active, making them feel younger and in many ways having the ability to keep them from becoming callous in their old age: "I think it adds to my life I think it keeps me younger because I'm outside playing and doing things like that, and if I did not have grandchildren I might just be sitting in my rocking chair" (Joanne, focus group, May 4, 2019). The relationship with their grandchildren and the Christian school strengthened their faith and created a reciprocal relationship that bonded them to the grandchild and the school where they can give but also receive. As a result, they felt appreciated and needed, making them a better grandparent: "He will hold me accountable - he'll say 'remember what I told you we learned in school' so it is a good way by having that to hold each other accountable" (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019).

And you can see what's happening with the grandchildren because when you give something, my little three-year-old wrote me a little thank you note a little scribble, so it is reciprocating back and forth. When you do something, they remember that and they want to do something also- it fosters the relationship. (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

The grandparents described the opportunity to contribute fulfilling as they were using

their gifts and talents to bless others. They found the experience richly rewarding and fun in that they were able to interact with others both in the family and at the school.

I feel like anything that I can do like that hopefully helps them out. And it is fun, spending time with the kids. I know all of them. They all call me, MeMe, or they'll call me Mrs and by my last name. So you know, and it is always hugs, and I know there's especially nowadays there's a lot of kids that don't have their grandparents nearby, and so I just thoroughly enjoyed the time. (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

The grandparents described giving at the school as the chance to be “famous in the best possible way” (Abigail, focus group, May 4, 2019). They felt blessed to have the health and the opportunities to give.

Grandparents also shared there was a satisfaction in knowing they might have some part in the success of their grandchildren and the success of the school.

I think there's some degree of satisfaction in being involved in thinking that you might have had a little bit of something to do with their success, or where they are. At least it's a source of pride to have grandchildren that I have. The attitudes they have and the outcomes they have had not that I did all that, but hopefully, it was some of it. (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

The investment in donations, teaching and mentoring opportunities, and participation in the school as a whole went beyond their grandchild to strengthen the school in their mission and purpose. In strengthening others in the school, their contribution could impact generations to come.

You're investing in not just the second generation, but the third-generation -only God knows what those children are going to be called to do. And what an impact they are

going to be able to have on the world and in their own immediate countries and states, cities and family. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

The last personal gain was from the spiritual investment made in the grandchildren's lives. While many of the grandparents shared the importance of knowing their grandchild had a good spiritual life, three of the grandparents shared the same verse in describing the measure of what they gain from being a part of their grandchild's life and seeing God work through their words, their parents and the Christian school: 3 John 1:4, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (NIV). All three broadened the wording of this verse to include their grandchildren and the hope they had of seeing them follow God's calling in their life and hope for their eternal destiny.

Encouragement to be a support. The last subtheme encourages those who are not engaging in supportive actions and how to encourage supportive behavior in grandparents within the Christian school setting. Through the knowledge of how rewarding and important the supportive role of the grandparent is to the family, the school, and even personally for the grandparent, key advice was given on how to increase the grandparent's desire and ability to contribute. The advice was directed at grandparents who are not involved in contributing and toward the school leaders to increase the opportunities and likelihood of contributing.

Encouragement to uninvolved grandparents. One of the most common statements to grandparents who were not involved in contributing to their grandchild's Christian school was they were missing it or missing out not only in the bonding experience with the grandchild but also a richness in their own life: "They are missing fellowship and a chance to see the grandchildren as grown-ups and as adults taking their role in society" (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019); "You are missing out on at least half of the life that you could have

because if you don't invest in their life, you'll have nothing in return” (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

The grandparents noted how essential it is for the grandparents to consider their priorities. You spend time like you want to spend time. You know if you have, if there is an event going on you try to schedule around that, so that makes them happy that makes you happy. You make time for the things that you want to make time to do; you do that all through your whole life. (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

Being involved in their grandchildren’s lives was considered a conscious choice that takes commitment, time, and energy that comes from making the grandchildren a priority in the grandparent’s life: “It takes time, discipline, and commitment, but the effort will build your relationship into a more positive and loving one” (Lydia, grandparent letter). Each grandparent had to decide how they wanted to spend the resources they had; no one could make that decision for them: “It is a decision to be a part of your grandchild’s life. It is easy to just settle in and not engage, so you have to make a conscious decision to participate with the grandchildren” (Lydia, personal interview, April 15, 2019).

Even though they emphasized making them a priority, the grandparents also understood many grandparents did not know where to start, especially in the Christian school setting. The grandparents encouraged other grandparents to start with whatever they had to give in the family setting and consider what they could give in the Christian school setting: “I would encourage them to get involved and to start anyway they can. With some- find some common ground and go from there to do something with the grandchildren who their grandchildren enjoy doing” (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). They emphasized grandparents did not have to

give money or specific resources, but each grandparent was different with different giftings. The main point was to start somewhere.

Get involved- you don't have to be financially involved to be physically and spiritually involved. And I would think one of the most important ways to be involved would be spiritually through prayer that these kids would grasp what's being taught to them, that it would be cemented into their heart, that those seeds would be planted so that they would not stray from them. That is a thing that you can do from whatever distance and without any financial involvement. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

Encouragement to school leaders toward grandparent support. The most common statement grandparents made as advice to Christian school leaders was to consider asking for the parents and/or grandparents for their contact information at orientation or the beginning of school. With the contact information, ask if there were an area of expertise or specialization the grandparent had they would be willing to share if needed. The school could use this listing as a resource for faculty and staff during the year when needed to personally ask if the grandparent would like to use their resource in the school setting.

When they become as students, if the grandparents who live locally, they should have to fill out a questionnaire also, as soon as they become a student, so you have a record of when you start to think about these types of things, we have somebody that used to do that they can contact as an expert. (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

The grandparents emphasized how much the grandparents would appreciate being acknowledged for what they know and what they can give. Much of the unique giving in the study were because someone in the school knew about the grandparents' resources, or the grandparent felt comfortable enough with the school to offer their resources. Having the listing would provide

the information for the leadership to act on as needed. In conjunction with getting their contact information was the request to be in the communication the school sent out. Most of the grandparents admitted they did receive emails and notifications of some events, but they would like to be more connected in some of the opportunities the school had for them to participate.

I would say for orientation ask if there is another member of the family who is involved in the child's life, no matter what age they are, if the parents are comfortable with that person who can also be involved. Maybe have something like a questionnaire they fill out if there another person involved and getting that information and asking the parent if they would like for the grandparent to receive the emails and newsletters. (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

Another area grandparents gave as advice to school leaders was to have a listing of areas grandparents could give, and/or needs that came up throughout the year the grandparents might be able to provide.

Put the needs out there I think people may not realize - maybe you could come in for just 1 hour where you can sit down and listen to a child read, spend some time with the teacher out on the playground to be an extra set of eyes, coming to the lunch room - and maybe give them a list of things that they can do. I think sometimes people don't volunteer because they don't know what to do, but if you give specific ideas they will think well I never thought about that, but I can do that. (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

Since many of the grandparents did not pay for the tuition but were willing to help out in other areas, they mentioned being knowledgeable of those areas so they could cover the smaller expense to help out the family.

So many want to be involved, but they may not know what's available that they could do. For financial resources, they need \$5 for incidental expenses or lunch send that out to the grandparents so that they can communicate with the parents and ask if they need help with this - supplies for school. I think it would be great to send the supply list to grandparents who are willing to help. Find out from the parent interviews, and then the grandparent could talk it over the parent, how can I help with this? This is a huge expense, especially if you got two or three or four or five kids. Let us know what we can do. We may not be able to help with much, but we can help some. It all boils down to better communication with grandparents. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

The last area the grandparents mentioned was school projects that would involve grandparents or an older mentor, such as a middle school interview with a grandparent/older person. This would create a bonding moment the grandchild was able to initiate, and the grandparent was able to share some of their histories to their grandchild, “if the school would do a school project interview with the grandparent – that way they would know their past -I think a project like that would be best in middle school” (Lydia, personal interview, April 15, 2019).

Research Question Responses

The study has one central research question: What are the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild’s Christian school education? The lived experiences of grandparents who contributed resources for the grandchild’s Christian school education can be described as a rewarding and fulfilling experience for the grandparent acting as a support in elevating the cohesion in the family unit. The actions were taken by the grandparents in contributing supported the development of the grandchild emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually while also fortifying the grandparent’s role in being a

vital part of the family unit and the school community. The contributions of the grandparents many times extended beyond just the grandchildren to the school itself. The grandparents experienced great joy and satisfaction, knowing that in giving of themselves, they had been able to enrich their own lives as well as impact future generations even beyond their own lives.

Research subquestion A response. Subquestion A asked: How does the experience of contributing resources for the grandchild's Christian school education relate to the continued psychosocial development of the non-custodial grandparent's life? The grandparent's continued psychosocial development was enhanced by the ability and commitment to contribute resources toward the grandchild's Christian school education. Woven throughout the findings was a detailed description of how their legacy is carried on through their contribution and the personal gains from that contribution. These results are covered in the following areas of grandparents crafting their own legacy, impact on the grandchild, personal gain of a sense of purpose, enrichment and fulfillment, and hope of eternal impact and great joy.

Grandparents crafting their own legacy. One of the most important reasons the grandparents wanted to contribute their resources was so a memory was created for both the grandchild and for the family to be able to reflect on in years to come: "I love my grandchildren, and I want to be part of their life, and I want them to have fond memories of me" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). Because school was such a large part of the grandchild's life, the grandparents wanted to make sure they were not only present for the memory of that moment in the grandchild's life, but the grandparent was a contributor to the events: "You spend time like you want to spend time. If there is an event going on, you try to schedule around that so that makes them happy and that makes you happy that you have been there" (Martha, personal

interview, April 22, 2019). The grandparents emphasized how memories create family stories that would continue in the family long after the grandparent is deceased.

What memories do they have when you sit around with the family? What stories do you have to tell? Do you have stories? You just have to make time for that if that's important to you. If it's not important to you, then they'll never know you, and they'll never have any stories to tell. (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

This investment in the grandchild's memory was important as the grandparent is remembered as a positive and supportive person in the grandchild's life.

They will remember their Grandma helping at their school, and I will remember the joy that it brought me. In doing so, it demonstrates a love for God, for education, and also a love for our grandchildren, which will influence them for their lifetime. (Lydia, grandparent letter)

Impact on the grandchild. For the grandparents, the most important outcome from the investment they made was in the life of their grandchild: "The outcome would be for my grandchildren have the opportunity to grow and develop emotionally, socially, and cognitively in a learning environment that encompasses just more than academics," developing lifelong friendships and shaping them into "spiritual learners with an excellent education" and pass these values to their own children (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). Through the specific grandparent contributions, they were depositing a part of who they are and what they believe into the grandchild's life.

