

# Responsibilities, Resources, and Relationships in Grandparents Who Provide Care for Grandchildren

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## Background

Grandparents are an increasing share of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2018), yet grandchildren are often in the shadows of research on wellbeing in aging populations.

Grandparent involvement is linked to both:

- Positive health and life satisfaction (Moore & Rosenthal, 2015; Thiele & Whelan, 2008)
- Poor wellbeing (Kim et al., 2017; Triado et al., 2014).

These conflicting findings require:

- Distinguishing specific activities from amount of care or household/family structure
- Embedding grandparents in multigenerational contexts that include relationships with parents (G2) and grandchildren (G3)

Resources and Demands theoretical framework (Hughes & Waite, 2002; Hughes et al., 2007):

- the effects of grandparenting are likely to depend on the nature (i.e., what they do) and perceptions of demands (i.e., burden)
- perceptions of resources (e.g., intergenerational relationship satisfaction).

## Research Questions

1. Is perceived **relationship satisfaction** with G2 and G3 independently associated with grandparent wellbeing?
2. How is **grandparent involvement** (teaching, caregiving and financial support) associated with grandparent wellbeing?
3. Are G1 perceptions of the **burden of grandchild care** independently associated with grandparent wellbeing?

## Methods

Online sample (Qualtrics Panel Services) of grandparents (N = 313) who self-identified as providing regular care for and seeing a grandchild under age 18 every day in the last month.

- Predominantly White (78%) females (88%) on average 61.05 years (SD=7.83) with mean target grandchild age= 7.33 years (SD=5.01)
- N = 109 grandparents in multigenerational households and N = 204 who lived apart from their grandchildren

### Measures

- **Grandparent Wellbeing (IVs):** *Life Satisfaction* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), *Depressive symptoms* (CESD-R; Eaton et al., 2004), and *Stress* (PSS; Cohen et al., 1994).
- **Grandparent Involvement** (Barnett et al., 2013): Frequency of engagement in: *Teaching* (4-items;  $\alpha=.82$ ), *Caregiving* (8-items;  $\alpha=.86$ ); *Financial Support* (1-item).
- **Grandparent Burden** ( $\alpha=.88$ ): modified version of the Zarit Burden Interview (Zarit et al., 1980) to describe caregiving for grandchildren.
- **G2 and G3 Relationship Satisfaction:** one item each rated on a 5-pt Likert scale.

## Results

OLS Regression Results	Life Satisfaction	Depressive Symptoms	Perceived Stress
	$\beta$	$\beta$	$\beta$
Residence (multigenerational)	-.00	.01	-.02
G1 Age	.01	-.07	-.05
G1 Gender (Female)	-.01	.04	.08
G1 Marital Status (Married/Partnered)	-.04	.05	-.03
G1 Financial Security	<b>.30***</b>	<b>-.19***</b>	<b>-.20***</b>
G1 Health	<b>.38***</b>	<b>-.32***</b>	<b>-.34***</b>
G1 Adult Caregiver	-.05	.05	<b>.10*</b>
G3 Age	-.06	.08	.08
G2 Relationship Satisfaction	<b>.23***</b>	<b>-.24***</b>	<b>-.15**</b>
G3 Relationship Satisfaction	.02	<b>-.16**</b>	-.03
Teaching	<b>.13*</b>	-.08	-.11
Caregiving	-.10	.11	<b>.14*</b>
Financial Support	-.07	.09	.06
Caregiving Burden	<b>-.11*</b>	<b>.22***</b>	<b>.22***</b>
F (14, 293)	19.53***	11.73***	13.28***
Adj. R-sq	.46	.33	.36

## Conclusions and Implications

- Grandparent wellbeing is a multigenerational process.
- Specific dimensions of grandparent involvement are linked to grandparent wellbeing in this sample of highly involved grandparents.
- Perception of demands and relationship resources may have greater implications for wellbeing than actual demands.