I would like to see her be a beautiful, loving person that her mother and dad are and to carry that on and know that she's going to be thoughtful toward other people. I know that

she's going to be loving; I know that she is going have a foundation that will carry her through for the rest of her life in the values. (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

The hope was that through the example set by valuing their education and spiritual development and the influence in being able to speak into their grandchild's life the grandchild would emulate the parents and grandparent and carry on their beliefs, values, and nature through their lives: "I hope I have some good citizens, some productive grandchildren and faithful grandchildren living faithful in the sense of to the Bible and to their God" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019). The investment they made in their lives could influence generations to come: "I pray God works in my grandson's life in such a way that it affects other people, the ripple effect" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019); "He sees a bigger picture that it is not just about him. If you can leave a legacy like that it is the biggest gain that I could get" (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019).

Personal gain of sense of purpose, enrichment, and fulfillment. Through these generative actions toward the grandchild, the grandparent's psychosocial development was enhanced through the personal gains the grandparent experiences. In giving to the next generation, the grandparents embraced their role in investing in the next generation which gave them a sense of purpose, filled their daily lives with activities and opportunities to give and keep them active and moving: "It certainly added to our life because it's given us a lot of opportunities to keep doing things; otherwise we'd be sitting here doing the same, reading, sleeping, watching TV, or working out in the yard" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019). Although the activity could be tiresome, the grandparents did not consider it a diminishing of life, but an enriching experience in their lives. "Well, when I wake up in the morning, I groan, but you know the kids keep me moving on" (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019). As the

grandparents were investing the gifts, life experiences, knowledge, and wisdom toward their grandchildren in the Christian school setting, the grandparents found fulfillment in who they were as an individual and the life they lived. Knowing they were wanted and needed created meaning in the grandparent's life and appreciated for everything they had to offer: "The door is always open, always. Smiling faces, glad to see me. They appreciate everything that I do. They thank me. I get thank you's all the time" (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019).

Hope of eternal impact and great joy. The Christian school has a unique quality in its support of Christian values and instruction in Biblical truth. In the grandparents' support of the school and reinforcement of Christian principles with the grandchild, the hope for the grandparent was the grandchild would also choose the Christian faith, have good morals and ethics, and be with the grandparent in eternity. Since grandparents are much more in tune with their mortality, the eternal perspective was much more relevant personally as well as desiring an assurance for their family's eternal destination: "The only thing that we can take to heaven with us are our children and our grandchildren, so I don't there is any money value we can put on that" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019). The grandparents who valued the spiritual aspect of the grandchild's development described the investment into their grandchild's life and the evidence of the grandchild having a relationship with Christ as creating "great joy" for the grandparent (3 John 1:4, NIV) and valuing the opportunity to invest in their spiritual lives.

When you have Biblical values rooted in your own soul as well as your external life, seeing your grandchildren recite Scripture, learn songs, memorize poems, read books, etc. that share these values, your joy only increases as you see them moving towards a life of following Jesus. (Leigh, grandparent letter)

Being able to invest in their grandchild's spiritual future brought great satisfaction knowing the

grandparent provided the means for the grandchild to be introduced and trained in biblical truth through the school and reinforced through the cohesion of this faith in the family unit.

Satisfaction that I have helped my grandchildren in every way possible to have a good foundation. They are close to me because of that, and I hope that I will always mean something in their lives and they can come to me as they grow. (Ginger, focus group, May 4, 2019)

As the grandparents considered their mortality, this eternal perspective in being faithful in their faith and being an example to the next generation caused great joy and peace.

Research subquestion B response. Subquestion B asked: What environmental factors permit or facilitate the non-custodial grandparents' experience of investing resources in the grandchild's Christian school education? Through the study's findings, the following areas of past relationships, past experiences, personal connections, time management, health, age of grandchild, geographic proximity, and the relationship between the grandparent and parent affected grandparents contributing in either a positive or negative way.

Past relationships. The grandparents created their definition of the grandparent they wanted to be based on the example they had in their family dynamic. Both positive examples the grandparents wanted to emulate as well as negative examples the grandparents wanted to avoid were instrumental in how much they wanted to be involved in their grandchildren's lives.

I want to take what I received from my grandmother and what I wanted my mother to be for my daughter I want to be tenfold hundredfold for my grandchild I want to my grandchild to know me to know who I am to take away all the wonderful good things I am and take that into her life for her future. (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

"I grew up with grandparents in the same town, and I know how much they meant to me the

extended family. I think is very important when you can achieve that” (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

Past or present experience in a teaching profession in a public or private school. Over half of the grandparents in the study had past or present experience in the teaching profession in either public or private school. The grandparents’ own experience in the school setting created a comfort level the grandparents could be confident in how they could give and the ways they could give in the school. “I have a family that is into the education- my husband 39 years, and my daughter is a principal now at a school. I have years in teaching kindergarten in the public schools” (Ginger, focus group, May 4, 2019). “I am happy and pleased that I physically can get in here and help” (Ginger, personal interview, April 16, 2019).

Personal connection to the school or church affiliation. The grandparents had an easier time finding opportunities to give and many times were invited to give when there was a personal school connection either in the school or church when there was an affiliation with the school. Having personal knowledge of the interworking of the school as well as knowledge of the grandparent created a greater opportunity for the grandparent to give: “Our daughter works there, so when she needs help she will ask, ‘hey dad, hey mom, can you lend a hand- can you do this?’ She will ask us for help” (John, focus group, May 4, 2019).

Time management. An environmental factor that could harm the grandparent’s ability to contribute was time management and being careful to balance between contributing to the family and protecting their personal life: “Plan ahead of time if possible and think about what you can and cannot do” (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019). The grandparents shared that even with retirement, life can become very busy, very quickly. With the majority of the

participants being retired, the grandparents emphasized the need to self-monitor activity and incorporate planning in considering all the responsibilities to create a balanced life.

Health or care of others in poor health. The health of the grandparent as well as the need to care for others that are in poor health had a great impact on the grandparent's ability to give in the Christian school setting. The grandparents considered the maintenance of their health a high priority, so they were able to remain engaged with the grandchildren and the school. All of the participants had good health at the time of the study, but health was the main concern as they acknowledged their age makes them more susceptible: "Well, so far, my health has been good, and I'm thankful that I'm able to. I try to stay active, so that if my health should fail, I know that would be a big factor (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). Health concern was not only for their own lives but also the need to care for elderly parents. Several grandparents mentioned the challenge of needing to care for elderly parents, and it impeding on their ability to contribute consistently: "We had our mother living with us for five years, so that presented a problem when they got to the point that someone had to be with her all the time" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

Age level of the grandchild. While the ability for grandparents to contribute into their grandchildren's Christian school could be accomplished regardless of age, the grandparents acknowledged the greatest impact that could be made was in the early years of the grandchild's life. As the grandchild aged, the grandparent had to find different ways to connect with the grandchild and still convey their love and support within the school setting. Several of the grandparents had been contributing from kindergarten to their senior year and shared the shifting that was necessary to stay connected to the grandchildren. In order to gain the greatest impact on the child's life, the grandparents shared making those connections needed to happen as early as

possible: “You have to get them when they are young. Once they get into their teens, they don't hang around to talk with a couple of old fogies, so you have to get them when they're young” (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

Geographic proximity of the grandparent to the grandchild. The grandparents acknowledged the recent technological advances allowed for grandparents to connect with their grandchildren in new and creative ways, but the grandparents admitted the geographic proximity would affect the ways the grandparent was able to contribute to the grandchild's Christian school. Grandparents that are at a distance may have to be intentional to find ways to connect with their grandchild and be creative with new methods of communication to contribute within the Christian school setting: “What greater place to place your treasure, which is financial, emotional, and spiritual than with these grandchildren, and it is so easy to do. You can do it from a distance. You just need to be involved” (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019).

Relationship between the grandparent and the parent. Another factor in the grandparent's ability to contribute is the nature of the relationship between the grandparent and parent of the grandchild. When asked if her relationship with her daughter affected her being able to contribute, Marsha answered,

Oh, I think it would affect it. I mean, I feel like we have a very good relationship. I can't imagine doing this any other way. I know there's a lot of different dynamics out there. As far as family situations and you know I hear of them; I've seen them. I'm very thankful that I am not having to deal with that. I feel very blessed that we have the opportunity to do this.

The grandparent's main source of information came through communication with the parent or in coordination with the parent. Positive communication and mutual respect between the

grandparent and parent is needed to build cohesion and operate as a family unit: “We have worked very hard to keep that communication open with the mother” (Martha, personal interview, April 22, 2019). This respect was needed both from the grandparent to parent as well as the parent to grandparent. For the grandparent to maintain a healthy balance of self-care, the parents had to monitor the level of grandparent involvement and consider how much they were asking for the grandparent to contribute. In some cases, the grandparent acknowledged needing to set boundaries of self-care when the parent abused the grandparent’s offer to help and take whatever the grandparent is willing to give. Both grandparent and parent needed to be protective of the relationship and honest in creating a positive family dynamic.

Research subquestion C response. Subquestion C asked: How does the non-custodial grandparent’s contribution of resources in the Christian school education setting impact the grandparent’s meaning of being a grandparent? The study addressed this question in the following areas of grandparent’s role in the family unit and family cohesion and the grandparent’s supportive role.

Grandparent’s role in the family unit and family cohesion. The contributions the grandparents made toward the grandchild within the Christian school setting was simply an extension of the supportive role the grandparent had in the family unit. The grandparents made it clear they would give toward their grandchild regardless of the school the grandchild attended, public or private, out of their love for the grandchild and as being a part of the family unit: “So you can be involved as much as you want or as you can, and so it is wonderful that you can feel that grandparent void- I don’t care where they go to school” (Martha, focus group, May 4, 2019). The grandparents’ desire to be involved in their grandchild’s life started at birth and continued into the beginning of the school years. Many of the grandparents were involved in choosing the

Christian school because they believed the school aligned with the beliefs of the family and wanted to support the parents in having the grandchildren in an environment that was cohesive with the family's beliefs. Over half of the participants aided in the selection of the Christian school acting as part of the family unit, and all participants value specific aspects of the school. The grandparents' involvement in the Christian school was a further extension of their love for their grandchildren in wanting to be a part of their life and to support the school's mission and the alignment of the beliefs and values for the family: "I've spent so much time with them that if they see me at school, or they see me at church, or at school, they are used to me being there, and it's just another extension of them being here" (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

The contribution the grandparent made toward the grandchild in the Christian school setting helped define and confirm the supportive role of the grandparent in the family unit with commitments ranging from adopting short-term parental roles to supporting on a need basis. Each grandparent worked with the parents to determine their role in the family and the level of involvement in the grandchild's life. Grandparents define their involvement as a range with one end of the spectrum being the grandparent acting as the parent at times or "second mom." "My role as a grandparent is unique in that I am more of a parent than a grandparent which I often regret that I don't get more of a grandparent" (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019); "Second mom. I even call them my children, much to their mother's dismay, but it just slips out, my boys, my children" (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019). Other times, the grandparent acted as an extended parent by stepping in when needed. Abigail described her role as "extended parent that doesn't have to do so strict. Being retired, I love having more time to spend with them. I feel like it's important to spend as much time as you can." The family unit worked together to monitor and maintain this relationship as the grandchild grew up with different

opportunities and levels of involvement for the grandparent. The grandparent supported the parents in their fulltime job in being at the school in their place to support the school and keep cohesion and continuity for the grandchild.

Ways grandparents support. The ways the grandparent contributed is the proof of the supportive role the grandparent achieved toward the family and the grandchild. The study highlighted the contributions the non-custodial grandparents made as to the means of support toward their grandchild and support of the school. The main grandparent resources were in the areas of physical, emotional and intellectual, financial, and spiritual contributions toward the grandchild within the Christian school setting.

The largest and most consistent contribution the grandparents made was their physical presence in their grandchildren's lives at all ages: "We are just doting grandparents, that is all I can say. We go to practically everything that we can. Our weekend started in the morning and is booked with grandchildren's activities" (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019); "I do participate in all their activities except sports all of the concerts their bake sales their stews anything that they are doing the extracurricular field. I am there with whatever they need" (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019). The grandparents stayed current on the grandchildren's activities, whether it was sports, music, fine arts, academic, or special programs through communication with the parents, grandchildren, the school, and social media: "We are constantly talking about it what's going on at school also the online website gives upcoming information, activities and calendar stuff" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). The grandparents showed support for the family of younger grandchildren by providing childcare, transportation and being on call to care for grandchildren for sickness, days off school, or schedule changes, etc.

If it is during the school week, I see her every morning between 5:30 to 8, so what we have on two and a half hours every morning for four days a week. On the days that she doesn't have school, I make sure that I get in there so that I'm the one that gets her.

(Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

Grandparents attended extracurricular activities and events of older grandchildren and enjoyed being a cheerleader for their grandchildren and knowing their presence created a memory for the family: "My granddaughter is a senior; she will be graduating next month. She is playing sand volleyball this afternoon, so that is the one that I am going to watch" (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019).

The connection the grandparents made with their grandchild was enhanced by the emotional and intellectual investments the grandparents made in the Christian school setting. These investments were interwoven in the context of these physical interactions with their grandchildren. The most pronounced opportunity happened before and after school as the grandchild prepared or processed the day's events with the grandparent.

Encouraging him to get up in the mornings when he is tired like this morning.

Encouraging him to see his worth in God; emotionally building him up and giving him skills to deal with bullying and just loving him. I probably told him a million times a day how much I love him, so I think that helps him a lot. (Lorraine, personal interview, April 23, 2019)

The grandparents were dedicated to maintaining open communication with their grandchildren to create a safe environment for the grandchild to be able to share their concerns.

The more time you spend with them and the fact that they knew I was interested in what was going on at school and what they were learning and doing makes you closer and

gives opportunity for them to talk about their life. If they have something bugging them and mom's not available, mom or dad. (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

One area of concern for the grandparents was to make sure each of the grandchildren felt special and to attempt to demonstrate equality between the grandchildren in support of their emotional development. The grandparents were not sure how successful they were, but they attempted to spend equal time, resources, and attention to achieve this equality.

I guess you never know if you're perceived as treating them equally. We try to go to all the events. If in the past, we've had situations in which there's been a conflict, one of us have gone to one and one the other on occasion. That doesn't happen very often; we've tried to present the idea that each one of them is equal. From our perspective, that's what we've done. (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019)

The study findings acknowledged grandparents made an intellectual investment of their resources through their grandchild's academic assignments and projects. Before-school and after-school care was an opportunity to help with homework and special projects and interact with the grandchild in allowing the child's "why" questions to be asked and answered. The grandchildren were aware of their grandparents' academic strengths and asked for their help in that area when needed. Even into the higher grades, if the grandchild was aware of the grandparent's expertise in specific subjects such as English or science, they would ask for help with essays and science projects for school: "They will call me for help with their assignments, in English, especially because I am known as the grammar control" (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019). Grandparents appreciated being considered an expert and found sharing their knowledge fulfilling. Additionally, grandparents created an educational environment for their

grandchildren by providing books and learning resources within their own homes as well as taking the grandchildren to educational destinations such as museums and theater.

We have all kinds of books in our home, and he loves learning. He is good at math so when he comes; we like to I play board games or Scrabble, or he will do like a scavenger hunt, and he will take post-it notes and write them and tell me I have to go here and there, so I know that little mind is just going to work. (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

In the grandparent's desire to strengthen their grandchild's educational environment, the grandparents also made financial investments into their grandchild's Christian school education. The study findings suggested grandparents were selective in finding the best way to support financially with some giving directly to the school and others finding ways to support the family overall. Some of the grandparents in the study made the commitment to cover the cost of tuition and other academic expenses to ensure the grandchild is able to be in Christian education.

I am the tuition payer. It was a little bit of the decider whether he went or not financial for them, but then I wanted him there so it was kind of like, well we cannot afford it, and I said if that is the problem then take that off the plate. (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019)

Other grandparents covered small expenses that come up throughout the year such as lunches, parties, and supplies: "We're doing a spring musical, and they had to have T-shirts, and I just told his mom, I'll cover that tab. We cater lunches, and I will just cover the lunches, so I do some stuff like that" (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019). Other grandparents offered to help in unexpected family expenses to offset the family's commitment to pay for tuition.

The last meaningful area the grandparents invested their resources was toward their grandchild's spiritual development. The grandparent's value and definition of spirituality determined their emphasis and ability to give that resource themselves. Within this study, all of the grandparents admired the moral and ethical guidance the Christian school provided and appreciated the alignment of the beliefs with the family unit. Abigail described her grandparent oversight as being "loving, supportive, concerned looking out for their good moral character, their ethical character, teaching them right from wrong, setting a good example for them to follow, always being there for them no matter what." Some of the grandparents made specific investments in the Biblical instructions by reviewing Bible verses and Bible songs and discussed the Bible lessons the grandchildren learned.

If he comes home with me during the week, we sit down, and we memorize his Bible verse. If he spends the night, and we used to would read him a Bible story, but now he reads the Bible story to us. We are a real family of prayer, and we are seeing that develop in him. (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

Emma was hundreds of miles from her grandchildren, but took the time to call or FaceTime and have the grandchildren recite their Bible verses to instill their spiritual growth.

Some of the grandparents felt a greater responsibility to create a stronger mentoring role by attending church together as a family unit, or praying or discussing the Bible together, and teaching them right from wrong and how to treat people.

The main thing that I'm able to give her is a respect for people; the understanding that it's the things that are intangible, it's the things that are not financially, it's the things that if we had no TV if we had no phone if we had that it is most important. (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019)

Some of the grandparents shared that the school's Biblical worldview was important to them in that it provided a valuable spiritual foundation for their grandchildren.

We wanted her to have a God-centered worldview. Her parents both wanted that for her as well, and that's what we wanted for our children when we were first so convicted, and it has turned out to be exactly the way that is supposed to be with Christian education.

(Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

This Biblical worldview had great significance for some of the grandparents because the eternal investment that is connected to the teaching and the desire to know their grandchildren would be in heaven with them someday. When Lydia was asked what she values the most, she answered,

the spiritual investment. We will not always be here, so the eternal investment of them having a faith is what matters. The fact that the Christian school focuses on their faith for these little souls, I look for ways that I can pour into the children.

The spiritual component was a unique aspect of the Christian school setting and had a strong reciprocal benefit as both the grandparent and grandchild were stronger in the faith and knowledge of God as they shared in this resource.

Summary

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experience of non-custodial grandparents who contribute toward their grandchild's Christian school. Individual descriptions and overarching themes produced a transcendental phenomenological description depicting the findings of Chapter Four. This produced thick, rich individual portraits of the collective participant beliefs, values, and attitudes. The resulting qualitative narrative described the essence of the grandparents contributing their resources through the main theme of support and the five subthemes: (a) why grandparents support, (b)

ways grandparents support, (c) aids or barriers to contributing resources, (d) generative results in supporting, and (e) encouragement to be a support. Synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions of the themes also answered the three specific research questions for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

This dissertation study addresses the need to understand further and describe the developmental opportunity grandparents have in making an investment using the many resources they have into their grandchild's life within the Christian school education setting. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenology was to discover the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education. The conclusion is based on the participants' descriptive voices used to explain how the findings of this qualitative investigation relate to the literature framework in Chapter Two and the findings in Chapter Four. The content of this chapter will consist of a summary of findings, a discussion of the findings in light of relevant literature and theory, an implications section, study limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The data analysis resulted in the identification of one major theme and five subthemes. The main theme was support, and the five subthemes were: (a) why grandparents support, (b) ways grandparents support, (c) aids or barriers to contributing resources, (d) generative results in supporting, and (e) encouragement to be a support. The summary of findings is organized around the study's research questions.

The study has one central research question: What are the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education?

The lived experiences of grandparents who contributed resources for the grandchild's Christian school education can be described as a rewarding and fulfilling experience for the grandparent who elevates the cohesion in the family unit. The contributions made supported the development of the grandchild emotionally, intellectually, physically, and spiritually while also fortifying the grandparent's role in being a vital part of the family unit and the school community. The contributions of the grandparents many times extended beyond just the grandchildren to the school itself. The grandparents experienced great joy and satisfaction, knowing that in giving of themselves, they have been able to enrich their own lives as well as impact future generations even beyond their own lives.

How does the experience of contributing resources for the grandchild's Christian School education relate to the continued psychosocial development of non-custodial grandparent's life? The grandparent's continued psychosocial development was enhanced by the ability and commitment to contribute resources toward the grandchild's Christian school education. Woven throughout the findings was a detailed description of how their legacy was carried on through their contribution and the personal gains from that contribution. The grandparents wanted to craft their legacy through the creation of positive memories and family stories that go beyond the grandparent's life. The grandparents believed the example they set influenced their grandchild's life in building a positive character, and through the grandchild's life. The grandparents gained much satisfaction in knowing they were a part of their grandchild's development and had great personal gain in having a purpose in life by contributing and fulfillment in using their gifts and talents. The grandparents also had a strong eternal perspective in understanding their own mortality and wanting eternal assurance for their grandchildren.

What environmental factors permit or facilitate the non-custodial grandparents' experience of investing resources in the grandchild's Christian school education? Several environmental factors were identified through the study as affecting the grandparents' ability to contribute either positively or negatively. The findings provided a detailed description of how the relationships in their life as well as their lived experiences influenced how and how much the grandparents contribute. The grandparents' past experience with their grandparents, the current relationship with the parent of the grandchild, the age of the grandchild, and the relationships that are in the school influenced the amount the grandparents contributed as well as the opportunities. The grandparents' lives themselves in their own experience in working in a school setting, the geographic location in relation to the grandchild, as well as their time management and health or caring for others' health also influenced the amount of comfort level in them contributing in that setting.

How does the non-custodial grandparent's contribution of resources in the Christian school education setting impact the grandparent's meaning of being a grandparent? The lived experience of grandparents' contributing resources toward their grandchildren in the Christian school setting affirmed their meaning of being a grandparent in providing an avenue for the grandparent to be a more active part of the grandchild's life. Woven throughout the findings was how the experiences reinforced the grandparent's role in being an important part of the family unit and contributor to the family's cohesion. This supportive role was demonstrated through the physical, emotional, intellectual, financial, and spiritual contributions the grandparents made into through grandchild's Christian school education. The narrative also gave the full range of supportive roles the grandparent operated in, as needed, in adopting short-term parental roles to supporting on a need basis. The Christian school setting provided a unique setting for the family

cohesion to extend to the family's beliefs and values and provided the opportunity for the grandparent to be a spiritual mentor to their grandchildren in the setting.

Discussion

Empirical literature and a theoretical framework set the foundation for this study. In this discussion section, the findings illuminated core literature components. This section provides a discussion of the study findings to the empirical literature of grandparent resources, barriers to the use of grandparent resources and grandparent involvement in Christian schools, as well as the theoretical framework for the study, Erikson's (1950) theory of psychosocial development.

Empirical Literature

The literature on the topic of grandparents who contribute to the Christian school setting provided a broad focus on the resources grandparents possess and are able to contribute, the effects of the contribution of these resources on the grandparent, the family, and the grandchild, as well as the barriers that exist in grandparents being able to contribute. The resources specified in the literature were identified as emotional, intellectual, physical/material, and spiritual resources. There is a gap in the literature on the subject of grandparents contributing in the specific setting of Christian education, but some research exists about grandparent involvement and the importance of mentoring relationships and spiritual reinforcement for Christian school students.

Grandparent resources. The empirical research identified the specific areas grandparents can contribute as being emotional, intellectual, physical/material, (Chiu, 2013) and the inclusion of spiritual resources (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). The literature highlighted the uniqueness of each grandparent's experience, knowledge, skill, and wisdom, and how these individual resources could be offered across all aspects of life.

The study findings confirmed each of these resource areas and their relevance to the grandchild in the Christian school setting. The grandparents identified the resources as operating in the dynamics of the Christian school but also noted the resources would be given, regardless of the educational institution the grandchild attended. The study findings of the family being the core and the school an extension coincides with the Christian school education two-part mission of (a) educating the whole child—spiritually, emotionally and intellectually, and (b) supporting parents in their God-given role as primary educator (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988). The family valued their shared beliefs and values, and they considered the grandchild's attendance at the Christian school and the supportive grandparent activity contributing to their family unit cohesive. The literature did not indicate the difference in giving according to the grandchild's age, but the findings indicated the way the grandparent contributes these resources fluctuates and changes according to the grandchild's age with some resources taking precedence as needed by the parents and the grandchild.

The grandparents' physical resources of being present in the grandchild's life were the most common resource given with all grandparents participating in some support roles in transporting, caring for, or filling in when needed for the parents to support the family unit. This finding confirmed the literature of the grandparents acting as a safety net by assisting in the hectic daily routine by offering informal childcare by assisting in summer childcare, extra-curricular activities, and day-to-day activities which allows the parents to work longer hours and remain focused on their vocation (Allana et al., 2017; Breheny et al., 2013; Dunifon et al., 2018; Fuller-Thompson & Minkler, 2001; Mitchell, 2008; Ochiltree, 2006; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013; Smith, 2005; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). Evidence of this dynamic was found in the grandparents' activity in the grandchild's younger years by contributing in the form of

carpooling, before-school/after-school care and attendance at events. The findings extended the physical support to include the grandparent assisting in the classroom or being at the school. The findings also illuminated the type of grandparent's contribution changed as the grandchild gets older and less dependent in being less hands-on in the daily care of the grandchild and shifting to be more of a physical presence as a support or cheerleader role in attendance at all the activities the grandchild participates. The grandparent "being there" (Breheny et al., 2013; Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; St. George & Fletcher, 2014) "physically helps establish family feelings, love and belongingness across the generations" (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017, p. 32) was confirmed in the study. These physical investments not only provided the opportunity for the grandparent/grandchild to be strengthened but also showed support to the parents and family unit: "It's really strengthened my daughter's and my bond because she appreciates me so much and always has and knows I would do anything for them you know a moment's notice" (Abigail, personal interview, April 18, 2019). The literature was confirmed as the grandparents dedicated time toward their grandchildren, and the parents felt they had reinforcement in raising their children (Allana et al., 2017; Dunifon, 2013; Friedman et al., 2008; Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018).

The study findings indicated the emotional and intellectual resources were linked to physical resources as the grandparent and grandchild spent time together. An emotional bond was created through this physical investments as the grandparents described their relationship with their grandchild as very close. Grandparents worked to create a close relationship where the grandchild can "reveal themselves emotionally and be reassured that they are loved" by their grandparent (Deprez, 2017, p. 114) which was confirmed in the study findings in that grandparents create an environment where "they are comfortable asking me questions, and I'm

comfortable asking them issues they have and making recommendations” (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019). The study did not focus on the grandchildren in their emotional outcomes and therefore, cannot confirm the benefits to the grandchild.

The use of the grandparent intellectual resources was confirmed most consistently through the grandparents before-school and after-school care in assisting with homework and for older grandchildren seeking out their grandparents’ expertise in completing assignments and projects. The study findings aligned with the literature in that the grandparents offered practical help in assistance with homework and created a learning atmosphere through providing educational resources in their own homes to promote learning (Chiu, 2013; Kazimi et al., 2016). Also, grandparent’s direct participation in their grandchild’s academic activities strengthens the message of the importance of education of being a lifelong learner and creates mutual learning dynamic in the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Kenner et al., 2007). This fact was confirmed in the study findings also: “Knowing a grandparent is actively participating and supporting the child's efforts strengthens the bond between the two and is often an incentive for the child to have a more favorable outlook toward achieving success” (Sally, grandparent letter). The literature also described each grandparent’s own unique experience and expertise as “funds of knowledge” (Kenner, 2007; Moll et al., 1992; Ruby et al., 2007) which can span beyond the academic level to home-based life skills, such as “cooking, gardening, story-telling, reading and shopping” (Mitchell, 2008, p. 130). This fact was confirmed in the academic expertise of grandparents helping in English writing essays or science projects according to their strengths. It was also confirmed in the grandparent using their talents of crafts, cooking, entrepreneurship, and administrative tasks in contributing to the school setting. These

opportunities allowed grandparents to share their talent and create a legacy with their grandchild as well as other classmates (Kenner et al., 2007; Triadó et al., 2014).

The two areas unique to the Christian school were the financial contribution and spiritual resources. The literature indicated financial and material resources might be at the grandparents' disposal as grandparents have extended their work-life due to an increase in longevity, the financial and material resources at their disposal may have also increased (Dunifon et al., 2018; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013), which was partially true with 25% of the grandparents still working but 75% of the grandparents were on fixed incomes, limiting the amount they could contribute. Most of the financial contributions were in the form of support for the school as donations or assistance to the family on a need basis. The literature noted grandparents contribute financially toward their grandchildren by helping with their grandchildren's school fees, clothing, and other items (Moore & Rosenthal, 2017; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013) which was confirmed in the study findings as grandparents search out opportunities to give incidentals throughout the year. Through their effort to give to the families and the school, it was confirmed grandparents are willing to provide financial help to parents (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Chiteji, 2010; MaloneBeach et al., 2018; Modin et al., 2013; Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2018) "to help sustain and/or educate the grandchildren" (Beiner et al., 2014, p. 115) which could be a benefit to the grandchild's academic success.

The Christian school has the unique focus of spiritual development and provides the opportunity for grandparents to contribute their spiritual resources. Although the literature highlighted the role confusion grandparents could have regarding their spiritual role (Mulvihill, 2016), the findings indicated the grandparent role is based on their own spiritual beliefs and comfort level in sharing with the grandchild: "it depends on the grandparents own spiritual

development whether they would be supportive in the spiritual realm” (Margaret, personal interview, April, 30, 2019). The most pronounced in the findings was the desire to encourage good moral and ethical living confirming the research grandparents understand the importance of transmitting the values of benevolence, justice, and service to others to future generations (Bengston et al., 2009; King & Elder, 1999; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Taylor & Bates, 2014). Grandparents also wanted to live a godly life as an example and heritage to the family, some simply being a good moral person and others demonstrating biblical disciplines through their daily lives. Some grandparents believed they were not only to be role models, but they had a spiritual responsibility to lead their grandchildren in spiritual matters.

I think grandparents are responsible according to Scripture and it doesn't say parents bring up a child, it says bring up a child in the way of the Lord, and they will not fall from it. It doesn't say only the parents. The grandparents have just as equal of a role as the parents because I think that's we are all a family and if the family doesn't work together. It pulls apart, and that's when you have your problems, so it is part of the God-ordained rule as far as how he created us. (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019)

This finding confirmed the literature in grandparents believing there is Biblical instruction in Scripture for grandparents to be spiritually active in the family unit is multilayered: to be a transmitter of heritage or heritage builder; to instruct, teach and counsel in truth and righteous living; to leave an inheritance; and, live a godly life as an example and heritage to the family (Allen & Oswald, 2008; Bates, 2009; Bengston et al., 2009; Mulvihill, 2016; Psalms 71:17-18; 2 Timothy 1:5; Deuteronomy 4:9; Genesis 31:55). This spiritual instruction was demonstrated in the grandparents taking the responsibility to take their grandchildren to church, supporting the grandchildren in the biblical studies, furthering their study through spiritual resources, and

encouraging discussions about spiritual topics to further their faith: “I believe that our involvement has brought us closer, which in turns, opens the venue for us to have deep spiritual conversations with our grandson” (Joanne, grandparent letter).

One area highlighted in the findings but not directly in the literature was the grandparents’ realization of mortality and their focus on eternal investments. The study findings highlighted the grandparents’ focus on the eternal value in what the grandchildren learned at the Christian school and what the grandparents and family modeled in their values and beliefs: “It is the peace of mind knowing that I am investing in eternity that the things that these children are learning in Christian school even though they might not be evident right away, that those seeds are sown” (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019). In the grandparents’ awareness of their mortality and their limited time, the focus of their family’s eternal destination was a high priority for the grandparents: “to see them in heaven someday. Eternity is a big deal. Getting closer to it all the time” (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). This perspective for the grandparents impacted their priorities and the way they spent their time with their grandchildren.

Another area that was addressed in the study but not as much in the literature in the area of spiritual resources was the impact of the family unit shared values and beliefs in conjunction with the school in presenting a cohesive foundation for the grandchild.

Because of the oneness of purpose by our grandchildren’s parents in the purpose of growing the children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, we can see the values and share in conversations that are deeper and richer as well as supportive of God’s Kingdom work. (Leigh, grandparent letter)

This cohesiveness was mirrored in the mission of Christian school education of (a) educating the whole child—spiritually, emotionally and intellectually, and (b) supporting parents in their God-

given role as primary educator (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988). “I think it brings it full circle for her that everybody is together on and everybody is on the same page” (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019).

Barriers to the use of grandparent resources. The empirical literature identified several challenges to the grandparents contributing their resources toward the grandchild in the Christian school which included personal, familial, and societal challenges in the definition of the grandparent role (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017) as well as educational (Maijala et al., 2013; Mitchell, 2008) and even geographic challenges (Deprez, 2017; Mulvihill, 2016) can deter a grandparent from making a significant investment in their grandchild’s life. Although the literature highlighted a difficulty in defining a norm for the role of the grandparent causing the role to be complex (Beiner et al., 2014; Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004; Stelle et al., 2010), the grandparents in the study had a definitive identity in their role as a grandparent and the ways they wanted to contribute toward the grandchild in the Christian school. The literature indicated grandparents might also have conflicting messages coming from society (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2004), the family unit (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017), and even personal internal dialogue (Mitchell, 2008; Mulvihill, 2016; Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017). The study findings highlighted the grandparent’s identity was built on the identity of their role in the family unit due to their close relationship with the parents and their involvement in the grandchild’s life since birth. The grandparents noted the relationship with the parents and the cohesion of the family unit was the greatest factor in the grandparents’ ability to contribute.

I feel like we have a very good relationship. I can't imagine doing this any other way. I know there's a lot of different dynamics out there. As far as family situations and you know I hear of them, I see them. I'm very thankful that I am not having to deal with that. I feel very blessed that we have the opportunity to do this. (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

This confirmed the literature in the definition of the grandparent being created not only from the grandparent's view of their own role but also the expectation the parent has in the grandparent role (Breheny et al., 2013; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Fingerman, 2004; MaloneBeach et al., 2018; Ochiltree, 2006; Reitzes, & Mutran, 2009; Sims & Rofail, 2013; Stelle et al, 2010; Thompson & Weaver, 2016; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014). The literature also addressed the parents being the “gatekeepers and mediate the amount of contact and the quality of the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren” (Reitzes & Mutran, 2009, p. 214). This finding was confirmed in this study in the grandparents monitoring and maintaining this relationship to ensure the family stays in agreement and unity.

I support what they do. I don't undermine; I don't disagree. I support what they do and so even to down to bringing them home or whatever we go through, if it is something that they want to do, let's talk about with mom and dad. (Leigh, personal interview, April 16, 2019)

This dedication to family cohesion was found not only in the grandparent to parent but also vice versa with the parents keeping open communication to make sure the grandparent was not physically taxed by the amount of involvement they have committed to giving. Several of the grandparents shared that in being a primary caregiver to their grandchild at birth the family had to assess the physical commitment the grandparent was giving and take other actions to create

balance for the grandparent, so it was not too much for them. The parent's care for their own parent kept the relationship strong and kept the grandparent from taking on the substitute grandparent role with "the parenting role causes conflict for the grandparent in feelings of "tiredness, overloading or lack of personal time, stress, fatigue and burden" (Noriega, Lopez, et al., 2017, p. 1232). This dynamic confirmed the literature in the family working to understand and establish both the boundaries and opportunities grandparents have in being distinct yet an important part of the family unit.

While the grandparents admitted society, mainly in the form of friends, did not always agree with the grandparents giving as much as they did, the family unit's decision for the way they worked together was more important and the reason the grandparents gave: "I hear friends tell me; you shouldn't be doing what you are doing. But I think if grandparents want to do this and if the children are ok with it if it works in that family, it works" (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019).

While the literature did highlight grandparents have greater longevity, are healthier than their predecessors, and are more educated (Deprez, 2017; Friedman et al., 2008; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016; Ochiltree, 2006; Powell, 2014; Seltzer & Yahirun, 2013), it did not address the greatest personal concern the grandparents have in self-care to make sure their health is good to be able to continue to contribute. This dynamic confirmed the literature that the physical resources given were determined by the health and well-being of the grandparent and their ability to be physically present (Maijala et al., 2013).

Well, so far, my health has been good, and I'm thankful that I'm able to. I try to stay active and eat healthy and all the things they say you should do so that if my health

should fail, I know that would be a big factor. (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

The literature highlighted educational challenges in the grandparents, not knowing the latest technology or educational learning approaches. The grandparents did not mention educational challenges they have faced in being able to contribute.

Research pinpoints one of the greatest concerns for grandparents who could be a barrier to cultivating the relationship between the grandparent and grandchild is geographic proximity (Breheny et al., 2013; Deprez, 2017; Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012; Dunifon, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Mulvihill, 2016; Stelle et al, 2010; Yorgason & Gustafson, 2014). This research was confirmed in the study as all of the grandparents stated this was a major barrier to connect and contribute toward their grandchild and develop a close relationship. Research also finds some grandparents decide to move closer in geographic proximity with a recent study stating half of the teenagers live within nine miles from a grandparent (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). This was confirmed in the study findings as almost all of the grandparents made the decision to move closer to the grandchildren when they were born because of the inability they would have to be able to contribute. The research indicated other grandparents use the technological resources available to connect consistently to ensure their mentoring relationship (Boger & Mercer, 2017; Deprez, 2017; Dunifon & Bajracharya. 2012; Geffen, 2014; Mayasari et al., 2016; Mulvihill, 2016). This research was confirmed by the one grandparent in the study that was at a distance more than 30 miles from the grandchildren, and grandparent was very intentional in using technology and connecting with the grandchild consistently.

Grandparent involvement in Christian schools. The empirical research identified the unique setting of the Christian school and unique opportunities the grandparents have in making

their contributions to their grandchild. The research highlighted the recent elevated involvement of grandparents in the selection of the Christian school with the grandparent influence having an increase of 12% from the previous generation of Gen-Xers (ACSI, 2017) and speculation the reasons could be due to a lack of financial stability in the millennial parents and a greater resource base from the grandparent (ACSI, 2017). The study indicated over half of the participants aided in the selection of the Christian school acting as part of the family unit, with only a few grandparents covering the tuition, but most assisting in incidentals or portions of the tuition for the family when needed. This involvement at even the selection of the Christian school was due to the grandparent's involvement from the grandchild's birth and their continued support of the grandchild's development. Of the grandparents who did give financially, some of the grandparents shared a negative viewpoint of the millennial mindset being more dependent on the grandparent contribution and an eagerness to take whatever they are willing to give: "are more willing to take whatever you are willing to pay" (Caroline, personal interview, May 2, 2019). Most of the families were able to maintain financial stability, but of the ones who gave financially, there was the potential to judge the parent and cause some resentment between the grandparent and parent.

The study findings also highlighted grandparents' decision to be involved in the grandchild's Christian school was based on the grandparent's role as part of the family unit and the family's dedication to family cohesion in all of their lives. This supported the literature as Christian school education is dedicated to educating the whole child, spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically for the glory of God (Braley et al., 2003; Bunnell, 2016; Graham, 2009; McCullough, 2008; Van Brummelen, 1988), so the grandparents are able to contribute holistically and cohesively to strengthen the grandchild and possibly the school. The

grandparents considered their contribution as building cohesion in the family and was aligned with the school's mission to give the grandchild the clearest direction in life. Because the Christian school aligned with the family's beliefs and values, the grandparent believed in contributing not only to the grandchild but to the school to make it stronger.

Grandparents who adhered to the biblical instruction to spiritual mentorship also saw the opportunity to partner with the school as the "Christian school has a multi-faceted call to educate, minister, introduce Christian worldview, and facilitate spiritual formation" (Horan, 2017, p. 62). The study findings highlighted the desired outcome of all of the grandparents' contributions being their grandchildren become moral citizens and spiritually responsible which mirrored the research in the Christian school fostering stewardship in "other dimensions, including the emotions, relationships, intellect, vocation, the physical body, along with the stewardship of God-given resources including the earth, money, and possessions" (Chandler, 2015, p. 315).

Lastly, the literature indicated the unique opportunities available at a Christian school that might not be feasible in a public school setting. The study confirmed this in the school being described as a "little village" that creates an intimate environment where specific behavior can be addressed, more creative learning opportunities can be implemented, and much of the school community have common beliefs and values. This unique setting was acknowledged in both literature and the study as it made it easier for grandparents to contribute as the school "provides more informal occasions for interactions between students and adults" (West et al., 2017, p.16) and welcome grandparents into the Christian school family (Deprez, 2017; West et al., 2017). This dynamic was confirmed in the study as the grandparents described the school setting:

You walk in, and everybody knows who you are. The teacher has already told the receptionist that so-and-so's grandmother's coming today and when I get there to sign in, they already know you are coming and want to see what you have planned and when I get ready to leave they ask, so what did you make!! (Marsha, personal interview, April 30, 2019)

The study also acknowledged the breadth of the impact to reach beyond their grandchild to others in the school community: “You become famous in the best possible way” (Abigail, focus group, May 4, 2019).

The study confirmed these resources as being relevant to the grandchild’s Christian school experience toward the development of the grandchild as well as a contribution to the school itself. The literature addressed the need for school leaders to acknowledge the grandparent role in the family unit and consider ways to incorporate them into the school community. School leaders can be proactive by “becoming more aware of the breadth and depth of these often ignored kin ties and include grandparents in their programming, school, and spiritual family outreach efforts” (Geffen, 2014, p. 60). The findings confirmed this as the grandparents suggested they be included in the school orientation in providing their contact information and ways they would be interested in contributing as well as the school providing ideas of how they could connect and serve the school: “The grandparents’ experience and knowledge and involvement and understanding, just include them on something. The Grandparent’s day is not enough because there are more grandparent that want to be involved than you would think” (Wanda, personal interview, April 18, 2019). The study findings proved grandparents also made contributions beyond their grandchild into the school itself through service activities in the classroom, special projects, and to the school as a whole. The

grandparents assessed their gifts and talents in considering the volunteer work at the school. The literature aligned with this in Christian schools needing to consider expanding the curriculum to include home-based life skills that could include grandparents in sharing their “funds of knowledge” and skill or intergenerational projects (Bates & Goodsell, 2013; Kenner et al., 2007; Mitchell, 2008; Ruby et al., 2007; Thompson & Weaver, 2016).

This study enhances the knowledge of the reasons why grandparents decide to share their resources toward the family and the importance of family cohesion and alignment with the Christian school. The study provides examples to Christian schools of how grandparent resources can be encouraged both toward the grandchild but also implemented in the school as a whole.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study was Erikson’s (1950) theory of psychosocial development in need of imparting and investing in future generations for the individual’s development and psychosocial well-being. The age range for this psychosocial development is within the ages of 40 to 65 years of age, which was represented by 9 of the 15 participants. Erikson et al. (1986) expanded the generative interest to beyond middle age. Erikson (1986) posed the concept of “grand-generative function” referring to adults over the age of 65 continuing to find value in “the possibility of caring for the newest generation” (p. 91) which was represented in the other six participants and their focus on generative action. The grandparents continued to find value in investing into younger generations through purposeful generative activities with children and grandchildren to maintain healthy personal development (Bates, 2009; Ochiltree, 2006; St. George & Fletcher, 2014). The original psychosocial development stage of Ego Integrity versus Despair which focuses more on the grandparents

reflecting on their life and coming to a resolution of contentment versus regret was not a primary focus for the participants in this study as they continued in their investment of the next generation adopting the “grand-generative function” in their life (Erikson, 1950).

The theoretical framework of the investment into the next generation was supported by the study findings as the grandparents’ main reason for the contributions was to benefit the grandchild in being strong in each of the contribution areas—emotionally, intellectually, financially, and spiritually. The focus for the grandparents was not on their well-being but was set on what the family will have in the form of memories and specifically the grandchild will have as a resource to draw from for their development after the grandparent is no longer alive. One specific aspect of the Generativity stage is the individual facing mortality and realization of the limitations of the person’s life (Erikson, 1950). This finding was confirmed through many of the comments the grandparents made and the importance of spending their time affirming their grandchildren as they are creating their own lives. It was also confirmed in their focus on making the most of their time by filling their calendar with ways they are connecting with their family and creating purpose and meaning in their life.

Erikson’s (1950) explanation of the need to care and be needed—“Mature man needs to be needed, and maturity needs guidance as well as encouragement from what has been produced and must be taken care of” (p. 267)—is echoed in the study findings. The personal gain the grandparents experience in their satisfaction in being able to contribute and the belief they are making a difference confirmed the recent studies of non-custodial grandparents who invest time and energy into their grandchildren revealing higher role satisfaction and stronger feelings of the need for generativity in this period of their lives (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Thiele & Whelan, 2008). “I know I am appreciated for my efforts as I am a grandparent making a difference. My

involvement is wanted and needed and rewarding experience for me” (Sally, personal interview, April 22, 2019).

The reciprocal benefit for both the mature individual and the subsequent generation was also confirmed as the grandparents described their relationships with the grandchildren as close because of the amount and frequency of time that had been invested into the relationship. “Supporting my grandchildren has given me a better understanding of their needs and has improved our communication. I believe they understand I am ready to help whenever they need me, and I am grateful for the opportunity” (Sally, grandparent letter); “I believe that our involvement in this way has had a great impact on our relationship” (Joanne, personal interview, April 30, 2019). The other side of this psychosocial development stage is Stagnation, addressed in the grandparents’ advice to uninvolved grandparents as missing the most important thing in life: “They are missing an opportunity to influence their grandchildren” (Donald, personal interview, May 2, 2019); “You are missing out on at least half of the life that you could have because if you don’t invest in their life, you’ll have nothing in return” (John, personal interview, April 22, 2019). This emphasis on investing in the next generation confirms Erikson’s (1950) statement of purpose and meaning in life as the grandparents in the study take pride in their calendar being filled with ways they are connecting with their family.

A unique aspect of the generative action within the Christian school was the addition of the spiritual aspect. The grandparents’ desire to have generative action in investing into the future and knowledge of their mortality coupled with their own spiritual beliefs elevated the spiritual importance in the grandparents for their grandchildren to be instrumental in securing their eternal destination. They wanted “to see them in heaven someday. Eternity is a big deal. Getting closer to it all the time” (Margaret, personal interview, April 30, 2019). Many of the

grandparents specifically invested their spiritual resources and have the personal gain of experiencing great joy in seeing their grandchild develop their spiritual relationship.

Implications

The findings of this qualitative study have theoretical, empirical, and practical implications. This section discusses details for each of these areas of implications.

Theoretical Implications

Erikson's (1950) theory of the stages of psychosocial development was the theoretical framework and lens for the study. The specific psychosocial development stage of Generativity versus Stagnation was considered for individuals aged 40 to 65, and their need to impart and invest in future generations for the individual's development and psychosocial well-being. A secondary psychosocial development group was considered for individuals in the age group of 65 years or older who would normally fall into the psychosocial development state of Ego Integrity versus Despair which focuses more on the grandparents reflecting on their life and coming to a resolution of contentment versus regret. Erikson (1982) pointed out individuals in this age group could also re-enter the Generativity stage reclassified as a "grand-generative function" (p. 63). This refers to adults over the age of 65 who "nurture and guide those people who will succeed them as adults" (Erikson et al., 1986, p. 72) through purposeful generative activities with children and grandchildren to maintain personal healthy development (Bates, 2009; Ochiltree, 2006; St. George & Fletcher, 2014).

This study consisted of 9 participants that were within the age range of 40 to 65 and were in the Generativity versus Isolation, and 6 grandparents who were older and would be considered in either the Ego Integrity versus Despair developmental stage or reverting back to the previous psychosocial development stage instead classified as the "grand-generative function" (Erikson,

1982, p. 63). The results from the study strongly supported the positive psychosocial development of the age groups through generative actions of the grandparents. The results of the generative action in “establishing and guiding of the next generation” is evident in how the grandparents described these generative actions and the grandparent’s personal gains from the experience (Erikson, 1950, p. 267). The positive results were the actions reinforcing the close relationships with all members of the family, the dedication to creating their own legacy through the actions being a memory for their family, the example and influence the grandparent’s generative actions are on the grandchild’s development and the rewarding and fulfilling experience it is for the grandparent.

The theoretical framework is strengthened in providing evidence of positive generative results for both the age group in the Generativity versus Stagnation stage as well as supporting the “grand-generative function” that is extended to older individuals. The Ego Integrity versus Despair was not established further in this study with the evidence given not supporting the grandparents being at a point in life where their main concern was the reflection on their life and considering their regret or successes. The findings supported a further focus on investing in life and relationships through contributing instead of engaging in more reflective actions.

A unique implication from this study is the generative investment into spiritual development. Erikson’s (1950) psychosocial development stage is described as “establishing and guiding of the next generation” (p. 267), and acknowledges the desire to inspire others becomes central to personal development as the individual faces mortality and realizes the limitations of the person’s life. These study findings revealed a focus beyond the investment into the life of the next generation to greater investment into what the participants saw as an eternal investment. In facing their mortality, a greater desire to impact the next generation in eternal

security becomes a higher priority. Participants were not only concerned about the eternal aspect for the next generation but also invested their spiritual resources in being an example and mentor to subsequent generations to aid in that assurance.

Empirical Implications

The study furthered much of the empirical research on the topic of grandparent resources, the effects of the contribution of these resources on the grandparent, the family, and the grandchild, as well as the barriers that exist in grandparents being able to contribute. The study contributed new information on the subject of grandparent contribution, specifically in the Christian school setting.

The empirical research identified the specific areas grandparents can contribute as being emotional, intellectual, physical/material (Chiu, 2013), and the inclusion of spiritual resources (Deindl & Tieben, 2017; Maijala et al., 2013; Mulvihill, 2016). The study's findings supported each of these grandparent resources. The study added to the literature in identifying the role of cohesion in family beliefs and values, and the Christian school mission and the role grandparent involvement played in reinforcing and supporting this cohesion. The study also added to the literature the difference in contributing the various resources according to the grandchild's age. The study strongly supported the research focus on the grandparents having "funds of knowledge" in providing examples of how these resources can be used in the family and school as well as how the grandparents desire to be respected for these unique resources (Kenner, 2007; Moll et al., 1992; Ruby et al., 2007). The research on the impact of the financial contribution of grandparent resources was supported and extended in providing evidence of different ways grandparents find to contribute financially beyond just tuition payments in the Christian school setting.

The research on spiritual investment of grandparent resources is limited with much of the focus being on the role confusion many grandparents experience. The findings of the study did not confirm the role confusion that is apparent in most research, but rather provided a range of perspectives on the role of a grandparent in spiritual matters based on the value of spirituality in the grandparent's own life. The focus on mortality for the grandparent and a heightened value of eternity for the grandparent's family was a finding in the study.

The literature focused on barriers grandparents experienced in being able to contribute, which the study also acknowledged, but also the study findings suggested aids that assisted in grandparents being able to contribute. The main aids that assisted in the grandparents being able to contribute in the school setting were having past experience working or volunteer work in some type of school setting and having some form of personal connection to the school or church connected to the school. These two factors are additions to the Christian school literature in considering grandparent involvement in the school systems. The literature identified several barriers in the literature on the levels of personal, familial, and societal. The study confirmed the barriers of concern for personal health and geographic proximity in being able to contribute but did not confirm a personal role confusion of being a grandparent or having educational challenges. The study findings confirmed the importance of creating a positive, balanced life for the grandparent in not becoming the primary caregiver but maintaining a support role in the family as well as maintaining a close relationship with the parents as being a major factor in being able to contribute. The societal barriers identified in the research were acknowledged as being present in the study findings but were not factors in whether the grandparent would contribute or not. The family relationship and commitment to family cohesion was stronger than any outside influence on the grandparents.

The literature is limited in research on the subject of grandparent involvement in Christian school education. The study findings support the research of grandparent influence in the selection of Christian school and further the literature in providing examples of how grandparents are involved from the selection of the Christian school to the grandchild's graduation. The literature is extending by the study findings in providing research in not only the support role the grandparents have in the lives of the grandchildren and parents but also their role in supporting the teachers and the school itself. The study furthers the research in identifying the value grandparents find in the Christian school setting and the importance of their grandchild being in that specific type of setting and what they take from the experience in being part of the school community.

Practical Implications

This study's findings provided practical advice to encourage supportive actions in non-custodial grandparents. This section discusses these implications and includes recommendations for families, other grandparents, and school administrators and teachers.

Families. One of the unexpected findings in the study was the power of family cohesion in relation to connecting the family to the Christian school. Much of the decision for Christian school is based on the alignment of beliefs and values, but the broadening of the family unit to include extended family adds a new dimension. This powerful third layer of truth from the grandparents can be influential in the grandchild's life and further solidify principles that are being taught in the school, church, and home. Families should consider how to strengthen these common beliefs, if possible, and look for opportunities where grandparents can be a part of the equation.

Other grandparents. The grandparents had strong advice for uninvolved grandparents in making sure they make the most of the time they have left in life and consider the difference they could make in another person, mainly their own grandchild's life. The study highlighted the rich rewards that are gained from the investment, but it is built on solid relationships that take time and energy to cultivate. Grandparents should consider the legacy that will be in place through the memories that were made, the words that were spoken, and the priorities that were made in the grandparent's life.

Christian school leaders. Christian school leaders should consider grandparents might be important contributors in the family unit and have the potential to be an influential contributor in the school. Because grandparents are becoming a more central part of the selection process, administrators should consider how they can connect and include grandparents in the process. Taking the time to learn about the family dynamic can lead to a better understanding of the best way to communicate with the family and to support the format the family has established for daily tasks such as homework and major school functions like attendance to special events. The grandparents encouraged school leaders to include them in communication not only, so they know what is coming up, but also so they can know ways they can support the family in some of the small investments. The most pronounced recommendation was to ask at orientation for information from the grandparent as to areas they could contribute based on their expertise, experiences, and knowledge. Having a list of school needs or ways to contribute to the school could diminish the lack of knowledge and fear a grandparent may have about contributing. In addition, the study acknowledged greater opportunities to contribute are based on relationships within the school; school leaders should explore ways to build community with the grandparents such as events designed to spend time with them or encouraging a grandparent association.

Delimitations and Limitations

Specific delimitations were made for this study to focus the collected data to align with the purpose of the study. Boundaries were established as a way to focus the study more specifically on the experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute toward their grandchild in the Christian school setting. Boundaries were defined through a purposeful sampling of non-custodial grandparents identified by the school administration as being contributors to their grandchild's Christian school education in any of the resource areas—physical, emotional, financial, intellectual and/or spiritual. The purpose of these delimitations was to ensure the collected data could provide specific results for non-custodial grandparents and specifically in the Christian school setting in alignment with the transcendental phenomenological design. The rationale for the decision to study non-custodial grandparents was to isolate the grandparent experience since the impact of being a custodial grandparent and taking the fulltime role of the parent would be a different dynamic for the grandparent. The Christian school was delimited to explore the Christian school setting specifically as well as the unique financial and spiritual resources the grandparent could contribute to this specific school setting.

Several limitations need to be addressed in the study. First, the purposeful sampling gained from the administrators' selection of contributing grandparents yielded participants that were White and consisted of 13 grandmothers and two grandfathers. This result created a clear ethnic and gender bias in the study. The study was limited to a geographic region in the southern region of the United States. The study consisted of 15 participants with a triangulation of interviews, support documents, and grandparent letters, which provided a rich description of each participant and met thematic saturation. While 15 participants are well within the

boundaries of the needs for a transcendental phenomenology, the number is still a limited view of the overall grandparent experience in contributing toward the grandchild's Christian education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Reflecting on the findings, implications, and limitations of this study, it is evident additional gaps still exist. Below are a set of recommendations and directions for future research.

Impact of Grandparent Contributions on the Family Unit

This study highlighted the importance of family cohesion in not only the family dynamic working but also its connection to the Christian school. While this study focused on the generative impact on the grandparent, the impact on family relationships should also be considered. One grandparent mentioned the parent feeling guilty and somewhat jealous of the grandparent for being able to be so involved in the grandchild's Christian school. Others shared their frustration at times at the level of commitment they felt they needed to give and the feeling their children will take whatever the grandparent is willing to give. These types of feelings have the potential of destroying the cohesion in the family. Further study is needed on the family dynamics to gain a greater understanding of how the family creates balance to produce a healthy family cohesion.

Custodial Grandparent Experience in Contributing Resources

This study delimited non-custodial grandparents in the study due to the different family dynamics of being a custodial grandparent and the custodial's primary responsibility of caregiving for the grandchild. The literature already exists on the topic of custodial grandparenting, but it would be valuable to have a concentration on the contributing aspect and

consider the healthy boundaries of how much custodial grandparents are willing to give in addition to their parenting responsibilities, and if they experience a personal gain from their giving. Having this information would give a broader and more complete picture of the phenomenon for all grandparents and would give a comparison between the life of a custodial and non-custodial grandparent experience.

Grandparent Contributions in Public Schools

The focus of this study was for Christian schools and was inclusive of the spiritual and financial components concerning the grandparent resources. One of the findings in the study was grandparents believed they would give in the same way if the grandchild were in the public school setting. Further study in the area of public school would provide a comparison to this study in the benefits to the grandparent, the family dynamic, and the grandchild. Further study would also highlight the opportunities grandparents have in being able to contribute to their grandchild's public school education and their motive in making the contribution as well as any barriers they experience. Lastly, further study could highlight grandparents who carry the school mission in contributing beyond their grandchild into the school system as a whole and their motivations in these contributions.

Model Grandparent Contributions in Christian School

None of the Christian schools in this study had an organized or designated grandparent involvement program within their school. The study was based on the grandparents lived experience based on self-generated contributions, request from loved ones or administrators, or unplanned experiences that led to their contribution. This study shed light on the average grandparent in the average Christian school in how they discover and decide on ways to contribute. A further study of model Christian schools that have a dedicated grandparent

involvement program would be beneficial as a comparison to encourage grandparents and administrators in how they could motivate grandparents in sharing their gifts and talents. The level of commitment by the grandparents in this study and the personal gain from the experiences should encourage other grandparents who are not involved in considering how they can use the gifts, talents, experiences, and wisdom God has given each of them.

Summary

The problem of the literature gap in knowing the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute toward their grandchild's Christian school created a void in Christian education research. The development of a thick, rich description of the experience of non-custodial grandparents who contribute toward their grandchild's Christian school in the southern region of the United States has highlighted this demographic and the riches they have to offer to their families and the Christian school community. This transcendental phenomenological study gave voice to an underrepresented group of amazing individuals while producing the main theme of support and the five subthemes: (a) why grandparents support, (b) ways grandparents support, (c) aids or barriers to contributing resources, (d) generative results in supporting, and (e) encouragement to be a support. These grandparents have chosen to create a legacy by investing what they have into future generations.

And to know that you're investing in not only the second generation but the third generation; only God knows what those children are going to be called to do. And what an impact they are going to be able to have on the world and in their own immediate countries, states, cities, and families. (Emma, personal interview, April 24, 2019)

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 29, 2019

Michele Worley

IRB Approval 3704.032919: A Transcendental Phenomenology of the Lived Experiences of Non-Custodial Grandparents Who Contribute Resources toward the Grandchild's Christian School Education

Dear Michele Worley,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

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APPENDIX B: Letter of Invitation to Principal

February 9, 2019
School Principal name
School Principal
[Company]
[Address 1]
[Address 2]
[Address 3]

Dear School Principal name:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The title of my research project is a Transcendental Phenomenology of the Lived Experiences of Non-Custodial Grandparents who Contribute Resources toward the Grandchild's Christian School Education and the purpose of my research is to discover the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education.

I am writing to ask if you could identify grandparents who are active in your Christian school implementing their personal financial, emotional, physical, mental and/or spiritual resources and after receiving permission from the grandparent to give their preferred contact information, please send me a list of grandparents' names and contact information. The data will be used to send each grandparent an invitation to be a participant in the study. In addition, I would like to request permission to conduct the individual interview in one of your school classrooms if the grandparent prefers that location.

Sincerely,

Michele Worley
School of Education Instructor

APPENDIX C: Letter of Invitation to Grandparent

February 9, 2019

[Grandparent name]

[Title]

[Company]

[Address 1]

[Address 2]

[Address 3]

Dear [Grandparent name):

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to explore the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education and how this affects their psychosocial development and the value in being a grandparent, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

Your grandchild's school principal has identified you as a non-custodial grandparent that is actively contributing your (financial, emotional, mental, physical and/or spiritual) resources to your grandchild's Christian school education. If you are willing to participate, you will be asked to participate in an hour-long focus group with other grandparents, to collect any support documentation of your contribution toward your grandchild in the Christian school setting, if applicable (tuition payments, academic activities, volunteer work, etc.), and bring to me in a week at the individual interview, to participate in an hour to hour and a half individual interview and to write a letter to another grandparent about your experience in participating in your grandchild's Christian school education. It should take approximately two weeks in total time for you to complete the procedures listed. Your name and/or other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or [msworley@liberty.edu](mailto:mworley@liberty.edu) to schedule the focus group time and location.

A consent document and a demographic questionnaire are provided as an attachment to this invitation. The consent document contains additional information about my research, please sign the consent document and return both completed documents to me at the time of the focus group.

If you choose to participate, you will receive a \$5 gift card for giving your time to this study.

Sincerely,

Michele Worley
School of Education Instructor

APPENDIX D: Participation Form for Grandparent

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/29/2019 to 3/28/2020
Protocol # 3704.032919

CONSENT FORM

A Transcendental Phenomenology of the Lived Experiences of Non-Custodial
Grandparents Who Contribute Resources toward the Grandchild's Christian School
Education

Michele Worley
Liberty
University School
of Education

You are invited to be in a research study on the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources toward their grandchild's Christian school education. You were selected as a possible participant because you have a grandchild enrolled in a K-12 Christian school, you do not live with or raise your grandchild, and you provide resources towards your grandchild's Christian school education (financial, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual) and your grandchild's school principal acknowledged your contribution within your grandchild's Christian school setting and recommended you for the study having met the study's criteria.

Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Michele Worley, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to gain knowledge of the lived experiences of non-custodial grandparents who contribute resources for the grandchild's Christian school education. The research will focus on how this experience influences your continued psychosocial development, the environmental factors that help facilitate these actions, and the impact on you as a grandparent.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Complete a demographic questionnaire that is sent with the invitation and consent

form and bring with you to turn in at the first meeting for the individual interview. The questionnaire will take 10 minutes to complete.

2. Participate in an individual interview that will last an hour to an hour and a half. The interview will be recorded.
3. Collect any support documentation that you have of your involvement in your grandchild's Christian school education (tuition payments, volunteer work, academic activities, school activity attendance, etc.). You will have a week to gather these documents. Please bring any documents to the focus group interview.
4. Write a letter to another grandparent who might not be involved in the Christian school. This task will take around 30 minutes to complete. The letter should be sent to me within three days of completing the interview.
5. Participate in a focus group with other grandparents who contribute resources in their grandchild's Christian school education. The focus group will last an hour and will be audio recorded.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The Liberty University Institutional
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3/29/2019 to 3/28/2020
Protocol # 3704.032919

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit by participating in this study. However, participants may learn of the various ways that grandparents can contribute their resources toward Christian school education by engaging with other participants during the focus group.

Benefits to society include a knowledge of the various ways that grandparents contribute to grandchildren within the Christian school setting and the impact on the grandparent/grandchild relationship, the family, and the Christian school itself.

Compensation: Participants will be compensated for participating in this study with a \$5 Walmart gift card. This compensation will be offered at the end of the study. If a subject does not complete the study, the \$5 Walmart gift card will still be issued to honor the time given.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject.

Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- The focus group and interview transcripts, the support documents and the letters to the grandparents will be scanned and kept in a password protected computer with the original document(s) being in a locked file cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and any original documents will be shredded. The data may be used in the future under pseudonyms and protected computers for presentations and publication. Interviews and focus group will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Limits of confidentiality: I cannot assure participants that other members of the focus group will not share what was discussed with persons outside of the group. All information shared directly with me will be kept confidential.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or the school that your grandchild attends. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
3/29/2019 to 3/28/2020
Protocol # 3704.032919

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Michele Worley. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX E: Grandparent Letter

Please write a letter to other grandparents who are not currently involved in their grandchild's Christian school education environment by addressing the following questions:

How has the experience of offering your personal resources toward your grandchild within the Christian school setting had meaning in being a grandparent?

What has been the impact on your grandparent-grandchild relationship?

Consider sharing your own failures or weaknesses in being a grandparent and how contributing your resources has impacted your own perspective of being a grandparent.

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Questions

1. Did any of you help select the Christian school, how soon did you start getting involved in the Christian school, and how long have you been contributing?
2. Were the activities that you have been involved in self-generated, or were you asked to be a part of it?
3. Do you live your life differently because you are contributing?
4. Do you think that contributing resources to your grandchild in Christian school adds or subtracts from your personal life, and if so, why or why not?
5. At this stage in your life, why is contributing resources to your grandchildren important?
6. Are there ways that you have contributed that has connected with more than just your grandchild? Why did you give these types of contributions, and what did it mean to you?
7. Do you think your past experiences in work or otherwise have influenced you wanting to give into Christian education and/or education in general, and if so, why?
8. If you talk to your friends about your involvement, what do they say and what is your response?
9. Do you think your involvement hinders or hampers your own self-care? Why or why not?
10. Are there times that you feel insufficient to be able to give if so how do you overcome that feeling?

APPENDIX G: Meaning of Grandparenthood Questionnaire

Demographic survey instrument from Helen Kivnick includes the following questions:

1. What is your age range? 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; 75-84; 84
2. What is your marital status? Single; Married; Separated; Divorced; Widowed
3. What is your ethnicity? White; African American; Asian; American Indian; Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian; or Other.
4. Level of education? 0-8; 9-11; 12-13; 2 yr. college; 4 yr. college; Masters; Doctorate
5. What is your work status? For pay; household; retired
6. What is your household composition? Live alone; live with Spouse; other
7. What is the current state of your health? Excellent; Good; Fair; Poor
8. What age range did you become a parent? Under 20; 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 34+
9. How many children do you have? 1; 2-3; 4-5; 6+
10. Age when you became a grandparent? <30; 31-40; 41-45; 45-50; 51-55; 56-60; 61-65; 66-70; 71+
11. How many grandchildren do you have? 1; 2-3; 4-6; 7-9; 10-15; 16+\
12. How many miles do you live from your grandchildren? 0-20 miles; 21-100 miles; 101-300 miles; 301-500 miles; 500+

APPENDIX H: Sample Interview Transcript

Marsha

Me: Let me give you some context I don't know how much you are able to read of the study itself, so my questions are going to be related to what you contribute to your grandchild, specifically within the Christian school setting, so we are looking at that environment, something may be like driving them to school, helping with homework, but is still related to their educational things. So let's start with you just a little bit about your family and personal history anything you want to share. Oh and let me preface this also. If you can refrain from using your grandchildren's names because it is recorded and we want to protect them.

Marsha: I have been one of the two primary caregivers for my two grandchildren. The two older ones that live close by for up to nine almost nine years now by my daughter and her husband work full time. The set-up has been I have them three days a week, and the other grandparent has them two days a week that has fluctuated as if the other grandparent had surgery or sick or something that I would have them five days a week, but we've always worked out a schedule and if there was any change in either one of our schedules. We notified each other. Plus of course my daughter, so it has been a good arrangement for us.

Me: Do y'all have a good relationship?

Marsha: Oh, yes, it is wonderful, wonderful people. I couldn't ask for better in-laws for my daughters.

Me: Very nice. You mentioned the two you have four total of two older ones. What ages are now?

Marsha: They are 8 1/2, and the other one just turned six.

Me: Are both of them at the Christian school?

Marsha: Yes.

Me: And what grade are they in?

Marsha: The older one is in third grade, and the younger one is in kindergarten.

Me: Such fun ages. Very good. So describe, or how would you describe your role as a grandparent?

Marsha: Grandmother/mom, of course, I've had them you know anywhere between 3 to 5 days a week since they were infants. My daughter-in-law, we agree on the type of discipline, schedule, but she's always been very good about leaving the final decision up to me if I had a question about something, but anything that I had a question about I call her immediately especially if it came to medication. You know if they already had something that morning. What time? We would normally go over that before she would leave in the morning but sometimes if it was just something I was hesitant about. I would just call, and double check on the weight for the dosage and you know before I administered anything.

Me: Right.

Marsha: So, that's been you know as far as that aspect goes that's how we would handle that.

Me: Great, good, so you when say that you have cared for them three days a week, Does that mean picking them up from home to go to school to pick them up at night to take them home at night?

Marsha: No, the arrangement was she would bring them here in the morning she would drop them off. This is all before you know either one of them went to school or past preschool, but she would drop them off in the morning and then once they were in preschool now I would take them to preschool and pick them up. Now that they're in regular school. I picked them up in the afternoon the days that I have them.

Me: And then you pick them up in the afternoon you keep them a certain period of time and then hand them over at the end of the day or do they sleep here?

Marsha: She comes back up, and she picks them up when she gets off work, and they have always stayed at my house and I, you know, the house is set up for them. They think they have the rooms and they do they have taken their naps in those rooms, and they name each one of their rooms, and they have their own toys here, you know it's you know it's a very relaxed atmosphere.

Me: What time is pickup at night?

Marsha: My daughter works, she gets off at - she goes in early, so she gets off early. She's fortunate in her job that she's able to kind of name her own hours and part of that is she's a self-starter she gets there early and she works most days through lunch so she would. On a typical day when I would have them before they started school, she would bring them at six, around 6:35 and she would leave here by seven. She would be at work at 7:30. She leaves work at four. She's here at 4:30.

Me: Ok, so you would have them, now with her arrangement after school?

Marsha: Yes, I go pick them up, which school gets out at 2:45 and then she picks them up at 4:30.

Me: Awesome, wonderful. Describe your relationship with your grandchildren that are in the Christian school.

Marsha: I think we're very close. You know, I've spent so much time with them that you know if they see me at school or they see me at church, or you know some other you know they are used to me being there and they just, you know, just another extension of them being here.

Me: Yes, Very good. So how have you been active in your grandchild's Christian school what specific activities have you either participated or done?

Marsha: Volunteer. I tend to be hands-on as far as crafts, and that's where I feel like my gifts are at, and so I carried that over there. I don't do like tutoring or anything because I feel like there's other people that can do that would probably enjoy that more and so I tend to do the crafts. I go up there for all the all the holidays, and you know we are making things, and now that my granddaughters in third grade and those kids are in second and third grade I'm teaching them to sew.

Me: Oh, nice!!

Marsha: And so they are quite excited about it and. . .

Me: Yea!!

Marsha: But if I go to one class I always have to go to the other one and especially that the younger one now is in kindergarten. She says, well. You went to my sister's class, and she says, when are you coming to my class? I said well I'll be there on Wednesday and (laughter) I've got you covered.

Me: That is very- so you do this in the class that or your grandchild and do you branch out beyond the class that your grandchild is in or is it just specifically?

Marsha: It is just specifically their class.

Me: Yea, ok, that is great! That is awesome. So doing that, was that an idea that you had or was that something that the teacher brought up or how did that happen?

Marsha: I volunteered because one I know it is a small school and we know everybody you know personally. One, we go to church there that makes a big difference.

Me: Yea, it does.

Marsha: I volunteered because we were so excited about both of them being there and we support the school, and we also feel like the, you know, the tuition is very, very cost-effective.

APPENDIX I: Audit Trail

Date	All Events Related to the Study
3/29/19	IRB Approval granted
3/29/19	Contact all School administrators or approval and request to contact grandparents
4/15/19	Individual interview - 1
4/16/19	Individual interview - 2
4/17/19	Transcription completed – 3 interviews
4/18/19	Individual interview -2
4/21/19	Transcription completed – 2 interviews
4/22/19	Individual interview -3
4/23/19	Individual interview - 1
4/24/19	Individual interview - 1
4/29/19	Transcription completed – 5 interviews
4/30/19	Individual interview - 3
5/2/19	Individual interview - 2
5/4/19	Focus group - 8
5/5/19	Transcription completed – 5 interviews
5/8/19	Transcription completed – focus group
5/13-17	Review transcriptions, synthesize, code data
5/18-5/25	Finish Chapters 4 and 5
5/26	Submit Chapter 4 and 5 for review

APPENDIX J: Themes Enumeration Chart

Codes	Code Across Data Sets	Theme
Help	90	Support
Give	50	
Support	44	
Volunteer	17	
Family	80	Why the grandparents support: Core is the family
Close (family)	20	
Past experience influence	20	
Cohesion/together/same	31	
Give in public or private schools	9	Why the grandparents support: School is an extension
Aided in selection the Christian school	7	
Unique Environment: Small/village	14	
Unique environment: Safe/welcoming/free/freedom	28	
Values	22	
Physical contribution	50	
Emotional contribution	12	Ways that grandparents support
Intellectual contribution	23	
Financial contribution	38	
Spiritual contribution	56	
Past experience as educator/teacher/teacher's aide	10	
Personal connection to the school	10	
Health	12	
Time	20	
Distance	15	
Grandchild's age	15	
Parent relationship	13	
Society/friends	12	
Close (grandchild)/bond	21	Generative results from supporting
Memory/legacy	26	
Grandchild's character	22	
Satisfaction	8	
Enjoy/joy	23	
Happy/enrich/rewarding	17	

Not supporting: Missing out	14	
Priority	10	Encouragement to be a support
Get involved in whatever way you can	15	
School communicate with grandparents	13	
School provide specific volunteer opportunities/consider their skills	10	